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 Svran Institute for Biosciences and Clinical Research, Gurgaon, (AIBCR)** has been established in collaboration with leading companies in the industry, viz Martin & Harris, ASG Biochemicals and Walter & Bushnell Health Care.

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

Partnership

Dear Partners,

The Apeejay Stya Education Research Foundation (ASERF) invites news, articles, resource material, opinions and analyses on relevant educational issues that can be highlighted in our by-monthly e-bulletins and on the ASERF portal.

We request if you could spare a few moments of your valuable time to have a look at our website and guide us on our regular initiatives.

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ASPECT

A Concise History of Education of Teachers, of Teacher Training and Teaching

Western history of teacher training, education history, teaching theories, education of teachers, modern history old education, began in early 18th century Germany: teaching seminaries educating teachers were the first formal teacher training in Western history of education and teaching.

(History of education had 2nd century-BC Greek Spartan free public education, Athenian Academy until age 18 and higher Academy and Lyceum; Roman private formal schooling in tiers; China's 1st century-BC administrator examinations; 1st century Jewish informal Cul' Tura general education; Islam's 9th century universities [madrasahs]; 16th century Aztec mandatory teen education; 18th century Russian nation-wide education, Poland's Education Ministry, Chez 'teacher of nations' Comenius's 'Didactica Magna' on universal education [compulsory, certified teachers, tests]; leading later Western history of education –17th century Scotland's free education, 18th's Norway's mandatory literacy and New Zealand's standard education, 21st's Europe's Bologna process equalising educational qualifications.)

Teacher education and training, first teacher training college in French history of education and history of teaching, Jean Babtiste de la Salle's 18th century Brothers of the Christian schools, had non-clerical male teachers teaching poor and middle class children. Based on Greek philosophers' philosophy of education and teaching, re-introduced by Islam, spirituality was not its only reason, basis of education. Teacher education and training had been clerical –this was Western history of education's first secular teacher training college.

This philosophy of education changed educational history's attitude to education. It reformed education, educational theory, learning, enabled further education reforms and educational theories of teaching in history of education. With education reforms in education history, educational theory of teacher education required of teachers an understanding of the human mind and the theory of education, knowledge of sciences and arts, principles and educational methods of teaching. This need in educational history for a teaching method, method of education, necessitated theories of education -in Western history of education educational theories on teacher education interested educators.

These educational philosophies and theories of education on teacher education became the norm in Western history of education, teacher-training establishments' first Normal Schools in the history of education and training of teachers.

Teacher education progressed educational history: in history of education and history of teaching, the system of education required and enabled knowledge, in-service experience, certification for teachers, continuing professional development for teachers in teaching. This non-uniform system of teacher education and training enabled teachers, while teaching, at teacher seminars to refresh and increase their knowledge of theory of education and method of teaching -exchanging ideas among teachers.

Napoleon, in history of education and teacher training, uniformed professional teaching. Adopting Germany's teacher seminars, in French history of education and in Western history of education and training of teachers, established the first uniform teacher education system.

Neither the USA's educational history nor British history of education did in educational philosophies, systems of education; include formal teacher education and training, although Elizabeth-I had introduced teachers' moral teaching fitness certification in teacher education.

In England's history of education and teaching, in early 19th century Joseph Lancaster and Andrew Bell founded the Lancastarian teaching method of teacher training: in a monitorial system of teacher education and training senior students ('monitors') receiving teaching from tutors were teaching junior students, acting as teachers.

In Scotland's history of education and teaching, 17th century free education compulsory in late 19th, Germany's teacher education and training influenced David Stowe's founding the Glasgow Normal Seminary for teachers.

Progress in teaching and teacher training began with Horace Mann's Massachusetts Normal Schools in the USA's educational history, and in Britain's history of education by the churches' and voluntary organisations' teacher training colleges and teaching the colonials.

In philosophies of education arguments followed on teacher education in educational history: should persons of lower English social class attend teacher-training colleges and give teaching to children of higher social class? Might teachers' teaching not influence young French minds with liberal ideas!

(Japan's educational philosophy [perhaps influencing the USA's educational philosophy, history of education and teaching] emphasised patriotic teacher education and teaching.)

In Europe's history of teacher education and training, Rosencrantz's 19th century 'Philosophy of Education' emphasised 'philosophical and psychological data'; this, resembling Islam's university faculties, developed into separate teaching disciplines.

In Sweden's history of education and teaching, Pestalozzi furthered the progress of systems of education, advocating formal teacher training colleges.

