



## 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 Svrán 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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Blibded Blind

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**ASPECT****Blinded Bling**

Much before education became the commodity it is today, the classes and masses in our country worshiped it. People were willing to invest any amount of time and money to bag their desired degree. However, over the years and with commercialisation of education, priorities have changed. Though the sentiment to spend on education remains the same, the reasons to bag the degree are certainly different.

“There was a time when higher education was about acquiring knowledge and earning a distinguished degree with excellent academic records. However, today perceptions have changed and education is only a means to secure a well-paid job. Most students are more interested in knowing the number and profiles of companies visiting the institution than the quality of education imparted,” reveals Mannar Jawahar, vice-chancellor of Anna University.

Real Reasons

Experts believe that many students look at education, as a means to an end and the quest to ‘learn’ has long been lost. Thus, it comes as no surprise that ‘new, improved’ courses from hitherto unknown universities (that many a times do not have the requisite certifications) are slowly but steadily gaining in popularity. “True, and in this pursuit of a different degree that would give them an edge over competition, students often overlook the fact that if the institute offering the fancy specialisation is not an established one, they are not likely to attract attention in the job market,” career counsellor Jayanti Ghose analyses.

Suresh Ghai, director, K J Somaiya Institute of Management Studies and Research, elaborates, “In some cases, these new/niche courses are not offered by recognised universities. Thus students enroll with private colleges.”

Of course, this is not the only reason why students enroll for colleges/universities whose only claim to fame is their presence in the media, thanks to commercial announcements. “Sometimes, students are unaware of the implications of enrolling for such courses. At others, they feel recognition is not as important as getting a job and if a course promises students a job, they opt for it,” Ghai goes on to elaborate.

Having said that, one of the biggest factors that influence students’ decision to enroll for such colleges/universities is their performance in either their exams or the entrance exams that determine their chances of getting admission in reputed, recognised colleges. Admits Jitesh, a final year engineering student in a private college in Delhi, “My grades in my boards were not sufficient to get admission in any of the engineering colleges of my choice. I enrolled for this college since I was assured that the college was good. However, none of the claims were met.” His college conducts only theory classes. There are no practical classes.

Jitesh’s isn’t the only case in point. There are several others. What appears to be a wise decision during desperate times often ends up as a waste of time, money and no career path to tread on.

Seconds’ counsellor Pratibha Jain, “Yes, a larger number of students and parents get carried away by sops that these institutes offer. However, they do not read the fine print in the process.”

For instance, not many are aware of the fact that private institutes cannot award degrees on their accord, be it a BBA or an MBA. In quite a few cases, private institutes can only offer autonomous certificate programmes or diplomas, which might have a high local recognition but are rarely accepted by international employers or institutes of higher education.

Foreign Fundas

The foreign factor is yet another crowd puller. Take the case of Ajay, a student of an unrecognised college that eventually downed its shutters. Ajay says, “The college was offering much more than the regular education and course practicals. Facilities like a trip to an international university and the opportunity to present our research in a foreign country sounded lucrative.”

Precisely the reason why Rashmi enrolled with another private university. “The programme description included faculty from NASA and DRDO. All went well till one day we received a notice saying that the lease of our college premises had expired and thus we had to vacate the property and our dreams,” she rues.

For Swapnil, student of a ‘leading’ college (unrecognised, mind you) that offered a diploma in fashion in affiliation with a leading foreign fashion institute, it was once again the lure of foreign shores that made him sign up for that course. “Apart from the affiliation, they promised a runway programme designed to showcase our products in front of international designers. Little did I know that the affiliation was allegedly a ‘spelling mistake’ presented in their course prospectus!”

Irrespective of our preference for foreign education and degrees, fact remains that the world over people regard Indian education in high esteem and look at educated Indians as competition. Even US President Barack Obama, while announcing the American Graduation Initiative in Warren Michigan, said that he was laying the foundation of an education system, which would help America compete with China and India in the 21st Century. Yet, we continue to nurse dreams of graduating from a foreign university.

Testimony of this fact is the number of students who queue up for admissions to courses that are ‘affiliated’ to a foreign college. Whilst doing so, they do not check the ranking of the particular affiliated foreign university globally. Since rankings matter when it comes to international acceptance, it surely should be verified before enrolling.

“Foreign accreditations, which are globally accepted are a measure of the credibility of an institution/programme, but if it does not have acceptance or recognition by the formal

educational authorities in the country, students may not be universally accepted in the job market or considered for admission to further studies in India and abroad. Some students who have opted for a foreign accredited or collaborative programme on account of its innovative curriculum, and method of instruction, have found themselves disappointed by the fact that the programme/institution did not attract the brightest minds, and the teachers/faculty have also fallen short of expectation," Ghose explains.

Jain advises, "Most Indian universities are higher ranked, better in reputation with a more comprehensive and well-recognised curriculum. Many Indian institutes organise industrial visits and internships, which empower students to take initiatives for any additional learning opportunities they deem important. Since Indian education is well affordable, students can spend the money on travelling, going for summer schools abroad or participating in trade fairs."

#### Placement Promises

With 'assured' placements being the order of the day, students prefer enrolling for diplomas, certificates or MBA programmes so as to bag the first job that is offered on campus. What they do not realise is that on many occasions these claims made in brochures are nothing but just claims.

"If these prospective students meet with alumni/students studying in the college, faculty and industry where the alumni are supposed to be working, this claim can be easily verified. They can also check with HR professionals/recruitment agencies to validate the placement claims," suggests Ghai.

Claims that international universities make too need to be verified, especially since students assume they would automatically be granted a work permit once they complete their course in that country. Reveals Jain, "This is again a myth as all countries have strict work permit rules for people looking for employment in their country. What the student does not read in the fine print is that he has to first find the job himself in order to apply for the work permit, which is not automatically an extension of the student visa. A low-tier MBA programme or a certificate programme does not fetch him a well paying white collar job in that country so that in effect the work permit 'sop' is useless, and he has to come back to India where his salary package is the same as a graduate from an equivalent Indian institute."

#### Credibility Check

While there are enough and more cases of students being duped by Indian colleges and those have affiliations with 'foreign' colleges, one must mention here that not all private institutes, colleges or universities are bogus. What students and parents need to do is make a well informed and researched choice.

"Any university should be recognised by the University Grants Commission ([www.ugc.ac.in](http://www.ugc.ac.in)) and this is usually

mentioned on the website and in the prospectus, quoting the date, and other details like when the university was established. The university should be a member of the Association of Indian Universities ([www.aiuweb.org](http://www.aiuweb.org)). A college should be affiliated to a recognised university, and if autonomous, should be accredited or recognised/approved by the regulatory authority for the professional programme it offers. The regulatory authorities are mentioned on the website of UGC under 'Higher Education.'

Examples are Medical Council of India, Dental Council of India, Indian Nursing Council, AICTE (for engineering, MBA, hotel management, MCA, etc), National Council for Teacher Education, and so on. The above factors usually ensure that there is adequate infrastructure, faculty and provision to handle the number of students & programmes the institution offers," Ghose advises.

Yet another way of checking the college/university's claim is by meeting with students of that college.

"Whenever students approach us looking for information on our college, we tell them the truth," Jitesh confesses. "Students must get in touch with alumni of their potential institutes, people living in that country and even recruitment agencies before they confirm their enrollment to get a more realistic idea of the post-education opportunities," Jain suggests.

Presenting the other side of the coin, a counsellor says on condition of anonymity, "Sometimes you can't blame universities for doing what they do — it is a business after all and there are so many people who are looking for better options, especially when it comes to finding a way out of this country and settling abroad. They are so blinded with this idea that it doesn't matter if it's a dodgy institution or not — they will mortgage their house and take loans to make these dreams come true."

These dreams are often not realised since students end up with degrees that are either not good enough to get them a job or they end up wasting precious academic years only to return to a basic run of the mill course.

**Source:** TNN [/timesofindia/2](http://timesofindia/2) November 2009

## **NEWS**

### **BITS Pilani and SAIL sign MoU for Collaboration**

*In India today, this tie-up of steel major SAIL with higher education pioneer BITS Pilani marks yet another milestone in industry university collaborations.*

The Scientific Manpower Committee (1947), Engineering Personnel Committee (1956), AICTE (1958, 1966, 1969, 1971), Thacker Committee (1961), Kothari Education Commission (1966), National Policy on Education (1968), Ministry of Education, Government of India (1978), Draft National Policy on Education (1979), AIEI (1980), Nayudamma Review Committee (1980), Challenge of Education – a policy perspective, Ministry of Education, GOI (1985), IIT Review Report (1986), ..... many more committees, commissions, seminars, symposiums.....have

repeatedly advocated and emphasized on the need for strong university industry linkages in India.

With Dr Kumar Mangalam Birla as the Chancellor and Dr LK Maheshwari as the Vice Chancellor, BITS presently has its campuses at Pilani (Rajasthan), Goa and Hyderabad in India and Dubai in UAE. BITS offers degrees in various disciplines at all three tiers namely Integrated First degree, higher degree and PhD.

For the year 2009, the Birla Institute of Technology and Science well known all over as BITS Pilani has been ranked among the top ranking universities in India along with IITs in various Magazine surveys such as India Today, Outlook, LiveMint etc. The alumni of BITS Pilani who are Proud to be BITSians are spread across various continents from Australia to America.

Admission to various degrees at BITS Pilani is by online test BITSAT. The NAAC - National Assessment and Accreditation Council has reaccredited BITS Pilani with 3.71 CGPA out of 4 and awarded "A" grade "Very Good" status. BITS Pilani has done pioneering work in industry university collaborations in terms of Practice School and Work Integrated Learning.

It is indeed a matter of pride that BITS Pilani today has Practice School program in very many organizations not only in India but also in USA, several countries in Europe, Middle East and Singapore. For Work Integrated Learning, BITS Pilani partnerships include Wipro, CTS, HP, Persistent, Patni, Tech Mahindra, SAP, Yahoo!, Sabre Travel, Bharat Forge, Bharat Dynamics, Ashok Leyland, L&T, NTPC, NDPL, Essar Power, Tehri Hydro, Renusagar Power, Chambal Fertilizers, Tata Chemicals, Hindustan Zinc (HZL), Hindalco, Aditya Birla Group Cement Business, Dr Reddy's Labs, Matrix Labs, Strides Arco Labs, Dabur Pharma (Fresenius Kabi Oncology Ltd), CMC Hospital Vellore, Bombay Hospital, CDC New Delhi, NCSM Kolkata, CLRI Chennai. NPL Delhi, IIQM Jaipur, RDSO Lucknow and IRCAMTECH Gwalior

The Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) is India's largest Steel producing Navratna Company. With a turnover of Rs. 48,681 crore, SAIL is among the top five highest profit earning corporates of the country. The Management Training Institute (MTI) which is the apex corporate training centre of SAIL is continuously exploring the means of enriching and upgrading its Human Resource Development initiatives for building the competence of the executives to enable them to take up newer challenges. In addition, MTI supports various SAIL Plants and Units in their efforts to develop the competence of employees in all disciplines.

In a colourful function organized at ISPAT Bhawan, Lodhi Road New Delhi on 05 November 2009, the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in the presence of Mr G Ojha Director (Personnel) by Dr G Sundar Dean Practice School Division and Dr BR Natarajan Dean Work Integrated Learning Programmes Division on behalf of BITS Pilani and by Mr Satya Prakash Patnaik Executive

Director (HRD) from MTI Ranchi and Mr B B Singh Executive Director (Operations) on behalf of SAIL. With effect from the date of signing, the MoU will remain in force for three years with the provision that it may be extended for another period on mutually agreeable terms and conditions.

Apart from BITS Faculty members from Delhi off campus centre Dr MD Arora, Mr Rajesh Tewari, Mrs Ritu, senior executives from SAIL including Mr B Dhal Executive Director (P&A) and Mr R K Singhal DGM (Corporate Affairs) also attended the function.

Dr Natarajan gave an overview of BITS Pilani after which Mr Patnaik presented the highlights of the proposed collaboration. Mr Ojha nostalgically recollected his visit to Pilani way back in 1969 and reiterated that SAIL had top focus for HRD with emphasis on work integrated learning. On behalf of BITS, Dr Sundar thanked all SAIL executives including Mr Anil Sharma from Bhilai and Mr Manas Panda from MTI Ranchi for making the MoU function a grand success. Dr Taposh Ghoshal AGM (Academic) from MTI Ranchi welcomed the gathering and proposed vote of thanks.

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between BITS and SAIL has been signed with the objective of fostering collaboration between the two institutions to promote academic and research interactions which include Practice School Programme for students of BITS, Work Integrated Learning Programmes for employees of SAIL under continuing education, Faculty support by BITS for short term technical programmes at SAIL as well as Involvement of Senior Executives and Experts from SAIL for value addition to the educational process at BITS.

SAIL and BITS understand that they may share confidential information and mutually agree to respect and adhere to the Confidentiality as well as IPR requirements of the respective organizations. A Coordination Committee consisting of Vice Chancellor, BITS as Chairman, two nominees each from SAIL and BITS would coordinate and monitor the academic and research programmes and all related operational matters within the framework of the academic regulations of BITS and the objectives outlined by SAIL.

After the MoU signing, the BITS team along with Mr Ojha and Mr S P Patnaik met Chairman and Managing Director Mr S K Roongta and discussed the salient features of the collaboration.

**Source:** [prlog.org/5](http://prlog.org/5) November 2009

#### **Centre tells states to adhere norms for teachers training**

The human resource development (HRD) ministry has asked all states to upgrade their eligibility criteria for teachers training to meet National Council for Teachers Education (NCTE) norms. The certificates issued by states that fail to do so would be termed illegal.

The warning came after the ministry was forced to step in to bail out about 31,000 West Bengal primary teachers whose

D.Eds (diplomas in education) were declared illegal by the Calcutta high court without NCTE recognition.

“In case of a dispute, the central legislation prevails. All such degrees that do not meet norms would be termed illegal,” HRD minister Kapil Sibal said.

As per NCTE norms, the duration of D.Ed courses should be two years and the eligibility for admission, 12th pass with at least 50% marks. However, in Bengal, primary teachers training institutions (PTTI) have been conducting a one-year D.Ed course with 10th pass the eligibility.

The high court held that the courses run by such institutions were illegal. The judgment affected 31,141 students who could neither be awarded diplomas, nor take exams. It became a serious issue in the state with finance minister Pranab Mukherjee and railway minister Mamata Banerjee seeking Sibal's help.

The Centre has decided to offer a one-year bridge course to 16,759 students who have passed 12th class with 50% marks and who have a one-year diploma. To 7,080 students who scored less than 50% in class 12, the government will allow at least five attempts to improve scores through open schools. The remaining 7,302 students who are only 10th pass will be asked to appear for the class 12 exam through open schools. Once they attain the minimum qualification, they would be eligible for the bridge course.

NCTE has also granted certain concessions to PTTIs to enable them to earn recognition. Once recognised, these institutions will not only be able to offer the bridge course to affected students, but also provide regular pre-service training to teachers.

“If states do not adhere to norms, how will we maintain quality? We expect states to cooperate and follow the norms for teachers training,” Sibal said.

**Source:** [DNA](#), 6 Nov 2009

### **Companies may be allowed to set up universities**

These non-profit multi-disciplinary institutions will have to be registered under Section 25 of Companies Act.

The government is planning to permit corporate houses to set up higher educational institutions — like multi-disciplinary universities and colleges — by floating a separate not-for-profit entity under Section 25 of the Companies Act 1956.

A not-for-profit entity is one that does not distribute its surplus funds to owners or shareholders. It, instead, reinvests these in the institute. Many private universities in India have been set up under Section 25 of the Companies Act. However, deemed universities are not covered by the Act.

“We have received requests demanding this route. The government is exploring the possibility, as it could be allowed under Section 25 of the Companies Act,”

confirmed Sunil Kumar, Joint secretary, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), on the sidelines of the Ficci summit on higher education. MHRD officials, too, acknowledged that the Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal was keen on the entry of companies through this route.

At present, educational institutions in India can be set up only by trusts, societies or companies, and it is not possible for non-profit companies, like industry associations, under Section 25 of the Companies Act, to set up institutions and get recognition from the University Grants Commission. In the primary and secondary education space, however, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) allowed companies registered under the Act to start private unaided schools last year.

Some higher education institutions have taken this route in the technical education space to escape policing by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) — the body that regulates technical education in the country. For instance, many management schools have gone the Indian School of Business (ISB) way, opting for a one-year management programme (against the conventional two-year courses), and have registered themselves under Section 25 of the Act.

The Mumbai Business School (MBS), which began operations in suburban Mumbai a few months ago, is a case in point. The school is registered under the Act as a private entity. Its promoters include A Mahendran, managing director, Godrej Sara Lee, and Santosh Desai, CEO, Future Brands.

This measure, industry observers reason, could provide more power to non-government organisations (NGOs) to enter into mainstream education rather than merely being supplementary-aiding centres. NGOs have been viewed as ‘aids’ to the formal education sector. Very few of them have received recognition as schools or colleges.

Educational institutions in India, which are set up by trusts or societies come under the purview of the Charity Commissioner, who is appointed by a state government. Section 25 of the Act, on the other hand, comes under the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), thus reinforcing the control of the Centre and not the state over the manner in which the institutions are run and financed.

However, in both the structures — non-profit or society and trust — profits cannot be taken out of the institution and have to be reinvested. Institutions registered under the Act have to use their profits, if any, in promoting the institutions. The Act also prohibits the payment of any dividend to its members. The association may enjoy all the privileges of charitable trusts, but are scrutinised by the Income-Tax Department and not Charity Commissioner, unlike limited companies.

MHRD says it is still studying the way out for students if an institution set up under the Act winds up and its assets are to be transferred to another similar institution. “As of today,

if an institution set up by a society winds up, its operation and properties are transferred to another institution. But in this case, we are still studying what route a non-profit entity could acquire if it faces a similar issue," added an HRD official.

Experts add, this arrangement will allow standards for centrally-administered institutes to be cleared by one central authority rather than different standards for different states.

**Source:** [Business-standard](#)/Nov, 9, 2009

### **Demand for govt. schools to be leased out to Pvt. education providers**

Nuts and bolts of the right to education law is still being put in place but the HRD ministry is getting serious suggestions from a host of private education providers to implement the concept of 'charter schools' in India.

The ministry is unlikely to fall for charter schools and a formal response will be given out soon. However, sources said these schools had shown mixed results in the US and elsewhere but were being pushed in India by a strong private sector school lobby to skirt the mandated 25% reservation that all schools have to give to underprivileged children under the RTE Act. Charter schools were against the concept of equity and access, the source said.

Started in the US in 1991, charter schools simply mean leasing the administration and management of government schools to private education providers and NGOs while the funding is done by the state. The only responsibility of private education providers is the promise of better results which is made part of the charter. In case of India, it would mean handing over 1.3 million government-run primary and secondary schools to NGOs and private sector. The argument for charter schools, sources said, was based on poor performance of government schools and the growing tendency even in small towns and villages to put children in private schools.

But ministry sources pointed out that free-market ideology and freedom of choice could not be used to hand over government schools to private sector. Basing their argument on studies done on charter schools in the US, sources listed reasons why this model would not work in India. These schools become for-profit charter schools undermining the role of state in imparting free and compulsory education to all. In US, many states like Wisconsin, California, Michigan and Arizona allowed for-profit corporations to run charter schools resulting in profits being diverted instead of investing it back on education. A National Education Association study showed that for-profit charter schools rarely outperformed traditional state schools.

Ministry sources also pointed to studies that showed charter schools increased competition among schools in an area. At the same time, a study by American Federation of Teachers found that students attending charter schools did not fare any better or worse statistically

in reading and maths scores than students attending public schools.

The Caroline Hoxby study on educational outcome was the only one that said charter school students did better than their counterparts in public schools. However, her study ran into controversy and she had to supplement her first report but the methodology was still considered suspect.

**Source:** [The Times of India](#), 9 Nov 2009

### **Engg fees to be linked with college's performance**

The key performance indicators (KPIs) devised by the director of technical education (DTE) for grading engineering colleges will be a crucial determining factor in the fixation of fees by the Shikshan Shulka Samiti (fee fixation panel).

Panel's office secretary P E Gaikwad said, "We are seriously contemplating giving incentives like apt raise in fees for the performing institutions. A positive decision will be taken soon and colleges meeting the KPIs will benefit to a great extent." Gaikwad said that from this year (2009-10), the fee panel has introduced an incentive of 3 to 5 per cent hike in tuition fees for professional colleges which offer courses accredited by the National Board Accreditation (NBA).

For instance, colleges having 50 per cent of their courses accredited by the NBA can effect a three per cent hike while those having 100 per cent of their courses accredited; qualify for a 5 per cent hike in tuition fees. Addressing a meeting on engineering education at the Vishwakarma Institute of Technology (VIT), the state directorate of technical education's (DTE) quality assurance cell chief Sangeeta Joshi unveiled the KPI programme, which has been finalised and proposed for clearance by the state government.

Higher and technical education secretary J S Saharia confirmed that a formal government resolution relating to the KPIs and its implementation would be issued soon.

According to Joshi, "The KPIs are the mechanism for monitoring performance of engineering institutions and a vital tool for identifying the best institutions, which can be used for mentoring other institutes, networking and resource sharing. All these objectives are aimed at improving quality of engineering education."

The programme is to be implemented through an independent online web-based portal and will cover three major areas viz. 1) human resources (HR) and infrastructure development, which are proposed to be linked with the fee fixation; 2) academic and professional output and 3) governance and socio-industry interaction.

Joshi said, "A cumulative tally of marks will eventually determine the grade for a given institution. For instance, those scoring 85 pc and above will be graded 'A' category institutions while those scoring 70 to 84 pc and 60 and 69

pc will fall in the 'B' and 'C' grades, respectively. Colleges scoring below 60 pc will be categorised under D' grade."

The below C' grade institutions won't be allowed any variation in their student intake or start of new course, she said, adding, if they fail to improve for another two years, their continuation as engineering institutions won't be recommended to the All India Council for Technical Education. "The universities too will be asked to take action like de-affiliation against institutions that are in existence for seven or more years but still end up scoring below C' grade in the KPI programme," she said.

Under the academic and professional output, factors like number of students making it to the final year exam; average result of final year students in last three years; campus placements; patents; paper publication in international refereed journals as well as national journals; number of projects received; consultancy and testing project; involvement of industry professionals in the institutes activity; number of industrial visits and technologies developed and transferred to community will carry varied marks depending on the location of an institution and other influencing factors.

Similarly, representation of industry and academic professional on an institution's board; management help in developing faculty; active MoUs with the industry for academic development of an institution; office automation; faculties deputed on foreign training; extra curricular activity and redressal of grievance mechanism will be crucial factors under the governance and socio-industry head, she added.

**Source:** [The Times of India](#), 8 Nov 2009

### **FICCI Higher Education Summit 2009**

*"Indian education opportunity is huge, but needs home-grown innovative solutions," says Kapil Sibal*

The FICCI Higher Education Summit 2009 began on November 6 at FICCI's Federation House in New Delhi. The inaugural session had Union Minister for Human Resource Development Mr. Kapil Sibal and Prof. Richard Levin, President, Yale University, USA as the key speakers. Giving company to these two stalwarts were Dr. Amit Mitra, Secretary General, FICCI; Mr. Harsh Pati Singhania, President, FICCI; Prof. H.S. Ballal, Pro-Chancellor, Manipal University and Mr. Steven J White, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of the United States of America.

MBAUniverse.com is the official 'Online Partner' of this conference.

The enlightening speech by Mr. Kapil Sibal left the audience spell-bound. His speech touched upon several important issues, such as migration of our top brains to foreign shores, population explosion, providing accessibility to education to all, making higher education affordable and all-inclusive, problems in the Indian education system, and many other significant issues.

He said, "Today 220 million children are able to go to school and out of them only 26 million reach college, which is just 12%. Our aim in the nearest future is to bring this percentage to 30%. Today is the time that can be a good starting point for India."

Commenting on the existing higher education infrastructure, he said that it is not of best quality. To bridge the gap between number of students going to school and the number of students going to training colleges we need to have quality infrastructure that is spread across the length and breadth of this country.

"Stakeholders from the society, entrepreneurs, NGOs, all have to be part of this higher education delivery system. The task is daunting. We also need to focus on the 150 million children who do not go to school. Government alone can't achieve the goal of education for all," he said, emphasizing the need for collaboration in education.

He stressed upon developing homegrown models for achieving the overall objectives in higher education. "We can create world-class universities only by collaboration with the industry and other global producers of knowledge. We need homegrown models to achieve our goals. Sitting in New York you can't find solution to the traffic problem in New Delhi!"

Mr. Sibal also called upon the members of the academia to support the development of Innovation Universities. "These universities will not just produce knowledge, but also contribute to the development of critical thinking of students. We are crying for solutions to our big problems, these universities will bring solutions by critical thinking."

His speech put special emphasis on the need for collaboration between providers of education and the industry. "There is enormous economic activity in our country today. It is in the interest of education providers to collaborate, to partner for expanding our educational infrastructure. Foreign universities are also welcome to collaborate with us to contribute to this expansion. On our part we will provide the best policy framework and adequate compensations to all. Collaborations and public private partnerships would be the key to building world class universities in India".

He also informed the gathering that the government is keen to introduce the Foreign Education Providers Bill in the Parliament. Once the bill is passed, foreign institutions will be able to come here and set up campuses or offer courses in partnership with Indian institutes.

The government has made significant progress in persuading US universities to partner with Indian institutes or set up campuses here. Mr. Sibal had earlier led a delegation to the US and had met the functionaries of leading universities, which expressed keenness to come to India. "It was a successful trip to the US. The American institutions have shown great interest in opening of the education sector in India," Sibal said.

Prof. H S Ballal gave several suggestions to the HRD ministry for the improvement of higher education,

presenting dismal figures of expenditure on education. “The global average expenditure on education is 4.5 per cent of GDP. For developing countries, it is 4.4 per cent. However, in India it is only 3.6 per cent of which a mere 0.7 per cent is spent on higher education,” he quoted. “The issue of expansion and inclusion can be addressed by promoting public-private partnerships...the expansion has to see new providers gaining acceptance, namely, private players, public-private initiatives and foreign players.”

The attendees at the conference were vice-chancellors of various universities, registrars, deans, professors, and education experts from the private sector. There were 31 delegates from the partner country USA. The significant event witnessed a good response with a footfall of more than 700, which included many school and college students who visited the exhibition and the seminars on higher education opportunities.

**Source:** New Delhi [/mbauniverse/](#)7 November 2009

### Fixing higher education

*It's time to focus on quality too*

The burgeoning demand for graduates as economic growth accelerates has been encouraging Minister for Human Resource Development Kapil Sibal to examine more innovative ways of involving the private sector, especially in higher and technical education. This is sensible in as much as the government lacks the financial wherewithal to focus on this sector when the claims from primary education are much more pressing. So his latest suggestion that the government could amend Section 25 of the Companies Act to allow corporations and industry associations to set up universities should be applauded.

Currently, corporations can set up educational institutions only through trusts, which means they have to re-invest the profits and come under the purview of the Charity Commissioner. Section 25 of the Companies Act does not differ significantly from the trust system. Institutions set up under this Act, too, can only reinvest profits but they will come under the scrutiny of the Central Board of Direct Taxes. But the big difference is that the Section 25 institutions will now be eligible for University Grants Commission (UGC) approval.