(Pestalozzi, except theologically, was self-educated, did not leave a written account of teaching and of teacher training colleges; his place in the history of education and teaching is deducible in outline from his various writings, loving sincere deeds, the example he set.)

Germany's Froebel, and Alexander Bain's 'Education as a Science', favoured education of teachers through teacher

training colleges; teacher education adopted what philosophies of education in Western educational history and teaching had lacked -Herbart's pedagogical emphasis in teaching on five formal steps: preparation, presentation, comparison, generalisation, application.

Germany's teacher education and training became the basis of developments in the history of education and teacher training; Derwent Coleridge and James Kay Shuttleworth in Britain, Mann in the USA broadly agreed: teacher education and training should emphasise techniques of teaching -"not only the subjects of instructions, but also the method of teaching".

Jules Ferry laws' compulsory education established teacher education and training in late 19th century French history of education: teacher education and training, by law, should be through formal teacher training colleges.

English speaking countries' history of education and teaching, formal teacher education and training, began with the University of Edinburgh's creating a chair in education, with St. Andrews; in the USA's history of education, e.g., Henry Bernard, Nicholas Murray Butler, followed.

In Western history of education, England's progress involved pedagogy, Herbart Sepencer's teaching techniques in teacher education, and training, the USA's e.g., Francis W. Parker's, studying Germany's pedagogical teacher education developments.

In the USA's history of education and teaching the Darwinian hypothesis (as before later scientific evaluation) influenced John Dewey at the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools; taking into account from other disciplines what were considered relevant in teaching to child development, Brown University founded an education department.

(The La Salle College in Philadelphia, had been teaching education.)

New York's Teachers College, founded 1888, was incorporated into the Columbia University, 1893, establishing its teacher training college, announcing: "The purpose of the Teacher Training College is to afford opportunity, both theoretical and practical, for the training of teachers, of both sexes, for kindergartens and elementary schools and secondary schools, of principals, supervisors, and superintendents of schools, and of specialists in various branches of school work, involving normal schools and colleges" -it became the basis, in Western history of education and teaching, of teacher education and training and Teacher Colleges.

(The USA's educational history experts' versions vary on it history of education.)

In most of British Commonwealth's history of education and system of teacher training, entry into teacher training came to require senior secondary education at High School level or British Grammar School education with national Matriculation or Ordinary and Advanced General Certificate of Education (GCE) examinations –or equivalent.

In Europe's history of education and teacher training, education with similar Gymnasium(/Abitur) or General Lycèe Diploma, or equivalent education, became professional teacher education and training entry qualification.

(In British history of education, until early 20th century, holders of those qualifications, by selection examination, could become temporary teachers. Oxbridge graduates could register 'master' and be syndicated teachers. Other universities' graduates, to become teachers, attended teacher training colleges [if Bachelor of Education, second year teacher training of a teacher training college].)

In British Commonwealth's history of education greater importance was attached to professionalism in teacher education and training: academic qualifications did not suffice for teaching; teacher examinations required specific periods of specifically professional study in teaching. Professional teaching involved two years' professional study in teaching and additional in-house teacher training before professional teacher status. Professional teachers could, with another educational year at the teacher training college, specialise in a subject, e.g., geography or history (in farming colonies, e.g., Cyprus where Agriculture became a secondary school examination subject, with one or two more educational years' through the Teacher Training College's Rural Agricultural School). Science graduates without professional teaching training and education qualified for permanent teaching after a year's classroom teaching experience approved by professionally qualified headmasters, as teachers of their subjects. Teachers were expected to attend teachers' seminars as continuing professional development.

While professional qualifications are regarded for professional reasons equivalent to doctorates in their counterparts and what qualify for teaching, teacher education and training (school age becoming lower and years less, to enable maturer teachers and teaching), for professional teaching knowledge and skills acquired at teacher training colleges, favoured bachelor degrees with teaching content emphasising skills over theory and, e.g., the USA's academic 'first professional degree' –more for research than professional practice.

(British history of education desired teaching with Post-graduate Certificate in Education [PGCE] -for English state school teaching Qualified Teacher Status [QTS] skills test, and [also if Bachelor of Education] successfully completing an induction year [in Scotland two] in school teaching as Newly Qualified Teacher [NQT], with continuing professional development; alternatively a specific teaching degree or on-the-job teacher training. Teachers trained at Teacher Training Colleges in [former] colonies –and similarly trained teachers with GCSE [grade C] or equivalent in English and Mathematics [for primary school teaching, also Physics] enjoy Qualified Teacher Status.)