In a sense, Mr Sibal is pushing at an open door. For one, government investment in higher education has been declining since the nineties even as enrollment numbers have zoomed, suggesting that the private sector is playing a bigger role here than before. For another, the private sector has been openly thirsting for a bigger piece of the higher and technical education action. But meeting numerical targets is one thing — indeed, it is worth considering that India has the largest higher education system in the world after China and the United States. The bigger issue that Mr Sibal will have to address is the quality of the universities that come up.

It is no revelation that the rise in the number of institutions of higher learning in the nineties and 2000s has not seen a

commensurate rise in quality. As Prime Minister Manmohan Singh admitted in a lecture at his alma mater, Panjab University, last week, “A major problem that we face is in the quality of higher education that our institutions impart. Unfortunately, most of them produce pass-outs who are nowhere near international standards.” Partly because a graduate degree has been the minimum qualification for any white-collar job, most universities, whether publicly or privately funded, remain inefficient teaching shops innocent of the rigours of seminal research or innovations that form the foundation of a robust higher education system.

Considering that the private sector already delivers more than half the education services in India — in medical and engineering, the proportion crosses 80 per cent — it is clear that it has not been a notable contributor to quality, so amending Section 25 is unlikely to fix this issue. The urgent problem that Mr Sibal needs to address, therefore, is a regulatory one. Questions need to be raised about UGC's role as a watchdog that promotes academic rigour rather than a dispenser of approvals that hark back to the licence raj. So far, it's been a system that indirectly encourages all manner of dodgy practices from capitation fees to fake degrees from fly-by-night private institutions cashing in on exploding demand. Reforming the regulatory system will undoubtedly be harder than opening the floodgates to private investment in education. But if Mr Sibal wants to find durable solutions to India's education system, he needs to fix what's broken first.

**Source:** New Delhi [/business-standard/](#)15 November 2009

### Higher Education Council holds first meeting

The first meeting of the Karnataka State Council for Higher Education (SCHE) was held on Wednesday, with Higher Education Minister Aravind Limbavali chairing the body that is expected to be the apex body for higher education in the state.

The inaugural meeting saw discussions on how to provide teeth to SCHE, effective administrative structure and problems facing the state. SCHE Vice-Chairman and former Mangalore University Vice-Chancellor IM Savadatti said the council had been envisioned in the National Policy on Education, 1986, according to which the body was to coordinate with the state and central governments and regulatory bodies like UGC and AICTE to improve higher education in Karnataka.

He also called for legislative backing to strengthen SCHE. “In states like Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, there are legislative acts which give these bodies authority. Once an act is passed, we will have authority to take decision,” he said.

In response, Limbavali said legislative backing was being looked into, but more importantly, the council should have an impact on the quality of higher education.

He said they need not follow the model of neighbouring states. “We should adopt whatever will work for Karnataka,” he said.

When the floor was open to the council members to list out the main problems higher education was facing, autonomy was on the lips of most members. Legislative Council member and PES Institutions chairman MR Doreswamy said autonomy, along with strengthening research, was the biggest challenge faced by varsities.

Former VTU V-C Balaveera Reddy said autonomy needed to be extended to teachers.

**Source:** Bangalore [/expressbuzz/](#)5 November 2009

### HRD taskforce to tackle faculty shortage in universities

Having advanced the gross enrollment ratio in higher education to a highly ambitious 16% by the end of 11th Plan, HRD ministry has set up a new taskforce to come with a solution to deal with acute faculty shortage and work out an incentive plan aimed at better remuneration and greater societal respect.

To be headed by Sanjay Dhande, director, IIT-Kanpur, the taskforce will consist of K K Aggarwal, formerly of Indraprastha University, Delhi; V Kanan, pro vice-chancellor, Hyderabad University, and Chiranjib Sen of IIM-Ahmedabad. University Grants Commission secretary R K Chauhan will be the member-secretary. The taskforce is likely to give its interim report within a month.

On Saturday, UGC chairman Sukhdeo Thorat had informed Parliament's consultative committee about the formation of the taskforce as a serious effort to deal with faculty shortage at a time when a major expansion of higher education is in progress. Ministry sources said faculty shortage had to be dealt with in a serious manner.

"Kapil Sibal has advanced the GER target of 16% to the end of 11th Plan and pegged 2016-17 target to 30%. It would mean massive recruitment of teachers in central and state universities. Therefore, there is a need to give it top priority," a source said. The current GER is 7%-8%.

Dhande told the Times of India that the twin issues of faculty shortage and lack of incentive for college and university teachers had been afflicting higher education for a long time. "Unlike the manufacturing sector where productivity is quantified, measurement of productivity of teachers is a difficult thing. We are collecting data," Dhande said.

As for incentive, Dhande said, it was not only about salary but also respect. "It is a broad issue. So there is a need to create a broad strategy and come with a solution that not only talks of financial remuneration but also carries respect. There is a need to reposition teaching profession. Only then more and more people will get attracted to it," he said.

Dhande said the traditional rule of demand and supply was not working in case of higher education teaching.

"Remuneration is not high because of regulation. Whereas in unregulated market, salary is high but this has become uncontrolled. A way out has to be found," he said.

**Source:** New Delhi [/timesofindia/](#)9 November 2009

### Indian students can appear in international test in 2012

Come 2012, school students from India will be able to gauge their level of scholastic performance compared to their global counterparts. India for the first time will participate in Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), a triennial world-wide test for 15-year-old school children being held by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT), which is the nodal agency for conducting the test, has decided to carry out a pilot test in the pattern of PISA in Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu this year.

"We will conduct a pilot test this year. This will help us in conducting PISA in 2012," a senior NCERT official said.

The questions will be of PISA standards in the pilot test and will assess the competence of students in reading, science and mathematics. This will be a text free exam in which questions on the related subjects will be asked, he said.

"By this test, our school children can know where they stand in the world with regard to performance," Singh said.

The first PISA assessment was held in 2000 when about 2,65,000 students from 32 countries appeared in the test. Over 2,75,000 students took part in PISA in 2003, which was conducted in 41 countries. In 2006, 57 countries participated in PISA.

**Source:** New Delhi [/timesofindia/](#)5 November 2009

### Is HRD going soft on deemed universities?

All deemed universities with funny names making tall claims can breathe easy for HRD ministry is unlikely to take any drastic action against them.

Realising that the report of its deemed university review committee is impossible to implement because of its serious findings and recommendations, the ministry has now asked the panel to make "additional observations" much after the report has been handed over to HRD minister Kapil Sibal. It was Sibal who was keen on setting the deemed universities right. The "additional observations", which in effect would mean diluting the HRD committee's report, would make it easier for the ministry to take action against the below par institutions.

In fact, an official said, "No drastic action will be taken. All below par deemed universities are likely to get more time for improvement."

The official, who did not wish to be identified, said, "The review committee report in the present form will raise a big controversy. Many of the institutions in Tamil Nadu and other states, without the necessary academic and other infrastructure, have political patronage. HRD ministry cannot take any action on the report. Therefore, it was felt that new observations be added."

The ministry's committee had said that more than 40 universities, most of them private, did not deserve the deemed status. The committee found only 38 deemed universities to have excellent infrastructure and 44 could

retain the deemed status after improving certain aspects of infrastructure, research and administration. The rest, a little over 40, the committee said, were not fit to retain deemed university status. Sources said that of the deemed universities that did not deserve deemed status, three are in Haryana and two each in Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh. The bulk of deemed universities not found fit are in South India, especially Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

Early this week, members of the ministry's review committee met Sibal where it was decided to find a way out so that even though the ministry was seen to be taking action, the deemed universities do not face any immediate crisis.

The committee members have now been requested to bring the report in sync with the UGC's review committee report. Despite pointing out deficiencies in many deemed universities, the UGC panel had recommended that they be given three years to put their house in order.

Another reason for HRD's eagerness to make its report in sync with UGC report is the fact that legally the ministry cannot take action against deemed universities on the basis of its own review committee report. Since deemed universities are given the status on the advice of UGC, even action against them should be based on the latter's recommendation. The UGC review report comes in handy here. "So an effort is being made to bring the ministry report in line with the UGC report. This will make it easier for HRD to take action," an official said.

**Source:** New Delhi [/timesofindia/](#)12 November 2009

### More Indians graduate in maths, science than in US, Japan

India's infrastructure on education may have a long way to go to reach global standards, but when it comes to the sheer number of students graduating in maths and science, the country outperforms the US, Europe and Japan, says a new study.

India, in fact, ranks 17th based on this parameter, against 48 for the US, 33 for Japan and 38 for China, says the study by Ernst and Young, conducted jointly with the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Assocham).

Germany, according to the study, ranks first, followed by Singapore and France.

"The number of science and engineering graduates is an important consideration. There are 690,000 students of science and maths graduating every year — much higher than China, Japan, the US and Europe," said D.S. Rawat, secretary general of Assocham.

"In China, the number of such graduates each year is 530,000, against 350,000 in Japan, 420,000 in the US and 470,000 in the EU," added Rawat, while releasing the study Thursday.

Some key facts about Indian education system highlighted by the study are:

- More than 2.3 million graduates every year
- Nearly 750,000 post-graduates per annum
- Second largest pool of scientists and engineers in the world
- Second largest number of trained doctors
- As many as 389 universities, 14,169 colleges and 1,500 research institutions

According to the study, changes in the education system were also necessary to meet the exacting demands of a knowledge economy. The exam system also needs to be overhauled to base it more on solving problem than in enhancing memorising capabilities of students.

"If higher education in India is liberalised with massive expansion of professional education and more institutions under public-private initiatives, the system can be completely transformed to acquire well established global standards," said Rawat.

Research institutions should be encouraged to incubate enterprises through a Rs.5,000-crore (over \$1-billion) fund. An expenditure of 3 percent of gross domestic product for research is needed to encourage innovation and to nurture original ideas and thinking.

**Source:** New Delhi [/blog.taragana/](#)5 November 2009

### Parliamentary Consultative Committee of Ministry of Labour & Employment discusses Initiatives in Skill Development

The Union Minister of Labour & Employment Minister, Shri Mallikarjun Kharge has said that the Government is committed to achieve the target of imparting skill development training to fifty crore people by the year 2022 to meet the growing demands of the trade and industry in the years to come. He said that 17 Ministries/Departments and Organizations are gearing up to offer various training programmes to achieve this ambitious target and to meet the requirement of skilled persons for sectors under their control.

Shri Kharge said that the Ministry of Labour and Employment will work towards achieving the target of training ten crore person by the year 2022. He was addressing the meeting of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee attached to his Ministry held here late last evening.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that under the "National Policy on Skill Development" announced earlier this year, a "National Skill Development Coordination Board" has also been constituted under the chairmanship of the Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission besides the "National Council on Skill Development", constituted earlier under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh.

Shri Kharge also informed the Members that he had already written to all the Chief Ministers of the States to set up State level Skill Missions and so far 18 States have indicated that they have already constituted the Missions.

Emphasizing the importance of skill development, Shri Kharge said that it is only through the proper skill development strategies that the youth of the country can be transformed into great national asset. He said that we can achieve the ideal objectives like the inclusive growth only through generating the productive employment and decent work as per the capabilities of the labour force.

Intervening in the discussion, the Minister of State for Labour and Employment, Shri Harish Rawat said that we must work towards initiating the steps to enhance the share of private sector in skill development programmes. Shri Rawat, however cautioned that it must be ensured that we have an alternative plan ready if we find that private sector investment for skill development initiatives is not forthcoming in the backwards and remote areas.

Participating in the discussion, the Members raised concerned about the growing unemployment and emphasized that the employment exchanges should be modernized at the earliest and industries should be asked to fill their vacancies from the people registered at these exchanges. Some Members suggested that care must be taken that Skill Development Centres are set up in the remote and difficult areas to ensure that the marginalized sections of the society.

Responding to Members' concerns, the Minister said that every effort will be made to set up at least one skill development center in a cluster of seven-eight villages and 50,000 such centers have been envisaged under the Skill Development Policy in Public-private partnership (PPP) mode across the country. He informed the Members that the Planning Commission has already given its 'in-principle' approval to set up 1500 ITIs in PPP mode.

The Director General of Employment & Training, Shri Sharda Prasad made a Presentation to the Committee on "Promoting Skill Development". He explained various challenges faced by the skill development system and initiatives taken by the Ministry.

Shri P.C. Chaturvedi, Secretary (Labour & Employment) in his concluding remarks expressed his gratitude to the Members for their active participation in the meeting and giving valuable suggestions.

The Members who attended the Meeting were: S/Shri A.V. Adsul, R.K. Singh Patel, Gurudas Das Gupta, Ram Sundar Das, Kamlesh Paswan, N. Peethambara Kurup, Badri Ram Jakhar (all from the Lok Sabha) and S/Shri Mohammed Amin, Narain Singh Kesari and Shriram Pal (all from the Rajya Sabha).

**Source:** New Delhi [pib.nic.in/](http://pib.nic.in/) 12 November 2009

### **Prime Minister's Speech at the Special Convocation of the Panjab University**

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh was honoured with the degree of Doctor of Law (Honoris Causa) at a special convocation of Panjab University, Chandigarh today. On this occasion he also laid the foundation stone of

multipurpose Auditorium cum Examination Centre of the University. Following is the text of the Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh's address on the occasion:

"Forgive me for being a bit emotional as I see before me a number of distinguished personalities with whom I have been associated for a very long time.

It is always a pleasure to visit one's alma-mater and I am delighted to be here with you today. As all of you know, I am deeply indebted to this great university for whatever I have achieved. I spent some of the best years of my life here. I have no hesitation in saying that the education I received in Panjab University has played a major part in whatever I have achieved in life. It is, therefore, with great humility that I have received today's recognition. I will always cherish an honor.

Panjab University has a long tradition of pursuing excellence in teaching and research in science and technology, humanities, social sciences, performing arts and sports. I recall with gratitude the great contribution that was made by Dewan Nand Kumar and Dr. A C Joshi in building up this great Institution. For more than a century, it has served society with great distinction. The rich legacy of this University's 127 years of existence continues to be a source of guidance and inspiration for the present generation of faculty and students. Today, I am very happy to know from the Vice-Chancellor's account that Panjab University is one of the most respected institutions in the country. It can legitimately boast of many accomplished and famous alumni including former Prime Minister Shri Inder Kumar Gujral, Nobel laureate Prof. Har Gobind Khorana, Astronaut Kalpana Chawla and Cricketer Kapil Dev. I truly feel proud to have been associated with this great institution, both as a student and later as a faculty member.

The importance of education in a modern society cannot be over-emphasized. It is not only good in itself but also a potent and powerful tool for empowering people to lead a life of dignity and self-respect. It is also essential for achieving sustained high economic growth. We live in an age where human knowledge is increasing exponentially and countries have to make an effort to remain on the frontiers of knowledge and be counted amongst the advanced nations. Therefore, in the last five years or so the Central Government has made unprecedented efforts for expanding and improving educational facilities at all levels. In fact, I often refer to the Eleventh Five Year Plan as an Education Plan.

In the last three to four years we have added five more IITs. Similarly, a large number of IIMs have been planned which are going to come up in coming two years.

But I do recognize we have a mammoth task ahead in pursuing our goal of providing access to good education to every citizen of our country. This is true of higher education also. At present, in any year, only about 12% of the students who complete secondary education enroll for higher education. This does not at all compare well with the figure of about 70% in some developed countries. It is also much lower than the figure of about 20% in some South

East Asian countries. If India has to march ahead, we must increase this proportion. This is the mandate I gave to the Chairman of UGC on his appointment five years old. We must also address the existing imbalances in our higher education system. Today, nearly half of the institutions of higher learning exist in only five states of our Union, nearly 70% of the total intake capacity for professional courses exists in another five states, there is a large gender gap in enrolments for higher education and there are large intra-State imbalances as well. We must address these deficiencies and do so without any further loss of time.

But this alone would not suffice. A major problem that we face is in the quality of higher education that our institutions impart. Unfortunately, most of them produce pass-outs who are nowhere near international standards. Even if we meet our targets of higher access and enrolment, even if we spend huge amounts on higher education and even if we open a large number of new institutions, this issue of quality will not get addressed by itself. In fact, one dimension of the quality deficit is the difficulty being faced in recruiting top class faculty for the new IIMs, IITs, Central Universities and other such institutions that the Government has decided to establish in the last five years.

Addressing all these problems requires structural reforms in our higher education system to which our government is fully committed. The reports of the National Knowledge Commission, and the "Committee to Advise on Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education" under the chairmanship of Prof. Yashpal, provide the basis for a series of reforms that we intend to undertake in the coming months. This will be in addition to the steps that have already been taken, including the introduction of the semester system, choice based credit system, and merit based admission procedures and continuous internal evaluations. Accreditation has been made compulsory for institutions to get UGC assistance. A review of the Deemed Universities has been initiated in the wake of concerns that some of them may be lagging behind in academic standards.

I made a mention earlier of the problem of getting competent faculty in adequate numbers in our new institutions of higher learning. To address this issue, the Central Government has announced a very progressive pay package for attracting and retaining talented faculty. The University Grants Commission has raised the entry level standards for fresh faculty members and has also started new training programmes for them. The VC was telling me that the University is finding it difficult to pay salaries as per UGC norms. I will look into it and would not like Panjab University to lose faculty for want of competitive salaries.

But I also realize that we may need to do more in this area. Let me assure you today that the government will continue to look for ways and means of ensuring that the faculty in our institutions of higher learning is of a very high quality. They will continue to have adequate facilities to discharge their responsibilities in a creditable manner.

I have just had the opportunity of laying the foundation stone for a new multi-purpose auditorium - cum - examination centre in your campus. I am told that this is part of a series of steps that Panjab University is taking to improve its infrastructure and upgrade its capabilities. I have also been informed that the grant of Rs. 50 crore announced in this year's Central Budget speech will be utilized for renovation of buildings, expansion of library facilities, and for two Centres of Excellence in Science & Technology and Social Sciences respectively. Promotion of interdisciplinary teaching, research training and consultancy, including setting up of four new interdisciplinary centres, is another new initiative that the University has taken and for which I complement the VC. I am happy with this record of progress and I am confident of the bright future of this great institution, which already has the status of a "University with Potential for Excellence in Bio Medical Sciences". I compliment the Vice Chancellor, faculty, staff and students of Panjab University for their contribution in enabling this great institution to maintain its position of eminence in our country.

To the students who are present here today I would say that you should consider yourself privileged to be studying in one of the best universities in our country. I hope you will make the most of this unique opportunity. I wish you all success in your academic careers and also in your professional life to follow. I also hope that you will turn out to be good citizens, repaying at least in part to society and to your country what they have invested in you.

Let me end by once again telling you how happy I have felt today to visit my alma-mater. I hope I will have more such opportunities in the future. Let me also wish the Panjab University and all of you all the very best for the future. May God be with you."

**Source:** Chandigarh [/pib.nic.in/](http://pib.nic.in/) 3 November 2007

### Privatise higher education?

Quality higher education is emerging as a hugely profitable business opportunity. A range of private enterprises, from India's largest, largest-hearted and best-run companies to fly-by-night operators, are making a beeline for the sector.

It is neither feasible nor desirable for the state to stem this tide. Rather, the state's role should be to modulate this enthusiasm to maximise social welfare. The first step should be to dump the fairy tale that education is a sacred mission and cannot be permitted to be a business. Allow companies to run educational institutions as well-run businesses that have transparent accounts and declare dividends.

But do so in the full knowledge that there is not even a single for-profit institution among the world's best universities. Entry of private funds into higher education is not a case for the state to withdraw from the sector. Rather, the state must deepen its involvement and give it a different shape. Higher education is an expensive business. A good part of the cost has to be realised from the students by way of realistic fees.

At the same time, it must be ensured that lack of funds does not kill the college dreams of any deserving high school graduate. A large part of government funding for education must be in the form of liberal scholarships. Securitised student loans with government backing would bring down the cost of education loans and these must be liberally available.

Universal identity codes would facilitate high repayment rates. But the biggest state push for broadening the base of quality higher education should take the form of new and numerous publicly-funded universities. America's so-called Land Grant universities, set up by state governments with federal funding, are a good way to go. The liberal arts and social sciences are unlikely to receive the attention they deserve in higher education funded entirely by the private sector and must get state funding.

Nation-wide common testing would be essential to determine eligibility for college admission and financial aid as also to measure, on a common scale, the outcome of a diverse graduation system. This could be a federal responsibility, along with a voluntary board of accreditation, whose value could be left to students and employers to judge.

**Source:** New Delhi [/economictimes/](#)3 November 2009

Sibal plans to pull global students in CBSE schools

Human resource development minister Kapil Sibal is tinkering with the idea of transforming India's national education board — the Central Board of Secondary Education — into an international board. Just like the International Baccalaureate (IB) and the Cambridge

International Examinations, the 'international' CBSE would reach out to students across the world as an alternate system of learning and evaluation.

Praise for India's secondary education system from US secretary of education Arne Duncan appears to have given further impetus to this idea.

The plan, senior ministry official said, is at a conceptual stage. "We are working things out. No deadlines have been set. There is a lot of work that needs to be done." The first order of business would be to internationalise the curriculum. "After all, why a student in Ethiopia should be studying Indian history".

Alongside, the quality issue should also be addressed. This would mean setting up parameters for the standards that schools will have to meet to remain affiliated to CBSE. The parameters would mandate requirements in terms of infrastructure, teaching staff and facilities for students.

The existing international systems like the IB and Cambridge have rigorous assessments before schools are taken on. CBSE would have to set up similar and rigorous systems.

The argument is that CBSE already has a global brand, with schools affiliated to it spread across 23 countries. The aim now is to internationalise CBSE so that it becomes an option for not just Indians or Indian expat students.

Leveraging on its global presence, CBSE will now seek to become the "best gateway for higher education in India".

"The focus will be on countries that send a large number of students to India for higher studies. Just like students opt for IB and Cambridge examinations to improve their options for admissions to universities in the US and UK, students opting for India as destination for higher education will opt for CBSE," a ministry official said. This would make Africa, West Asia and South East Asia, the initial catchment area for the "international CBSE".

The CBSE school-leaving certificate is recognised by leading universities across the world. An improved curriculum would necessarily increase the board's standing. Additionally, the lower cost, as compared to IB and Cambridge, for a world-class school-leaving programme would also be a factor that would appeal to students, especially in developing countries.

The idea of transforming CBSE into an international board is part of the effort to make India a global education player. Sources said this effort is also part of the reform process in school education that is currently being undertaken by the ministry.

**Source:** New Delhi [/economictimes/](#)5 November 2009

### Three Delhi schools issued notice on admission of poor students

The Delhi High Court Thursday issued notices to three private schools for not giving admissions to students from economically weak families.

A division bench comprising Justices A.K. Sikri and Siddharth Mridul issued notices to Modern School, Indian School and Frank Anthony Public school for not complying with the court's order of giving admission to students from weak financial background.

The court was hearing a public interest petition filed by Social Jurist, an NGO, which said the schools were allotted public land on concessional rates on the condition that they would also admit students from economically weaker sections.

Ashok Aggarwal, counsel for Social Jurist, said there were complaints that some schools do not issue admission forms to parents of such children.

**Source:** New Delhi [/prokerala.com/](#)5 November 2009

### UGC announces common entrance test for deemed varsities

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has issued directives to the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) to conduct admissions in the deemed universities on the basis of an entrance exam while the admission fees should be regulated according to the proposal setup by the fee fixation panels.

Last year, the UGC had set up a committee under Pondicherry University Vice Chancellor Prof. J.A.K. Tareen to examine the admission process and fee structure in the

institutes which were under UGC's lens to acquire the deemed status.

The changes recommended by the committee has been accepted by both UGC and HRD Ministry's review committee, comprising of four members, set up under the reign of HRD Minister Mr. Kapil Sibal to study the functioning of all 127 deemed universities in the country.

"Admissions and high fees are two major accusations against the deemed universities. At least for medical and engineering programmes, the UGC committee is in favor of conducting an all-India based entrance exam for admissions while the deemed universities can conduct their entrance exams individually. The basic idea is to increase the transparency in the admission process," said an official.

However, adding on to his comment he also cited that, "It has been recommended that the fees should be pre-determined either by a national- or a state-level fee fixation committee."

Improvisation in the admission procedures too falls in the recommendation of Ministry's review committee report that has although finished its work but its details are yet to be public. It has also advocated to taper the difference of fees in government-aided institutes and deemed universities.

The HRD committee, while pointing out the shortcomings of the deemed universities, commented that around 127 of them are not par with their quality of education and faculty and needs upgradation in a big way in order to hold on to their deemed status.

Unlike the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) and Prof. Yashpal Committee's advisory on Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education to scrap the 'deemed to be university' system altogether, the HRD committee has advised to focus "less on business and more on academics."

Apart from the Tareen committee, the UGC, which is also conducting the inspection on the deemed universities, has been less critical of the situation.

Submitting its report to the ministry for 70-odd universities, it has found it lacking on the compliance issues.

**Source:** New Delhi [indiaedunews.net/](http://indiaedunews.net/)2 November 2009

#### **UGC asks DU to grade colleges**

The introduction of the grading system for the colleges of Delhi University is imminent. Vice-chancellor Deepak Pental has put this proposal on the agenda of the Academic Council meeting scheduled for November 9.

In 2004, the UGC had asked DU to implement this system but it was opposed by the teachers and could not be implemented at that time. The UGC has again sent a letter to DU, asking it to implement the accreditation system.

The grading system for the colleges of Delhi University will decide the amount of funds provided by the University Grant Commission to the colleges. The UGC has made an agency, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council, award grades in the form of stars to the colleges.

The grades will be awarded on the basis of performance and infrastructure in the colleges. The college having excellent infrastructure will get five stars from NAAC.

According to the accreditation system, the higher the grading stars, the higher will be the grant to the college given by the UGC. The Delhi University Teachers Association is against this proposal.

According to J Khuntia, teacher representative on the Academic Council, "The implementation of the accreditation system will give rise to inequality. Two institutions cannot be judged by star grades as they differ in their infrastructures, percentage of students and other facilities. When the infrastructure is differing in various colleges due to historical reasons then they cannot be judged by grades. This system will create star colleges and starved colleges".

Khuntia further said that DU is an eminent institute and it is a decade old institution established by the Government and does not need accreditation from other agency. While mentioning private universities, Khuntia said, "Lovely Professional University was established by a sweets-maker. As he was having a lot of money, he invested it in an educational institution and has an excellent infrastructure with a swimming pool so the university got five stars from NAAC but what about the colleges which are having good faculty and results but do not have high class infrastructure?"

NAAC grades colleges on various parameters. The performance of the colleges will be judged on the issues like academic improvement, improvement of library and strengthening of laboratories and the examination system.

The DUTA has always been positioning itself against this system. DUTA president Aditya Narayan Mishra said, "There is need to strengthen higher education in the country. But the accreditation system is stamping the colleges and the students. St Stephen's College and Shyamlal College are extremely different from each other in every sense and judging them on the same parameters will be wrong".

Principal of Ramjas College Rajendra Prasad said, "Each college of Delhi University is doing well. With accreditation system, the university can be judged among world universities and if we want to bring DU to the global level then we have to implement this system. Why should India lag behind?"