(Canada's provinces or schools certify teachers; Australia requires none for federally funded private schools; France's is college/bachelor and Teacher Institute [master's -2010].)

{In the USA's history of education, until 1960s, one year's teacher training college education was required for teacher certification. In 1984 an alternate teaching route was introduced: bachelor's with teaching preparation and within a specified number of years completing a teaching or content based master's. (Some universities award [with summer study] bachelor degrees in two years, some two bachelor degrees simultaneously [e.g., with two arts and two science majors both BA Philosophy and BS ChE Chemical Engineering]; the doctoral JD is pre-requisite to master's LL.M which not all tenured professors need posses.) The 'Master of Professional Studies' (MPS) First Professional Degree is academic, not professional. Many states require of teachers, for permanent teaching, examinations in pedagogy and a content area or general knowledge accredited by many private associations' varying standards; in early 21st century Marlboro-Carolina 20% of teachers had no certification.}

In educational history post general education having been academic for career advancement and scholarly activity or research, or professional for actual practice in the filed, the professional qualification is normally the terminating qualification; in professional teaching, advanced professional degrees enabling specialised teaching, e.g., at universities, are not regarded as part of professional teacher education and training for general education teaching; the USA's main master's area is for Ed.D or Ph.D. –research.)

In European history of education, teaching related educational leadership gained importance at the end of 20th century. Desiring the benefits of learnable leadership skills and inherent personal leadership qualities, teachers' educational leadership skills in teaching leadership are remunerated according to national teacher pay scales.

The USA's educational leadership teachers' pay is non-uniform; educational leadership skills standards vary. Graduate educational leadership programs are in, e.g., community issues and educational law. Private Teacher Advancement Programmes (TAP) subscribed by some schools encourage teachers in administrative or teaching development: a teacher prepares an individual growth plan (IGP) with an educational goal or teaching activity, or a cluster group of teachers identify a student learning need, becoming 'mentor' or 'master teacher'/'teacher of teachers'.

As others', USA's teacher training colleges' comparable teaching qualifications enjoy international regard.

In their history of education, having less aspired to 'practical' general education as in the USA and 21st century Britain, most British Commonwealth and European teaching institutions almost uniformly value widely academic general education as culture not acquirable in post general education (e.g., an opposition leader to a Prime Minister [both lawyers] "I as a Grammar School boy" [would not take 'that' from him who was not]) and Britain's suggestion to equate practical skills certificates with general academic qualifications was criticised.

(Early 21st century British educational history saw [university or equivalent mandatory student grants becoming loans, unemployment necessitating longer and more courses, foreigners scoring higher in English] no increase since late 20th in literacy.)

(In the USA's history of education, with 20% adult functional illiteracy, as the educationists' concerns grew, the educationalists considered Europe's baccalaureate system of education; with growing public interest in education, at the end of 20th century a state appointed three generals to improve the standards of teaching and education and at the beginning of 21st century a general was appointed to federally improve teaching and educational standards.)

In educational history interest in the teaching profession has been based on the status of teachers. Regard for teachers in late 20th century was highest in Russia where teachers enjoyed better employment terms than elsewhere.

(In Britain's history of education, 1980s' miss-projection of numbers of teachers needed necessitated engaging science graduates without teaching qualifications as teachers; but a status was enjoyed by teachers of regard as in Europe, and, about the end of 20th century, knighthood for long serving teachers was suggested –due to controversy over peerages it did not materialise. At the beginning of 21st century reducing undergraduate degrees to two years with vocational content was considered, with master's for teachers -also non-major professional qualifications being above undergraduate degrees in National Vocational Qualifications; but Teachers' status was regarded to have been equated for economical reasons to classroom assistants' socially criticised for taking classes without professional teacher education and training.])

In the USA's history of education, teaching has hailed a form of essentialism in education, with a culture of practicality and model citizenry, emphasising respect for authority (advocated also for 21st century British education); with no general minimum standard in teacher training and education, some states not recognising the teaching qualifications of some others, teachers and teaching appear officially to enjoy no higher regard then Bernard Shaw's remark (about writers) "Those who can, do; those who can not, teach".

(In the USA, e.g., some teachers paid only term time having to seek vacation work, teaching and teachers generally are regarded to have enjoyed less good terms and conditions than elsewhere in proportion to social regard and public resources.)

The growth of interest in culture and education in Western history of teaching has been seen in the European Union, e.g., in Cyprus with the popularisation of education in mid. 20th century -reportedly with highest percentage of university graduates by 21st.

In Western educational reforms spiritual values in education are protected by teaching religious studies in schools in American secularism (protection of religion from political influence) and by the religious affiliations of many universities; in European secularism (protecting against one's formal dominance of the other), often with a state religion enshrined in the constitution, this is ensured by, e.g., Britain's Education Acts' requirement in compulsory education of religious worship by pupils at least once a month and, while British universities are not formally religiously affiliated, the availability of chapels & chaplains to students at universities.

While preferences in education (e.g., the pedagogy based Steiner-Waldorf education for creating free moral and integrated individuals -its teachers' and schools' say on defining the curricula by some disagreed with, or Montessori's pre-school and elementary school child's self directed activities with auto-didactic equipment -regarded by some as risking raising obedient automatons), and emphasis (be it practical skills or Emerson's 'thinking man'), have all had praise and criticism in the history of education and teaching and arguments continue on pragmatism and creation -v- evolution, generally Socrates's argument that the rightly trained mind turns toward virtue carries weight in most educational systems. Basically, in every history of education, an important aim of education and the societies' all time expectations have been on the lines of these verses (by the Cypriot teacher, the late Orhan Seyfi Ari):

'' 'I was an ape' you say -or amphibian? And now?! Are you not now... 'man'!? "

The cultural values balance have been more reflected in the education and training of teachers in Western history of education and teaching and the status of teachers in Europe mostly in Spain, Italy and France where, without much disregard to spiritual values, school teachers' political and ideological affiliations have been the norm in professional teaching.

The web site may interest on teacher the late Orhan Seyfi Ari at **www.geocities.com/eoa_uk**

Source: /apmod2008.org/24 November 2009

NEWS

Addressing Imbalances in Higher Education

The National Sample Survey (NSS) data for 2004-05, indicates rural-urban disparities, gender disparities, inter caste disparities, imbalances in access opportunities for tribal population of the country, disparities amongst religious groups and differences in enrolment rates between the poor and non-poor. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education for the nation as a whole as a percentage of the population cohort in the age group of 18-24 years is 12.4% based on 2007 enrolment data whereas the GER in secondary education (class XI-XII) as a percentage of the population in the age group of 16-18

years is 28.96% based on data reported in Selected Educational Statistics of 2006-07.

During the Eleventh Plan establishment of Central Universities in hitherto uncovered States has been envisaged. 15 New Central Universities have been notified on 15.1.2009 and another Central University has been established in Jammu Division of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The Indira Gandhi National Tribal University (IGNTU) has been established for facilitating and promoting studies in areas concerned with the way of life of the tribal population in the country. A new Regional Centre of the IGNTU has been inaugurated in Manipur. University Grants Commission (UGC) has invited detailed project proposals from State Governments for Establishment of 374 model degree colleges in the districts having GER lower than national level with the Centre-State funding in the ratio of 1:1 for Special Category States and 1:2 for other States. The Eleventh Plan has schemes for incentivizing State Government for setting up of new institutions or expansion of existing institutions with Central assistance with focus on underserved areas, strengthening colleges and State universities with focus on underserved areas which are not presently eligible for receiving assistance from UGC to enable these institutions to fulfil the criteria for UGC assistance, additional assistance to State universities and colleges which are already declared fit to receive grants under Section 12B of the UGC Act. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has permitted second shift in certain engineering colleges and polytechnics. Expansion of intake in Central Educational Institutions by 54% has been undertaken consequent to the implementation of the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admission) Act, 2006. A scheme of interest subsidy during moratorium period for students accessing educational loans for technical and professional education has been notified on 8.9.2009.

This information was given by the Minister of State for Human Resource Development Smt. D. Purandeswari, in a written reply to a question, in the Lok Sabha today.

Source: New Delhi /pib.nic.in/25 November 2009

Diploma courses cannot be termed full-time, warns varsity

Management institutes under University of Pune to face action if they fail to follow norms

The University of Pune (UoP) on Monday warned all the management institutes recognised or affiliated to it to refrain from running diploma course as full-time course. The university has decided to come up with its own norms, which will be binding on the institutes besides AICTE norms, failing to follow which will invite stern action.

The varsity had called a meeting of directors of all the management institutes in the backdrop of increasing complaints by the students. Recently, two management institutes have been found providing diploma courses as full-time courses, claiming they were affiliated to the university. Terming such action illegal, acting Vice-

Chancellor Arun Adsool said such institutes would be served show cause notices.

Dean of management studies Chandrashekhar Chitale said the department has set up three committees to come up with norms for courses like MPM, MCM, MMM and PGDBM. "These norms will be binding on the institutes besides the AICTE norms," he said.