**Source:** New Delhi [dailypioneer/](http://dailypioneer/)5 November 2009

#### **UGC under fire for too many 'deemed' tags**

Government-appointed panel says many institutes not adhering to UGC guidelines were awarded the status

Under fire over the grant of deemed university status to private educational institutions, India's top education regulator is now facing criticism by a government-appointed panel for the approvals.

The findings come after another panel appointed by the University Grants Commission (UGC), the regulator for higher education in India, gave a clean chit to several such universities.

In its report to be submitted to human resource development minister Kapil Sibal, who oversees education, the government committee has said that out of the 137 such institutions under review, most were found to be violating the norms for faculty, infrastructure and academic courses. The report says the running of study centres by such universities is the “biggest blunder”.

“There is no assurance of quality control. We found that not even quality faculty were recruited,” said a member of the committee, who requested anonymity since he is not authorized to speak with the media. “These (study centres) have become a means to make money at the cost of students.”

An official at the human resource development ministry, who is involved in the issue but declined to be named, confirmed the findings of the committee.

In several deemed universities, the report says, irregularities in fee structures and appointment of administrative officials were discovered. “In fact, when we started the probe, many universities appointed new vice-chancellors even as predecessors remained kin or friends of families running such universities,” the member said.

The review of deemed universities was ordered soon after Sibal assumed charge as minister in May this year, responding to which UGC had constituted its own committee to look into the matter.

The objections came after a flurry of deemed university approvals by UGC.

The status is a coveted one in higher education and allows institutes to free themselves from government control.

In the last four years of the previous United Progressive Alliance government, as legislation to both regulate private colleges and open the education sector to foreign investment were stalled, UGC granted deemed university status to a record 34 institutions.

Out of this number, only six are government-run; the rest are private institutions.

The status used to be awarded mostly to institutes that have been in operation for 25 years. This was later revised to enable 10-year-old institutions to apply for the status.

Of the 28 newly deemed universities, nine were recognized as such through the so-called starting afresh clause introduced by UGC in 2001 to benefit institutes barely a few years old, subject to revision after five years.

As many as 177 more institutes have approached UGC seeking deemed university status, most of them private organizations. Out of these, 38 institutes are less than five years old, seeking the status under the starting afresh category.

The number of deemed institutions thus becomes significant as it represents a way that the government has enabled private organizations to flourish, even as the Private Professional Educational Institutions (Regulation of Admission and Fixation of Fee) Bill, 2005, which would regulate admissions and fees, hasn't been expedited.

The government-appointed panel says that many institutes, which were not adhering to the UGC guidelines in regard to course offerings, were awarded the status. It says politicians or big business houses backed many of the universities that obtained the status.

“It's a welcome step long after we wrote to the ministry objecting to this mushrooming of deemed universities and we hope some concrete action will be take soon,” said Thomas Joseph, president of the All India Federation of University and College Teachers' Organisations, a teachers' union.

But under intense demand for higher education across India and backed by Planning Commission recommendations in favour of financial assistance to deemed universities, UGC has been defending its actions.

UGC chairman Sukhdeo Thorat, in an interview to *Mint* earlier this year, had even defended the mushrooming of deemed universities by calling the growth “steady”.

“This has happened over a period of time,” Thorat had said. “As far as regulation is concerned, we are strict with defaulters.” Thorat, when contacted by *Mint* again, refused to comment, saying he had not yet seen the report by the government-appointed panel.

But the Yash Pal committee, appointed to suggest reforms in the higher education sector, recommended the abolition of the deemed university status to institutions and also called for UGC and the All India Council For Technical Education, which oversees engineering and business schools in India, to be dismantled.

The new administration is now keen on implementing the committee's recommendations, government officials familiar with the issue said on condition of anonymity.

Even before Sibal took charge as the human resource development minister, the UGC chairman had announced several plans for the higher education sector to project the regulator as being proactive, an image that has eluded it for years.

**Source:** New Delhi [/livemint.com/](http://livemint.com/) 2 November 2007

## ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

### 75% Indian engineering students unemployable: Report

Discussing a report by software industry group Nasscom which says that 75 percent engineering students in India are unemployable, education experts here on Saturday said that the Indian higher education system must give skill building and practical training equal importance as academics to give them an edge.

A.D. Sahasrabudhu, director of the College of Engineering, Pune said that one of the major reasons why engineers, even from reputed institutes, are not easily employed because they lack hands-on skill.

“The focus in most institutes here is always on academics and theory. Thus a mechanical engineer may actually not know how to change a part of a machine. Therefore even if

a high scoring student gets placed in a good company, eventually that lack of practical knowledge catches up," Sahasrabudhu said during a panel discussion at the sixth Higher Education Summit organised by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

"From our experience we now know that practical, hands-on training

is very crucial in the education system," he added.

In their latest report released in the last week of October, National Association of Software and Services Companies (Nasscom) said that Indian IT firms reject 90 percent of college graduates and 75 percent of engineers who apply for jobs because they are not good enough to be trained.

And because there is such a dearth of competent people, companies like Infosys increased its training of employees to 29 weeks from this year. That's seven months of training, the report added.

Richard Kerly, a Scottish university professor, who had participated in the discussion said: "Just recently I came to know that Citi Bank had started its recruiting process here, but was not going to campuses placement cells.

"The possible reason is that students here, although brilliant, don't have an edge when it comes to putting theories to practice."

Sudhir Matthew, Dean, Ecole Hoteliere Lavasa, Lavasa Corporation Limited, Pune said: "The scene is very similar in the hospitality industry. Lack of hands-on trained students has forced hotel chains like the Oberoi, Taj and ITC to open their own hotel schools where the students are trained as per their needs.

"Tourism will grow at a rate of 8.8 percent till 2015 in India, making it one of the fastest growing markets but there is a serious lack of skilled hands. Academics combined with practical training is therefore very important to meet this shortage which is estimated at 3.2 million."

**Source:** New Delhi [/economictimes/](#)8 November 2009

### **Bridging the intermediate gap**

A balanced workforce is the key to achieving and more importantly sustaining economic growth. In India, however, the thrust in terms of skill development has been lopsided so far. "While universities and other educational institutes have been conscientious in producing highly skilled and qualified professionals who are engaged in high-end functions, there has been an appalling dearth of initiative to train and upgrade people who are essentially engaged in support functions," observes Chris Humphries, chief executive, UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES).

He cites an example: "While on one hand there is an overflow of research and scientists in the domain of information technology, on the other there is a pressing need for skilled supervisors and quality technicians. This deficit at the middle-level is true for all sectors. For ideas and strategies to effectively generate into tangible

outcomes it is extremely necessary to have an efficient middle rung, as most of the implementation support comes from this cadre of professionals."

According to Humphries, deficit in terms of skill upgradation of the middle or intermediate workforce is a problem faced not just by India but by many countries of the developed world like the UK, Australia and New Zealand as well. And the implications, he says, are quite serious in the long run.

### Common Difference

Although skill shortage at the intermediate level is common to both India and the UK, Humphries believes there are some 'interesting differences' between the two economies that will lead to a slightly different set of repercussions. He adds, "In India, there is a burgeoning young workforce. A sizeable proportion of this is absorbed in the intermediate crust of the economy. Within the next 10 to 15 years, a considerable portion of this workforce should progress qualitatively to the higher strata of the economy. However, if they are not regularly upgraded with new and relevant skills, India will eventually lose out in terms of leveraging the advantage of its young workforce."

The UK, on the other hand, is suffering from a 'fast ageing workforce and diminishing young workforce.' The falling birth rates from the 1990s specifically indicate that young people entering the workforce will be progressively lesser in the near future. "Research has revealed that, currently, training for older workers or managerial level employees in the UK is much more in comparison to training for younger workers. So, in the UK, there is greater need and scope for basic skills training to make young people more employable," opines Humphries.

As for the possible solution, he says, "In many countries, including India, there is a dearth of quality formal institutions that impart vocational skills or provide short-term courses for skill upgradation. For instance, the Industrial Training Institutes are becoming redundant as their curriculum is outdated. So, there is an urgent need to strengthen the system of industry and academia interface."

**Source:** [/timesofindia/](#)2 November 2009

### **Business of Knowledge**

While many disagree about how to fix Indian higher education, there is broad consensus that it is, to quote Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, "in a state of disrepair". Most analyses put the blame squarely on the government's shoulders. Higher education has been deeply politicised and as one of the last bastions of the licence raj, lofty rhetoric has typically disguised egregious venal behaviour.

However, much less attention has been paid to the role of business interests in shaping the direction of Indian higher education. Availability of skilled labour is a critical input for all firms, and hence Indian business has an enormous self-interest in the functioning of this sector. One could argue that just as Indian firms have been forced to adapt to chronic infrastructure shortages and disadvantageous

labour laws, they have also adapted to the weaknesses of the Indian higher education system.

A surrogate higher education system has evolved and, in particular, workforce skill development is occurring outside the traditional domestic university model - within firms, by commercial providers, overseas, through open-source/virtual learning and in narrow specialised institutions. Investment by Indian firms in an array of workforce skill development practices, including new employee training, continual instruction, performance appraisal systems and university partnerships, have all gone a long way towards improving the skills of their workforce. But these practices are confined to the large corporate sector, which both has the capability to undertake such initiatives and can internalise the costs.

Indian business is also involved in provision of higher education. Where business enterprises offer narrow professional skills, such as training in a computer language, this model has been somewhat successful. But the vast majority of private sector efforts involve the promotion of professional education in fields such as medicine, engineering and business management. These are ostensibly not-for-profit institutions set up as trusts or societies, yet they represent some of the worst aspects of crony capitalism in India, with politicians and business interests colluding to provide dubious education at inflated prices. Government policies have ensured that it is easier for such suppliers to enter higher education than for genuine philanthropists. Professional associations, even statutory ones like the BCI and MCI, have largely failed to regulate the quality of these institutions - a testimony to the failure of the professions to self-govern.

But while Indian business has been somewhat successful in securing its short-term interests by aggressively pursuing skill development programmes, it has shown a striking absence of any long-term strategic vision with regard to higher education. No world-class higher education institution anywhere in the world makes profits. Great universities produce knowledge - where knowledge is a public good. Consequently all such institutions require subsidies, whether through the government or private philanthropy. Despite rapidly increasing wealth within the Indian corporate sector, private philanthropy has had very little impact on higher education.

The commitment of Indian business to philanthropy in higher education was strong prior to independence and has dwindled ever since. Pre-independence, business interests not only made the transition from merchant charity to organised professional philanthropy, but did so in a significant way. They created some of India's most enduring trusts, foundations and public institutions, including the Aligarh Muslim University, Banaras Hindu University, Jamia Millia, Annamalai and Indian Institute of Science. Of the 16 largest "non-religious" trusts set up during this period, 14 were major patrons of higher education.

Today, the so-called not-for-profit educational institutions do not engage in philanthropy. Their income comes from fees rather than endowments and investments. Thus even while the number of "trusts" set up for philanthropy in higher education has been steadily rising, the total share of "endowments and other sources" in higher education funding has been consistently falling - from 17 per cent in 1950 to less than 2 per cent today. Some of this decline is to be expected, as the government has expanded its role in higher education, yet the extent is remarkable. Furthermore, donors today are more likely to retain effective control over the resources they contribute.

But Indian business has much to explain for a more egregious failing: for the most part, it sees little value in research and even less in building quality institutions that produce good research. This is manifest most starkly in its unwillingness to fund even world-class think tanks, let alone an outstanding university. The reality is that most Indian business elites' children study abroad, not in India. The sad implication is that this reduces their stake in lending a badly needed voice to genuine higher education reform in India.

It is extraordinary how much energy and capital Indian corporate titans are willing to commit to summits, conclaves and the like, where photo opportunities and power-point presentations pass off as the epitome of deep thinking and real insight. Yet, for all the posturing by Indian business elites and their courting of universities in the West (especially in the US), the notion of Indian business coming together to fund research centres that produce knowledge and provide quality education accessible to all sections of society in India does not seem to be on the horizon.

**Source:** [/timesofindia/](http://timesofindia/)6 November 2009

### **Can privatisation help?**

*With the Right to Education Bill, we will have a need for more schools. We can't leave it to the private sector to meet this demand. Well funded, functional government schools are critical to the successful implementation of the RTE Bill...*

With the Right to Education Bill now awaiting only the signature of the President to become law, children between the ages of six and 14 are about to be guaranteed access to a neighbourhood school. This is good news indeed! But as with all visionary Bills, the question of who will pay for and provide the new schools remains. Those working in the area of educational policy have long debated how to best provide quality education for India's children. There are many who argue that the State alone cannot provide adequate schools and that private providers must be allowed to contribute. Some argue that private providers not only relieve pressure on the State but that they also deliver a higher quality of education than that offered at government schools. The private provision of education is well established in India's cities and towns, though less well established in her villages.

*Critical role*

A field survey was done in 2006 to capture changes in the primary school experience in the previous decade by revisiting villages covered by the PROBE study in the low-literacy States of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. Between 1996 and 2006, we found that total enrolment rates for 6-12 years olds have increased from 80 per cent to 95 per cent. In the same period, we found that there has been a large increase in the number of new government and private schools, and the proportion of government to private schools has shifted from 83:17 to 75:25. But even with private schools making up an increased proportion of schools in the villages surveyed, government schools still educate 8 out of every 10 enrolled children. This figure has remained stable over the decade. Nevertheless, there is a view that private schools are superior to government schools. This discourse is well established in the cities, but is fast catching on in the rural areas too. But is this perception true? Are private schools able to provide high quality education to children across India? Our research shows there are problems of access and quality.