Opposition came from some directors as they argued that their courses would come under threat. But finally, the idea was upheld in the meeting as it was directly related to students. "It is a matter involving the future of the students and the varsity expects institutes take these norms seriously," said Chitale.

"The norms include guidelines about infrastructure such as computers for a class of 60 students, faculty and space. It will also talk about the teaching hours required to complete a subject and need of facilities like library. Institutes will be asked to comply with these standards," he said.

Meanwhile, Adsool has also appealed that parents and students should be careful before taking admission to any institute. "They should verify the recognition of the institute by cross checking with the varsity office or website," he said.

Source: Pune /indianexpress/24 November 2009

Education Reform

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in consultation with the Ministry of Human Resource Development and keeping in view the spirit of National Policy of Education, 1986 has decided to introduce the following education reforms:-

i) There will be no class X Board examination w.e.f. 2011 for students studying CBSE's Senior Secondary Schools and who do not wish to move out of the CBSE system after Class X. The students studying in CBSE's Secondary Schools however, will, be required to appear in Board's external examination because they will be leaving the Secondary School after Class X.

ii) The Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation has been strengthened in all CBSE affiliated schools w.e.f. October 2009 in Class IX.

iii) The new Grading System has been introduced at Secondary School Level (for Class IX and X) effective from 2009-10 academic sessions.

The Right of Children to Free & Compulsory Education Act 2009 has been enacted, which envisages significant reforms in the Elementary Education sector especially with reference to admission, attendance and completion of elementary education by all children in schools which conform to specified norms and standards.

Appropriate policy reforms in the higher education sector have also been undertaken, Section 6 of the Central Universities Act, 2009 provides for academic reforms in newly established Central Universities. The reforms are being extended to other Central Educational Institutions also.

This information was given by the Minister of State for Human Resource Development Smt. D. Purandeswari, in a written reply to a question, in the Rajya Sabha today.

Source: New Delhi /pib.nic.in/20 November 2009

Emphasis is on human resource development

The central government has sanctioned Rs. 3 lakh crore for the National Knowledge Commission in the 11th Plan, a four-fold increase over the 10th Plan allocation, according to Union Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee.

Mr. Mukherjee, whose valedictory address at the silver jubilee celebrations of VIT University here on Sunday was read out in his absence by Union Minister for Shipping G.K. Vasan, said India produced 2.5 million graduates every year, and this constituted just 10 per cent of the youths in the age group suitable for higher education. Hence, the Centre was laying more emphasis on human resource development.

He said it was proposed to start 15 new universities. Six new Indian Institutes of Technology were opened, and an Indian Institute of Management (the Rajiv Gandhi Indian Institute of Management) was set up in Shillong, all during 2008-09. New Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research were established in Bhopal and Thiruvananthapuram.

"In line with the recommendations of the National Knowledge Commission, I am in favour of starting smaller universities, which are responsive to change, and can be managed easily. This requires policy measures and changes in resource allocation. Educational infrastructure such as libraries, laboratories and connectivity needs to be monitored and upgraded regularly," he said. He appealed to the students to compete at the world level through ethical means to build a strong and prosperous nation.

Mr. Vasan unveiled the Silver Jubilee Commemorative Pillar and the Silver Jubilee Tower.

Chancellor of VIT University G. Viswanathan urged the Centre to introduce the 'voucher system' (which is in vogue in many foreign countries) that enables individual students to join institution of their choice.

He said:

"This system will not only help to improve the quality of higher educational institutions but will also ensure a healthy competition among the institutions.

"At present, we find too many regulations and controls, which will stifle innovation, competition and quality of education. Students should be given enough freedom to choose the institutions. This will ensure that the low quality institutions will leave the business.

"What was done to the economic policy in 1991 should be done to the education policy now to improve and expand higher education."

Mr. Viswanathan wanted educational institutions categorised on the basis of their quality, and not on the basis of whether they belonged to the Central and State governments or the private sector.

As for the introduction of the Fully Flexible Credit System (FFCS) in the VIT, he said he wanted all other universities to follow suit, and favoured a 'credit transfer system,' which would facilitate transfer of students from one university to another within the country.

The VIT was prepared to help other universities to introduce this system by sharing its experience. "We want the entire community to grow. We also want to use the institution as an instrument of growth in this party of the country", he said.

Bryan Dalton, Consular Chief, U.S. Embassy, who handed over the ABET certificate to Mr. Viswanathan, said India was the top supplier of students to the U.S., with one lakh students visiting the U.S. every year.