First, we found that private schools are most likely to be established in places where there is already a government school. This does little to improve overall access for children, and mostly acts as a catalyst for the redistribution of students away from government schools. Wealthier and high caste households tend to opt for private education because it appears to offer a superior good — more teaching activity, beginning right from pre-primary level, the inclusion of English as a subject, with visible add-ons such as furniture in classrooms and children dressed in uniforms with ties, belts, and shoes. Private education is very much seen as a status symbol. With the cost of private schooling, as reported by rural households, increasing by almost 50 per cent (Grades 1-5) over the survey period (while costs associated with government schooling in real terms have declined), the choice of private schooling is not an option for most low caste and poor households. The difference in the costs associated with government and private education is therefore a key determinant of schooling choice and promotes the reproduction of social disadvantage as high caste children come to dominate private schools and low caste children dominate government schools. Private schools thrive on building on this base of better nourished children from more educated families. They appear to have less inclination and capacity to cater to children whose families are poor and illiterate, and for whom expected returns from schooling are low and uncertain.

For those children who do access private education, is the quality of the schooling experience superior to that at the local government school? Our research shows that the quality of private schooling is highly variable. It is greatly influenced by the type of private school we are assessing — low-fee or high fee. Our research shows that in low-fee private schools the quality of education tends to be low. This is primarily due to the economics of low-fee schools: low fees deliver only small amounts of funds available to

be spent on teacher salaries and infrastructure. In rural areas in the low-literacy States in our 2006 study, there was a limit to the number of households who could sustain regular fee payments, particularly if the fees were anything more than modest. There was also a scarcity of educated persons overall, and qualified teachers in particular, who were available and willing to work for very low rates. In contrast, in Himachal Pradesh, the 2006 study found that the private schools charged high fees to students and had more funds to employ trained teachers and provide good infrastructure. The quality of private school education was higher than in the low-literacy States.

#### Setting the standard

The quality of a private school is also in large part influenced by the quality of the local government school. This is to be expected in an open market where government and private schools compete for students. Government schools set the standard that the private schools only need to surpass in part in order to be able to attract students. In our 1999 study on low-fee private schools in Haryana, UP and Rajasthan, we found that in a district in Haryana where the government schools were more functional, the local private schools also functioned reasonably well and were able to attract students. However, in places where the government schools were largely dysfunctional, such as in a district in UP, the quality of the local private schools was also extremely low. Government schools therefore set the benchmark against which private schools must compete for students. Similarly, in Himachal Pradesh, our 2006 study found the existence of a more functional government school sector compared to the low-literacy States, which appeared to play some role in pushing up the quality of private schools available in Himachal Pradesh.

Considering the goals of the Right to Education Bill, our research findings on private and government education over the past decade suggest two things. Firstly, while private providers may contribute to an expanded school market place, they cannot be expected to provide universal access for 6-14 year olds in the same way as government schools can. The cost of private schooling imposes a limit on accessibility and has negative implications for the breadth and depth of school accessibility across socio-economic groups. Only government schools can be expected to provide universal education, but they must be adequately funded and monitored to provide a quality service to the majority of Indian children. Secondly, in order to ensure that private schools have better quality, government schools must themselves be functioning at a certain standard. Under the SSA, government schools have received funding to improve school infrastructure. Our 2006 revisit of “PROBE villages” shows that this has significantly improved the quality of the schooling experience for students and the satisfaction of parents. If private providers are to contribute to fulfilling the goals of the Right to Education Bill, then once again, government schools must be adequately funded and supported by the State. A well equipped and functioning government school sector will



encourage a quality private school sector. No matter which way the debate turns, well funded, functional government schools are critical to the successful implementation of the RTE Bill and a positive schooling experience for all Indian school children.

**Source:** New Delhi [/hindu.com/](http://hindu.com/) 1 November 2009

### **Education, a powerful tool to empower people to live a dignified life: PM**

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh on Tuesday said that education is a potent and powerful tool for empowering people to lead a life of dignity and also essential for achieving sustained high economic growth.

Addressing a special convocation of Panjab University in Chandigarh, Manmohan Singh said: "We live in an age where human knowledge is increasing exponentially and countries have to make an effort to remain on the frontiers of knowledge and be counted amongst the advanced nations. Therefore, in the last five years or so the Central Government has made unprecedented efforts for expanding and improving educational facilities at all levels. In fact, I often refer to the Eleventh Five Year Plan as an Education Plan."

On the occasion Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh was honoured with the degree of Doctor of Law (Honoris Causa).

"It is not only good in itself, but also a potent and powerful tool for empowering people to lead a life of dignity and self-respect. I am deeply indebted to this great university for whatever I have achieved. I spent some of the best years of my life here. I have no hesitation in saying that the education I received in Panjab University has played a major part in whatever I have achieved in life. It is, therefore, with great humility that I have received today's recognition. It is an honor that I will always cherish," Manmohan Singh said.

He also emphasized the importance of solving salary related issues, which has been a cause of concern in IITs.

"I made a mention earlier of the problem of getting competent faculty in adequate numbers in our new institutions of higher learning. To address this issue, the Central Government has announced a very progressive pay package for attracting and retaining talented faculty. The University Grants Commission has raised the entry level standards for fresh faculty members and has also started new training programmes for them," Manmohan Singh said.

"I also realize that we may need to do more in this area. Let me assure you today that the government will continue to look for ways and means of ensuring that the faculty in our institutions of higher learning is of a very high quality. They will continue to have adequate facilities to discharge their responsibilities in a creditable manner," he added.

**Source:** New Delhi [/trak.in/](http://trak.in/) 3 November 2009

### **Financial innovation, ICT can turn around higher education sector: FICCI**

Financial innovation, innovative use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), reinvigorating research, thrust on vocational education and training (VET) and a regulatory framework comprise the five critical areas that can prove to be 'game changers' for the higher education sector, suggests a new report on higher education by Ficci and Ernst & Young.

It reasons that the Indian higher education sector, which has grown both in size and student enrolment, has many structural shortcomings which impedes its growth. For instance, despite having more higher education institutions than any other country in the world, India's Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at 12 per cent is almost half that of China's GER and lower than many developing countries. Moreover, inequity is also pervasive in the system with GERs of women and backward classes lesser than the national average, points out the report titled 'Making Indian higher education system future ready'.

Financial innovation is necessary, according to the report, since India's per-capita spends on higher education are very low, leading to significant paucity of funds for expansion and quality enhancement besides poor coverage of scholarships and student loan schemes to support needy students and enable tuition fee rationalisation. These can be overcome by encouraging private sector investments, performance-based funding by the government and creation of a strong education financing mechanism, states the report.

Another game changer is the use of ICT that faces the issue of poor quality of digital content, especially in regional languages and can be resolved by developing mechanisms for development and free distribution of high quality content across languages.

For the poor standard of research across Indian higher education institutes and lack of qualified faculty, limited funding for research as well as poor linkages between academic institutions and industry/government R&D labs, the report recommends creation of an enabling environment in terms of lesser teaching hours for researchers, greater budgets and access to better infrastructure. "Increase the number and quality of doctoral students through the launch of innovative programmes, provision of attractive fellowships and enhanced industry collaboration," the report reasons.

The fourth game changer is of VET that faces the key challenge of low penetration due to limited relevance and poor outcomes besides multiple regulatory bodies and lack of linkage of VET with the mainstream education system, says the report for which it recommends greater industry involvement and mobility between VET and mainstream education through a system of credit transfer. Another recommendation for VET pertains to supporting private sector vocational education through accreditation and recognition mechanisms.

Regulatory framework is the final game changer that is ailing from limited transparency, low autonomy and poor quality control systems besides multiplicity of regulators with overlapping roles for which the report recommends: "Create a single independent agency for regulating higher education and simplify the regulatory framework and reduce entry barriers for reputed players, by facilitating entry of high- quality foreign universities and private universities through the PPP mode."

**Source:** New Delhi [/business-standard/](#)7 November 2009

### **Foreign varsities welcome but can't make profits: Sibal**

Union Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister Kapil Sibal today said that during his visit to the US last week, he assured representatives of foreign universities that they were welcome to invest in India's education sector but should not aim at making profits. Speaking to reporters here today, Sibal said that during his recent visit to the US, he assured foreign varsities that "there is a variety of involvement in educational services such as training, book, service facilities, testing, providing a range of opportunities to invest in India in these allied services, and there is no bar on surpluses even today for Indian private structure". He, however, simultaneously cautioned them about India's firm stance of not making profits from tuition fees and the education sector.

Sibal had led a delegation to the US last week and met functionaries of leading universities, which "have expressed keenness to come to India". The move came ahead of the introduction of the Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations, Maintenance of Quality and Prevention of Commercialisation) Bill which will permit the entry of foreign institutions in the education sector.

Sibal held meetings with presidents and other functionaries of Harvard, Yale, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Boston University, among others. "They have accepted our views that they would not make profit from the tuition fee," he said. But such institutions can undertake other projects to make profits.

As a first step, the government has set up a three-member taskforce to explore possible collaborations with MIT which will submit its report in six months.

Sibal said the government had decided to award fellowships to 100 Indo-American academics and researchers to work in Indian universities. After his interactions, Yale university has already sent a delegation to India for further discussions on the issue.

"Harvard has said that it needs further dialogue for taking a decision on the issue of opening campus or offering courses through partnership basis. Boston University will send a delegation in January," said Sibal.

**Source:** [Business Standard](#), 7 Nov 2009

### **India Economic Summit Poor scope for educational reforms**

*Minister of human resource development, Kapil Sibal lashes out at the India Economic Summit 09 against for-profit educational institutions*

Looks like there isn't much on the horizon for reforms in the education sector. The minister of Human Resource Development lashed out at the India Economic Summit 09 against for-profit educational institutions, saying "nowhere in the world" is education for profit and such a set up would be "unacceptable".

93% of all education in India is governmental and only 7% with the private sector. Much of the so called private educational institutions are either of poor quality or owned by politicians. In effect because of this outrage against for profit, honest private sector people don't get into education or face phenomenal rent seeking. Either dishonest people or politicians (because they are immune from the rent seekers) thus find it easy to set up educational institutions. Not only are the standards low because of this arrangement where the money is taken in cash, this also forms the basis of the argument that the private sector isn't delivering!

The argument that 'nowhere in the world' is education private and for profit is plain wrong. Unless of course the world is comprised of western Europe and the US. Europe can afford to subsidise education at all levels and therefore standards of public education are quite high. US educational system is both well funded in the primary and secondary level by the government and by private endowments in the higher education levels. In India, with the fiscal constraints and because of lack of financial support by the private sector, neither is a real option.

We clearly need to move away from short term political posturing against for-profit private institutions — the national demands for education and employability are too great for us to ignore this critical reform.

There is a clear need for introducing accountability into the primary and even secondary education in the public sector. The sad truth of our governmental educational system (in primary and secondary) public schools is that teachers don't attend school, out of the few who attend occasionally, few really teach. Unless, attendance records fix the accountability of teachers being made public or a fair part of the salary being conditional upon performance improvements — there is little hope for reforming the public educational system.

The interesting success story of parts of India where citizens have sought attendance records of public teachers and the dramatic impact of such right to information, applications on the attendance of such schools is an indicator to this key problem in the existing system. Another indicator of the impact of accountability of public sector education is the 'Kendriya Vidyalaya' institutions — which are run extremely well because children of civil servants

and important people attend these schools — putting the pressure of accountability by the bureaucrats on improving their performance constantly.

**Source:** [/livemint/](#)10 November 2009

Only few students pursue higher education: Sibal

Union Minister for Human Resource Development Kapil Sibal today rued the state of education in the country, saying only a small percentage of students pursue higher education and many graduates do not get proper jobs after completing college.

Addressing students and faculty of SSN Engineering College near here after distributing scholarships, he said only around 12 per cent of school students in India pursue higher education, compared to some developed countries, where the figure is around 70 per cent.

"Many students with graduation or post graduation in some arts courses cannot find proper jobs in India," Sibal said.

Reforms in education with flexibility being an integral part of it are a must, he said, adding that children should be allowed to select their choice of subjects.

"This does not happen in India, which makes us think a lot about our education system," he said.

**Source:** Chennai [/ptinews/](#)4 November 2009

**Over 27,000 institutes of higher learning needed: Sibal**

More than 27,000 additional institutions of higher learning would be required to meet the targeted Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of 30 percent for 2020, Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister Kapil Sibal said here Saturday.

'This figure includes 14,000 colleges of general higher education, 12,775 additional technical and professional institutions and 269 additional universities,' Sibal said in a presentation during the meeting of the consultative committee for the HRD ministry here Saturday.

While addressing the MPs present at the meeting, Sibal asked for their collaboration in education, so that India can become a world power by 2020.

'Issues raised by the MPs included whether adequate regulatory framework was being envisaged for private participation in the education sector. Whether the government was envisaging an SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan) type large scale programme for the higher education sector also, whether foreign universities, if allowed to come to India would be making profit, and whether steps had been taken to incentivise people to enter the teaching profession,' according to an official statement.

The MPs also expressed concern on the inadequate numbers of faculty in state universities and colleges and on the proliferation of technical institutions.

Responding to the concerns, Sibal assured the MPs that the mandate of the proposed overarching body in higher education would be enforcing quality and good governance procedures in higher education institutions.

He underlined that the regulatory framework would be enforced for higher education and clarified that financial constraints would not allow the central government to have an SSA type programme for the country in higher education.

The minister noted that besides the additional spending by the central government for building new central universities, and degree colleges in educationally backward districts, the state governments will also themselves have to look for private investment.

Sibal stated that when foreign universities come to India they would not be allowed to make profits through tuition fees. He stated that India needs to set up a world class institute in humanities.

Some of the MPs who attended the meeting were Chinta Mohan, Jagdanand Singh, Ganeshrao N. Dudhgaonkar, M. Thambi Durai, Prem Das Rai, Madan Lal Sharma, Bijayanta 'Jai' Panda, Rama Devi, Sucharu Ranjan Haldar, Ranjan Prasad Yadav, Vasanthi Stanley, Kapila Vatsyayan and Prabhakar Kore.

**Source:** [/sify.com/](#)7 November 2007

**Panel reports on colleges to go online**

Rattled by several higher educational institutions with appalling infrastructural and academic facilities being granted university status (including deemed universities), the Union ministry of human resources development (MHRD) has directed the University Grants Commission (UGC) to make public inspection reports submitted by expert committees.

According to a communication issued by MHRD joint secretary Sunil Kumar, the UGC will have to place the reports of its expert committees, which inspect universities or institutions on its website. The order covers both central/state universities and deemed universities.

The ministry has admitted in its communication that while the central government respects the academic autonomy of the university system, it is at the same time "concerned about certain practices adopted that could damage the creditability of the entire university system."

MHRD officials hope that this move, aimed at ensuring transparency and accountability in the working of universities, would "contain corruption as well as malpractices" in higher education. Once the information about institutions, including inspection reports, is available in public domain it would make it imperative for the UGC to ensure that highest standards are maintained. "In the absence of information placed in the public domain, it would be extremely difficult for standards of education to be maintained across universities and higher educational institutions," Kumar said.

In a related effort to help students, parents and other stakeholders make informed choices on joining a course in an institution, the MHRD has asked the UGC to ensure that all universities/deemed universities functioning with its

approval also disclose complete information about their academic and infrastructural strengths.

Consequently, it has become mandatory for all universities/deemed universities in the country to host on their respective websites details regarding the physical infrastructure, admission criteria, fee structure, courses offered (including those under the distance education mode), curricula and information on study centres.

Besides, every institution must furnish online details of faculty positions in every department along with their photographs and nature of employment (permanent, temporary or visiting faculty). This is aimed at ending impersonation of staff.

The ministry has directed the UGC to provide a link to the websites of all universities on its portal.

**Source:** Chennai [/timesofindia/](http://timesofindia/)6 November 2009

### **Prime Minister calls upon nation to rededicate itself to the cause of education**

The Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh today called upon the nation to rededicate itself to the cause of education. He said, "The celebration of Maulana Azad's birth anniversary as the National Education Day is a befitting homage to one of our greatest leaders. Today is also an occasion when all of us should re-dedicate ourselves to the cause of education, and through it to building India as a modern, knowledge society." He was speaking at the National Education Day celebrations, here today. Also present on the occasion among others were Shri Kapil Sibal, Union Minister of Human Resource Development, Shri Koichiro Matsuura, Director General, UNESCO, Smt. D. Purandeswari, Minister of State for Human Resource Development and Smt. Anshu Vaisha, Secretary, Department of Higher Education.

The Prime Minister pointed out that, education has received the highest priority from the Central Govt. in the last 5 years or so. He said, "We had earlier taken important steps in providing quality education to all children through our flagship programme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Now we have extended our initiatives to the secondary level. The objective of the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) is to achieve an enrolment ratio of 75% for classes IX-X within five years and to provide universal secondary education by the year 2017. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 creates a legal entitlement for compulsory and free education for all our children between the ages of 6 and 14 years. We have recently launched a new literacy initiative, SAKSHAR BHARAT, on the International Literacy Day on 8th September, 2009."

"In higher education, the outlay has been increased by 10 times in the Eleventh Five Year Plan as compared to the Tenth Five Year Plan. A number of new institutions - Indian Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Management, Indian Institutes for Science Education & Research, Indian Institutes of Information Technology and others - are being established."

The Prime Minister offered to share with UNESCO e-learning material prepared under the National Mission on Education through ICT by the Indian Institutes of Technologies (IITs). He said that UNESCO plays a very important role as a global clearinghouse of ideas and knowledge.

The Prime Minister underlined that improving access to education is not enough, and that it should be accompanied by efforts to ensure equity and improve quality. He said, "Our Government stands committed to provide good and quality education to each and every child in our country, especially those who belong to the underprivileged sections of our society. It is with this end in view that we have started a number of scholarship schemes for those who cannot afford to study on their own - the SCs/STs/Minorities and other such disadvantaged groups. We especially recognize the importance of educating women and they are being given special attention in the SAKSHAR BHARAT mission. Improvement in quality at all levels is also receiving increasing emphasis. In higher education this will be achieved through structural reforms on the basis of the recommendations of the National Knowledge Commission and the Yashpal Committee."

The Prime Minister said that India needs an extra 1 million teachers to implement the Right to Education Act. For this purpose, apart from the need of augmenting teacher's training institutes and use of ICT for mass learning, it is necessary to restore the prestige and status of the teaching profession in our society, he added. Dr. Manmohan Singh stated, "The importance of good teachers cannot be over-emphasized. Good teachers not only educate- they also inspire. Good teachers make good students. Good teachers make good citizens. We must therefore find ways and means of improving the quality of our teachers. We must find ways of attracting the best talent as faculty in our premier institutions. We today face difficulty in finding top level professors and lecturers in the newly created IITs, IISERs and other such institutions. This state of affairs cannot be allowed to persist and I urge all of you to work to address these problems of deficiency in the quality of teaching in our schools, in our colleges, and in our universities."

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Kapil Sibal, Union Minister for Human Resource Development, said to meet the requirements of Education For All (EFA) and to provide secondary and vocational training to the youth, we require millions of teachers. The social order must respect teachers who all play a pivotal role in building a peaceful and just society, he added.

Shri Sibal stated that the globalisation of higher education has also added newer challenges in terms of quality assurance system, issues of mutual recognition and equivalence of degrees and transparency in the regulatory structures of national systems of higher education. He said, "Towards this, our Government has initiated several reforms measures. An independent mandatory accreditation system is being proposed. We also plan to introduce legislation to prohibit and punish malpractices

and adoption of unfair practices in higher education. Further, a legislation to facilitate the entry of foreign education providers is also under consideration.”

**Source:** New Delhi [/pib.nic.in/](http://pib.nic.in/)11 November 2009

### Reforms agenda in place for education sector: Sibal

Massive reforms are required across the spectrum in India's Education sector, declared Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal, at the plenary session on "Creating World-Class Education in India", at the 25th India Economic Summit, on Monday.

Indeed, most of the critical legislation relating to this sector would be in place by the end of the budget session of Parliament in March 2010, he said at the event jointly organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry and World Economic Forum in New Delhi.

These reforms would need to bring in flexibility, transparency and quality in education in India, he added.

Inviting the private sector to participate in a big way in India's education agenda, Sibal emphatically delineated the distinction between 'profit' and 'surplus,' stating that enterprises must be allowed to make surpluses to be ploughed back into the sector. "We cannot allow education to be exposed to risk factors," he stressed.

The minister outlined several key challenges. India needs to prepare the critical mass of students to be ready for higher education, he said, pointing out that at present, only 12 per cent of the 220 million children who go to school in India reach college level.

The target is to increase this to 30 per cent by year 2020, he said. There are huge gaps in the skills development sphere too, that need urgent attention, said Sibal, with only around 12 per cent of India's 509 million young employed people equipped with the right skills.

Richard C Levin, President, Yale University, USA, felt that developing access was 'doable' with resources and political will. However, building world class institutions was much harder, and takes decades, he said. Mr Levin felt that partnerships and affiliations with foreign universities was a more viable proposition in the present term, than expecting great universities to establish themselves in this geography.

Access, Affordability and Accountability are the key pillars to develop a sound education system, pointed out William D. Green, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Accenture.

His company's world wide agenda of "Skills to Succeed" sought to address the need to raise the 'water table' in the tank, by making more people employable, he said, pointing to the need for a 'horizontal' approach across the board, along with the 'vertical' one of building world class institutions.

Rajendra S. Pawar, Chairman, NIIT Group, India, suggested that mobility to students to move between

different streams, and between vocational and formal education, establishment of an independent regulatory authority and letting the market principle operate in terms of what to teach and what to charge, would make education more open to both students and parents, as well as investors.

Anand Sudarshan, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Manipal Education India, called for a more diverse approach and the creation of a national mindset that gave respectability to vocational education.

We need to develop excellence at each rung of the ladder, he said.

Shantanu Prakash, Managing Director, Educomp Solutions, India, too, regretted that India was a degree-obsessed country. We need to harness the vast intellectual capacity that India possesses to draw investment into Education in India, he said.

Ravi Venkatesan, Chairman and Corporate Vice President, Microsoft Corporation India, highlighted the key role technology could play in making education accessible and affordable, especially at the higher education level.

Expressing confidence that the government's initiatives in Education, in terms of far-reaching reforms, establishing infrastructure and encouraging public-private-partnerships and tie-ups would bear fruit, Sibal felt that India could, in time, develop into an education hub. Then, he said, the most reputed institutions in the world too would be keen to test the Indian waters.

**Source:** New Delhi [/expressindia/](http://expressindia/)9 November 2009

### Regulator to precede education reforms?

In a "did the chicken come first or the egg" debate that can have an important bearing on the role of regulators in rolling out of key UPA agendas, the government is grappling with the question whether a slew of legislation pushed by the HRD ministry should await the formation of the promised National Commission for Higher Education and Research.

Keen to press on with the job at hand, HRD ministry would like a raft of bills on foreign varsities, education tribunals, an accreditation authority, checking malpractices and distance learning. It is also moving on the mega regulator that will subsume bodies like UGC and AICTE, which were seen to inefficient and even corrupt.

But what has brought sequencing of reforms into question is a view that since the bills had strong inter-linkages, they should follow the setting up of the proposed regulator. Tech whiz Sam Pitroda has submitted such a view to the government which PMO has taken due note of. It is being argued that the regulator will have a crucial role in framing the proposed reform bills. Pitroda has since been appointed advisor to PM with Cabinet rank.

The suggestion has, however, not yet found much traction with HRD which has responded to the proposition that the regulator be first put in place by arguing that the legislation it wants to pursue can make provision for the regulator. This can be done by specifying a "UGC or successor body" in the reform proposals being considered. The successor

body or regulator can be referenced as the need arises and the processes can be simultaneous.

The debate throws up a more fundamental issue of what a regulator's mandate should be. Would a regulator simply implement a law or should it be involved in its framing and policy-making. This is being examined closely as government sees an opportunity to set higher education on a sound footing with Arjun Singh's politics-driven raj having ended. With regulators for health and agricultural education in the pipeline, the issue is naturally important.

It is being pointed out that issues such as fee structure of foreign varsities, implementation of quotas, discrepancies between rules governing Indian private colleges, accreditation of foreign varsities as well as their being covered by a tribunal and whether IITs and IIMs also need fresh accreditation may need a regulator's view. Having moved briskly on the right to education bill, HRD is looking to maintain its pace and the issues, though tricky, are expected to be sorted out.

The final view that the Cabinet arrives at will be significant as the government has decided to persevere with the "regulator knows best" model despite the criticism that such watchdog bodies are only partially effective given that they are often manned by ex-bureaucrats. The abject failure of the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority to protect consumer interests from arbitrary hikes in user fees, steep parking charges and poor facilities overall is seen as a good example of how appointing former officials linked to the sector is not a good idea.

**Source:** New Delhi [/timesofindia/](#)9 November 2009

### **Reward scheme for university, college teachers proposed**

The UGC is mulling a reward scheme for university and college teachers on the lines of the Performance Related Incentive Scheme (PRIS) being worked out for IIT and IIM faculty to encourage better performance.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) today started a two-day workshop on 'Human Resource Management Techniques in Indian Universities' to discuss and evolve a strategy on how the institutions will be able to retain their faculty and attract best talents.

"The conference will give a broad view on the HR management in our universities and if any review required to personnel policy and manpower planning. The vice chancellors will discuss and evolve a rational reward policy to encourage teachers who are doing exceptionally well at individual and institution level," UGC Secretary R K Chouhan said.

The reward scheme will take into consideration the parameters of teaching and research and set standards in these areas. The scheme will consider whether the teachers need to get certain percentage of their basic salary as incentive. At present, scientists at national level institutes, including ISRO, are getting PRIS under which they get upto 50 per cent of their basic salary as incentives.

The HRD Ministry has announced that it would start similar scheme for the faculty of IITs, IIMs and NITs. The IIT directors are working on such a policy now.

The two-day conference will also discuss starting e-governance at the university level for smooth functioning of the institutions.

About 120 vice chancellors from are attending the conference, being organised in collaboration with the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), across the country.

The conference would also discuss establishment of HR department in all universities; and how to bring greater coherence to planning, policymaking and practice.

The HR management in universities assumes significance in view of the institutions failing to get a good faculty. The Central Universities in India are suffering from 30 per cent vacancy of teachers.

Similar is the situation in IITs and IIMs. The PRIS and reward scheme are expected to attract young talent to these institutions.

**Source:** New Delhi [/business-standard/](#)3 November 2009

### **Sibal moots corporation to fund education**

#### *What it offers*

- *The NEFC could provide long-gestation loans of up to 20-30 years at lower rates of interest than offered by banks and FIs.*
- *Could also provide limited credit guarantees through the principle of risk-pooling for educational loans*

The Union Ministry of Human Resource Development has mooted the idea of setting up a national education finance corporation (NEFC) to raise resources for primary and higher education sectors. A brainchild of the Union Minister for HRD, Mr Kapil Sibal, the corporation is being equipped to generate resources for meeting the obligations imposed by the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, as well as the larger funding requirements of the higher education sector.

#### No Supplanting

The proposed corporation is intended to supplement and not supplant the existing funding mechanism through banks, according to Mr Sibal. The NEFC could provide long-gestation loans of up to 20-30 years at lower rates of interest than are offered by banks and FIs. Since educational infrastructure involves creation of physical assets, mortgage or collateral for such loans would not be an issue.