''The VIT is the first and currently the only Indian engineering institution to get the ABET accreditation in the undergraduate civil and mechanical engineering programme. This certificate means the mechanical engineering and civil engineering graduates of the VIT can obtain the professional engineer licence in the U.S., which has worldwide recognition," he said.

ABET is a recognised accrediting agency in the U.S. for evaluating educational programmes in applied science, computers, engineering and technology.

Rwandan Minister for Education Charles Murigande released the VIT journal. The former Union Minister, K.V. Thangkabalu, inaugurated the Nethaji Subhas Chandra Bose Block and released a book on 'VIT History.'

Abdul Rahman, Vellore MP, and C. Gnanasekharan, MLA, donated furniture and other equipment to government schools on behalf of the VIT.

Kayumba Nyamwasa, Ambassador, Republic of Rwanda, and Sekar Viswanathan and G.V. Selvam, Pro-Chancellors, spoke.

Mr. Viswanathan honoured E.S. Daniel Gunanidhi, the then Collector of the composite North Arcot district, for identifying the land needed to set up the VIT University in 1984-85.

Vice-Chancellor D.P. Kothari and B.V.A. Rao, Advisor to the Chancellor, spoke.

Source: VIT /beta.thehindu/29 November 2009

Ex-CJI heads committee to suggest fee in technical institutes

The All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) has set up a committee under the chairmanship of a former Chief Justice of India to suggest fee structure in technical institutes, the Lok Sabha was told on Wednesday.

The committee under Justice Rangnath Mishra is in the process of finalising its report, Minister of State for HRD, D Purandeswari, said in a written reply.

The AICTE, the apex body to standardise technical education in the country, has received some complaints about charging of capitation fee by certain institutes, she said.

The government is considering bringing a law to prohibit and punish unfair practices, including capitation fee, she said.

The University Grants Commission has also prepared a regulation for admission and fee structure in deemed universities. This is under the consideration of the government, she said.

Source: New Delhi /expressindia/25 November 2009

Govt. continues to flout AICTE norms Last Updated

Even as Kerala High Court Bench has passed severe strictures against the State Government on October 6 for its lack of seriousness to streamline the professional technical education sector, the authorities concerned continue to dilly-dally on the issue.

The Government was told to ensure the prescribed additional professional qualifications of faculty members in educational institutions as per AICTE schemes.

The High Court had passed a final verdict directing to quash Rule 6(A) in the amended special rules of 2004, which gave protection to those under-qualified teachers in the matter of promotions.

It also ordered to prepare the list of qualified people as per the AICTE norms from those who have applied during April 2008 and effect promotions within two months.

Interestingly, a section in the government is keen to outwit the order, stand by the interests of the under-qualified teachers, and grant them promotions. The alleged move to approach the court again has created a great divide among the faculty of many streams in government engineering colleges of the state.

Even after 23 years since the AICTE scheme had been implemented, the Government is still promoting under-qualified teachers and giving higher scales of pay as per AICTE scheme.

The revised AICTE scheme 1996 was issued by the GO(P) No 68/2000/HEdn dated 18.5.2000. In the said order, the Government categorically admits its failure to implement the AICTE scheme.

The Government also confessed that the standard of technical education had not improved, even though higher scales of pay were given to the teaching faculty.

The Government clarified that by amending the special rules, promotions will be done in future. But for the past nine years, the Government has been promoting under-qualified teachers, it is alleged.

When AICTE scheme was implemented in the State, every faculty member was given freedom to submit his or her option in accordance with the usual practice in Government service. Accordingly, the teachers were allowed to opt

either the then existing State special rules of 1967 or AICTE scheme.

At the time of implementation of the AICTE scheme, the teachers who were not qualified, were given protection till October 28, 1989, and allowed to draw salary as per the AICTE scale. It was also stated that "all future promotions after 1-04-1990 will be done as per AICTE scheme only".

Justice Siri Jagan, while passing the order in October had observed that it is unbecoming on the part of the Government to sacrifice the technical education.

Source: Kottayam /expressbuzz/17 November 2009

Govt. may allow private sector investment in education

The Centre plans to allow the (for-profit) private sector to set up educational institutions and tap the capital market, thus aiming to plug the funding gap in the education sector. In this regard, the Human Resource Development (HRD) ministry has asked Max India Chairman Analjit Singh to prepare a feasibility paper.

HRD Minister Kapil Sibal did so during a roundtable in New Delhi with Singh and other members, including Sunil Alagh, chairman of SKA Advisors, Hari Bhartia, co-chairman and MD of Jubilant Organosys, and Rajendra Pawar, chairman of NIIT.

Singh is one of the founder supporters of Indian School of Business (ISB's) second campus at the Knowledge City, Mohali and has donated Rs 50 crore for the campus. Other founder supporters include the Bharti, Hero and Punj Lloyd groups.

Analjit Singh's office confirmed the development, but declined to divulge details.

MHRD sources confirmed that the government wanted to plug the funding gap in the education sector and the private sector's participation is being perceived as one such method that could go a long way in bridging the deficit.

According to a recent Ernst & Young report; the resource gap in higher education identified by Planning Commission stands at Rs 220,000 crore.

"At present, education in India needs huge funding and this cannot come from the central and state governments alone. We are discussing various options and private participation is an obvious one," said an MHRD official. He, however, added that issues relating to for-profit privatisation of education were still being debated.

Economists say there is a larger "private" benefit in the higher education sector as it allows students to be placed in the employment market and thus it should charge accordingly and for-profit private players should be allowed in the sector.

The issues in permitting the entry of for-profit entities in education pertain to educational institutes being an "enduring" entity as compared to a company.

"A company can close today but if an institute shuts down, the future of students is at stake. Once the student enters the institution, he is locked in and does not have a place to move out. We need to deal with such issues and this is being debated," added the MHRD official.

Also, at present, profits cannot be taken out of the education institution and have to be reinvested. There is no concept of payment of any dividend to its members. Educational institutions enjoy all the privileges of charitable trusts, but are scrutinised by the Income-Tax Department and not Charity Commissioner, unlike limited companies.

Incidentally, the MHRD is also considering if 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.

Only trusts, societies or companies can set up currently educational institutions in India, 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 allowed companies registered under the Act to start private unaided schools last year.

Source: Mumbai /business-standard/21 November 2009

Higher education in top universities in India

Indian universities are the ideal destination for students; who wish to continue their higher education, at reliable fees and in an educational institution with university rankings, university profiles and university rating.

Indian universities are the ideal destination for students, who wish to continue their higher education, at reliable fees and in an educational institution with university rankings, university profiles and university rating. All the top Universities in India ensure to offer top quality education, which a student expects from an Indian university. These best universities enhance the prestigious image of the country.

The Delhi University is one among the top Indian universities that is poised with the wide range of quality education to the students, who are about 300,000 in number. Students can continue their higher education through correspondence courses, as well. This Indian university is well established with most modern lab facilities and Delhi University is well known for its high standards on teaching and research.

Amity University nestled in Rajasthan also comes under the category of best universities among Indian universities list. Students who wish to pursue higher education in non-profit organization can opt for this magnificent India University. Range of courses are offered in diversified fields and they mould the students, to cherish as successful leaders, through integrated education, where they insist on all round development, with Ivy League universities in US as their model.

Kanpur University is one among the top universities in India with its amazing ace university rating. More than 170 colleges are affiliated in the university profiles. This India University revises the courses and university rankings with the newest trends and has unique teaching technique to offer positive stimulus in learning.

Uttar Pradesh Technical University is one among the largest institute to offer technical education, in Asia and among all other Indian universities. Status for this university is special among the top universities, as it has nearly 238 institutes and colleges excelling in top university rating and every institute come under fantastic university rankings, university profile and university rating.

Anna university of Chennai too is listed among the best universities in India; is under UGC, affiliated to UNESCO and India Universities Association. More than 250 private engineering colleges, three government aided colleges and six government colleges are under this university. University rating is augmented with top quality library facilities in this Indian university.

Maharishi Dayanand University is elected among the best universities in India, with its 126 educational institutions and colleges to pursue higher education in superior university profiles. This India University is enriched with university rankings in varied departments in different fields of education and including linguistics studies is the exceptional feature of this India University.

University of Madras is more than 150 years old among the top universities in India. The Open University and distance education with wonderful university rankings are exclusively mentioned in the university profiles.

Alagappa University, located in TamilNadu, too is enlisted in the top universities among Indian universities list, for its fame on international alliance with various higher education institutes in China, West Indies, USA, South Korea and Malaysia. The students can sort out for regular, distance, weekend and alliance modes of education in this India University.

Annamailai University is accredited among the best universities in India with its wide infrastructure for the students. Along with educational facilities, it is known for NCC, Red Cross, and various other opportunities for social services offered in university profiles.