The NEFC could also provide limited credit guarantees through the principle of risk-pooling for educational loans analogous to that provided by the Export Credit Guarantee Corporation. The proposed corporation would have an

authorised share capital of Rs 20,000 crore, with 5 per cent being redeemable preference shares. Three-fourths of the initial issued share capital of Rs 4,000 crore may be contributed by the Centre and the rest subscribed to by development banks, public sector banks, the GIC, the LIC and other institutions owned and controlled by the Centre.

The equity subscribed to by banks and other institutions could be converted into redeemable preference shares carrying a fixed rate of dividend after seven years. The share capital may be augmented by Rs 2,000 crore every year over the next eight years limited only by the size of the authorised capital.

#### Raising Debt

The NEPC may also have the power to raise debt by issue or sale of bonds to raise resources from the market. The bond holders may be exempt from the levy of tax – individual or corporate – or be granted rebate in capital gains tax.

The NEFC could also be allowed to borrow from the Reserve Bank against securities. The Centre may, if required, guarantee the bonds issued by the Corporation against outstanding principal or interest. Another possible mode of funds would be the rural infrastructure development fund (RIDF) from the NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development).

The debt to equity ratio may be kept at 4:1, allowing for maximum lendable resources of Rs 20,000 crore during the first year, which can go up to Rs 1 lakh crore in the eighth year.

The requirement of funds for the education sector is expected to be Rs 60,000 crore during 2009-10. This could grow to as high as Rs 1.55 lakh crore in 2016-17. The NEFC will ensure lendable funds of an estimated Rs 38,000 crore in 2009-10 and Rs 1 lakh crore in 2016-17.

#### Easy Resort

“The difficulty is that banks treat loans and advances to the sector much the same way as they do for the trade, industry and commerce and conveniently ignore inherent contrasts in terms of initial investments, gestation period and returns,” says Mr Sibal.

Short-tenure loans availed at commercial rates of interest leave educational institutions with hardly any other option than rustle up quick money – even if this meant the easy resort to charging capitation fees, or other scourges that the resource-hungry sector is blamed for.

“We can’t stop these practices just by legislation. There is therefore a need to devise an institutional mechanism that can provide educational institutions the means to access funds at lower cost with long gestation periods.”

The mandate of NEFC may extend to granting loans and advances to any scheduled public sector bank or such other financial institutions by way of refinance for

establishment, development or promotion of any educational institution or providing loans and advances at concessional rates of interest for infrastructure in identified backward districts.

The corporation could also directly finance any university for its establishment, increase in enrolment or improvement of infrastructure. The proposal has already been moved to the Planning Commission for favour of constituting a working group to discuss the modalities of taking it to the next level, which may include exercising the option of drafting an enabling legislation.

**Source:** [Business Line](#), 7 Nov 2009

#### **What are the functions of UGC and AICTE in the Indian education system?**

The Indian education system was in tatters right after independence. The country had witnessed widespread riots across the country, and the whole region was in the state of chaos. India needed a profound education system to improve general awareness among its people. In the late 1940's, it was decided that the country require the services of an institution to improve the general education standard of India. UGC thus came into existence in the year 1948.

UGC was founded by Dr. Radhakrishnan, and the purpose of the body was to coordinate the various education bodies in the country. UGC acted as a summit body, which overlooked the affairs of various universities, and colleges in the country.

Though initially, the University Grants Commission (UGC) was not assigned the task of handling every university in the country, there were only few select universities under its wings. As more and more universities cropped up, there was a need to catapult the use of UGC to far flung areas.

In the year 1956, the government of India passed a resolution, which stated that UGC would be the apex body for each and every university across the country.

The role of UGC is not just limited to overlooking the affairs of the university. It has a much greater role as UGC is responsible for providing grants and funds for the development of various colleges and universities. The summit body also functions as a sole body, which assist and determines the educational status for women and weaker sections of the society.

UGC is also responsible for the promotion of research initiatives within the country. The body makes sure that enough grants are provided in the field of science and technology, to promote the facilities for research.

While the role of UGC is undisputed in the Indian education system, there had been a steady rise in the technical skilled labors in the country, after independence. It became important to provide technical education and expertise to such individuals.

The All India council for technical education (AICTE) was formed in the year 1945 to look after the general standards of technical education in India. It is considered as a top

most body, which manages different technical institutes across the country.

It provides funding to different technical bodies, if required and also awards certificates to the trainees.

Both UGC and AICTE play a very significant role in the development of general education standard of India.

**Source:** New Delhi [/indiauniversity/](#)3 November 2009

### 'Vocational education gets better job than mere degrees'

Does a degree guarantee a job? It doesn't, unless the subject is one of the preferred ones or it has been obtained from a reputed premier college. So, a society poised to have a substantially large young population by 2020 just might end up with a "demographic disaster".

"The serious deficiency in vocational training and deficiency in the level of education, especially in the tertiary education, as compared to the other emerging BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) countries is well known," said Prof Abad Ahmad, chairman, Aga Khan Foundation India. He was speaking at the convention 'Leveraging demographic dividend through quality education -- The way forward', organised by LMA on Friday.

Prof Ahmad pointed out that the number of employable graduates is a small percentage. The key to transform our education system lies in liberalisation of education, addressing its supply side matrix, enabling more choices to students and creating healthy competition among educational institutions to generate merit. This will require bold steps to dismantle "archaic regulations" that have generated artificial scarcity for quality education and spurred growth of shoddy institutions indulging in crass commercialisation, he said.

Former director, IIT Madras, Prof P V Indiresan stressed upon improving the admission process. Referring to the recommendations of Yash Pal Committee on higher education and the National Knowledge Commission, he questioned the wisdom of increasing enrolment and instead suggested decrease in enrolments and matching the system to economic activity.

Prof Indiresan suggested doing away with tests that lead to the need for coaching classes and instead considering value for school tradition and teachers' recommendations as in premier global institutions like Harvard. He also stressed the need for job-oriented education and suggested a plan for better teachers, not just by offering higher salaries.

In the session that was chaired by G B Pattanaik, principal secretary to the governor, the head of corporate affairs at Intel Corporation, Valsa Williams suggested a sharing of responsibility between stakeholders including government, private sector, academia and civil society.

Earlier, delivering the keynote address, member, Planning Commission, Narendra Jadhav expressed concern over quality of education, which, he said, was much below expectations. While curriculum revision could be a step

towards improving the quality, access to higher education also needed to be increased.

Governor B L Joshi, delivering the inaugural address, stressed on human resource management, innovative modification in curriculum and a balanced regulatory system based on transparency and accountability.

Chief secretary (UP) and chairman of LMA advisory council, Atul Gupta, maintaining that UP had committed itself for improving the education scenario, stressed upon public-private partnership. LMA president, Jayant Krishna was also present on the occasion.

**Source:** Lucknow [/timesofindia/](#)14 November 2009

## RESOURCE

### Catalyst for Science

*Science grads to be paid to stay in class Two-Year Dole To Be Given For Research Proposal That Promises Useful Results*

The Centre is to hand out a two-year financial dole to fresh science graduates to help them continue higher studies and thus stop the decline in basic science research.

The project of the Union science and technology ministry will be open to MSc and Phd students. The grant is intended to instil confidence among students to take up basic sciences, science and technology department sources said on Monday.

An unemployed MSc or Phd basic science student can write a proposal to the department of science and technology on any project that would have useful results — either in terms of a product or in terms of enhanced knowledge, or new formulations in basic sciences. The proposal is evaluated by experts, and if okayed, the student gets the grant for two years.

“Students may not want to do an MSc or Phd in basic sciences, fearing they won't land jobs. This hit research in basic sciences as well as the student ratio and strength. If there is some sort of security and an assured financial support period, students would feel confident to take up MSc or Phd in basic sciences. That way, research benefits,” said an official of the department of science and technology.

The ministry is planning an awareness drive across the country on the science allowance. “Not many students are aware of the plan for basic sciences. We plan to go region-wise. There need be no fear about proposals being rejected. Keeping in mind the need to encourage basic science students, we have brought down the rejection rate. More students can now get grants,” said the official.

The grant expires after two years, and will be offered to a fresh batch of students — thus rotated every two years. The ministry is of the view that two years is adequate time for a student to find a job and that other students would be waiting for financial help.

“The money coming from the DST is good and will be enough to help the student coast through a year or two. We

expect a student to come up with a project that would be job-enabling, as experience on the project would count in job offers. The good thing is that students would not be penniless for the two-year period. The science ministry takes care of the student until he or she finds a job," the official said.

**Source:** New Delhi TOI; Nov 3, 2009; Times Nation; Page: 9

### **Coal India to devote 5 per cent net profit to CSR**

Coal India Ltd (CIL) will devote five per cent of its net profit to fulfill its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Coal Minister said here today.

"CIL will provide 5 per cent of the net profit so that there is no scarcity of funds for CSR activities," Coal Minister Sriprakash Jaiswal said speaking at CIL's 34th foundation day celebrations here.

The company will support 100 BPL meritorious students selected through a nationwide selection process and provide them full financial support for higher education, he said.

"All these successful students will be offered a job in CIL," the minister added.

Meanwhile, the coal ministry has also proposed to fix minimum wage for contract workers in the coalmines.

Currently, there is no minimum wage for workers under contractors.

"We want that minimum wages for contract workers in mines should be higher than the state government's minimum wage," Jaiswal said.

**Source:** Kolkata [ptinews.com/](http://ptinews.com/) 1 November 2009

### **Indian Govt. Approves Secondary Edu Plans of 7 States**

With just four months left of the current financial year, the ambitious Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan aimed at universalizing secondary education came up for review at a meeting on Thursday taking up proposals of seven states, which were approved.

Considering that RMSA was launched during the last days of UPA-I, the response of the states has been overwhelming. Sixteen states have so far given their proposals out of which seven were taken up during the review meeting and approved. These states are: Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Mizoram, Rajasthan, Punjab, Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh. For 2009-10, Rs 1,354 crore was put aside for RMSA. So far, Rs 58 crore has been spent by various states on preparatory activity.

Sources did not agree that there has been slow progress of RMSA. "This is the first massive intervention in secondary education. The fact that out of 1.3 million schools, roughly one million are elementary and upper primary schools shows that secondary education has not been given due attention. Also, unlike primary schools, 40% of secondary schools are privately-managed," an official said.

The meeting discussed the general strategy of RMSA that includes upgradation and capacity expansion of existing schools, opening of new schools in un-served areas, and making all secondary schools conform to prescribed norms.

RMSA's target is to improve the enrolment ratio for classes IX-X to 75% by 2011-12 from 52.26% in 2005-06. It also envisages providing facilities for estimated additional enrolment of 63 lakh by 2011-12 through strengthening of 44,000 existing schools, upgradation of 11,188 higher primary schools, appointment of 2.5 lakh additional teachers and construction of 1.33 lakh additional classrooms.

During the 11th Plan, the financing pattern of RMSA will be 75:25 between Centre and states. In the 12th Plan, the sharing pattern will be 50:50.

**Source:** New Delhi [sinlung/](http://sinlung/) 13 November 2009

### **Seminar on 'Delhi as the Knowledge Capital'**

*Delhi Technological University along with Department of Training & Technical Education, Govt. of Delhi is organizing a seminar on 'Delhi as the Knowledge Capital' on November 18, 2009*

To shape Delhi as the Knowledge Capital of the Country, it is pertinent to equip Delhi with requisite knowledge infrastructure and the necessary enabling environment for world class education, research technology incubation and innovation, commensurate with the challenges of the new knowledge age. To discuss this and many more issues, Delhi Technological University (DTU), along with Department of Training and Technical Education (DTTE), Govt. of Delhi is organizing a seminar on 'Delhi as the Knowledge Capital' on November 18, 2009 at Pragati Maidan as a part of the India International Trade Fair.

Shri Rakesh Mehta, IAS, Chief Secretary, Govt. of Delhi will inaugurate the one-day seminar in the presence of Shri. P.K. Tripathi, Principal Secretary to Hon'ble Chief Minister, Govt. of Delhi, Shri. Rajendra Kumar, Secretary, DTTE, Govt. of Delhi and Prof. P.B. Sharma, Vice Chancellor, DTU, among others. The keynote address will be delivered by Prof. Ashoka Chandra, Former Technical Advisor (Education) and Former Special Secretary, Ministry of HRD, Govt. of India. A booklet on 'Research and Innovations @ DTU' will also be released on the occasion.

Speaking about the seminar, Prof. Sharma, remarked, "Delhi with its pre-eminent position in respect of higher education and research institutions such as IIT-Delhi, AIIMS, JNU, Delhi University, DCE now DTU, Jamia Millia Islamia, Jamia Hamdard etc. and a host of highly reputed R&D labs including National Physical Laboratory, Solidstate Physics Laboratory (DRDO), Institute of Nuclear Medicine & Allied Sciences (DRDO) and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, to mention some, has all the opportunity to shape itself as the Knowledge Capital of the Country; provided we are able to create a focus on world quality research and innovation, and an enabling environment to foster knowledge industries in the NCT of Delhi. The seminar identifies the strategic issues which are

to be taken up as also work out the road map for such a transformation." The seminar shall focus on the following sub-themes: Higher education in the new knowledge age; World class universities and knowledge infrastructure; Technology incubation and new product development facilities; Green energy and clean environment technologies; ICT enabled education system; Public Private Partnership for Education and Research Excellence; Knowledge Enterprise Development; and Ethics and Scientific values.

The seminar will conclude with a panel discussion on "Strategic Framework for Transformation of Delhi as Knowledge Capital", which will be participated by eminent educationist including Prof. Chandra, Prof. Sharma, Prof. D.K. Bandyopadhyay, Vice Chancellor, GGSIPU. Prof. Ranbir Singh, Vice Chancellor, National Law University, Delhi, Prof. Shyam B. Menon, Vice Chancellor, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University, Delhi and Dr. A. Wali, Managing Director, FITT, IIT Delhi.

**Source:** New Delhi [/indiapwire/](#)13 November 2009

## Contribute

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

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

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