Pune University is known for its academic excellence and registered among the top universities in India. University ratings are enhanced for its completely equipped infrastructure like lab for Air, soil and water analysis; computer, remote sensing, Ion Analyzer, Weather monitoring amenities, and many more updated conveniences in education.

Source: /live-pr.com/22 November 2009

India remains attractive for B-school aspirants

Foreign universities may be going the extra mile to lure Indian students abroad, but a new report reveals that Indian students who aspire for a Master in Business Administration (MBA) degree continue to find the country an attractive destination for higher studies.

Consider this. The Indian School of Business (ISB) has overtaken Harvard Business School for the first time in terms of schools/programmes to which Asian citizens sent score reports, according to the 2009 Application Trends Survey. It was conducted by the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC), which owns and administers the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT).

While the US tops the wish-list of Indian students chasing their management education dreams with 74,948 scores (56.87 per cent) sent, it's India that follows with 21,440 scores (16.27 per cent). The UK came third with 10,909 (8.28 per cent) scores, states the report.

And the recent closure of bankrupt colleges in Australia coupled with the "bashing" of Indian students appears to have hit the country badly. The island nation received only 2,072 scores (1.57 per cent) from Indian students this year to stand seventh in the list of Top 10 countries.

The survey also states that the per cent change of score reports sent by Indian citizens to Indian schools increased by 23 per cent from testing year (TY) 2008 to TY 2009. In TY 2008, Indian citizens sent a total 127,916 score reports to 10 countries, which increased 3 per cent, or 3,870 score reports to 131,786 in 2009.

"In 2008, the US spearheaded the growth in the number of applications for full-time MBA programmes, whereas, it appears that growth in 2009 was primarily driven by programmes located in other world regions across all MBA programme types," the report states.

The study further stated that the applications are down to half of the executive MBA programmes while the average number of applications per programme declined 25 per cent. Part-time MBA programmes experienced two distinct trends — nearly half (45 per cent) of the programmes reported an average decline of 22 per cent in applications, and 42 per cent of part-time programmes had an average increase of 40 per cent. This translated into an overall positive change of 7 per cent in part-time programme application volume, despite the fact that slightly fewer programmes reported an increase in applications than those that reported a decline.

Flexible MBA programmes continued to attract more applications — two-thirds of such programmes surveyed (66 per cent) reported an increase in application volume; the average participating programme received 14 per cent more applications in 2009 than in 2008, the report further states.

Graduate management programmes participating in the 2009 GMAC survey received nearly 230,000 completed applications from approximately 75,000 candidates. Created in 1954, GMAT is the only standardised test designed by business schools specifically for graduate business and management programmes.

The IIM Bangalore recently joined 178 leading business schools from 19 countries, which accept GMAT. In India,

ISB, Great Lakes, SP Jain, MICA, TAPMI, IIM-B, among other accept the GMAT scores. The GMAT exam is offered the year-round at more than 450 test centers in over 110 countries. In testing year 2009 (July 1, 2008-June 30, 2009), a record number of 265,213 exams were administered.

Source: Ahmedabad/business-standard/23 Nov. 2009

India's bid for membership of Washington Accord rejected

India has bid to become a full-fledged member of the Washington Accord, an international agreement for which, the 13-member grouping has turned down standardising engineering education.

India, which is a provisional member of the Washington Accord, will again seek for full-fledged membership next year.

The application of National Board of Accreditation (NBA), the body under All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) for accreditation engineering institutes, was rejected after two mentors of the Washington Accord gave adverse reports.

They suggested that India should wait for some more time till the revised criteria for accreditation, which came into force on January one this year, yield results.

''The two mentors, appointed by the Washington Accord, came here and examined our accreditation system. They felt that India needs to wait some more time till the new accreditation guidelines yield results,'' a senior AICTE official said.

They will again evaluate the outcome of the new guidelines and suggest accordingly, he said.

The Washington Accord, signed in 1989, recognises substantial equivalence in the accreditation of qualifications in professional engineering, normally of four years duration.

Signing the accord will enhance mobility of the engineering graduates of India to go to any of the signatory countries and do jobs or pursue further studies.

India became a provisional member of Washington Accord in 2007. The elite grouping has Australia, Canada, Taipei, Hong Kong, Ireland, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, United Kingdom and United States as its members.

Germany, Russia and Sri Lanka are the other provisional members of this accord.

The AICTE has revised the criteria for accreditation of institutes to bring them at par with the international level.

As per the revised procedure, the overall placement success of the institute and satisfaction and comfort level of students would be considered while giving accreditation.

The visiting team of NBA will take into consideration the enrolment status, admission norms for students and if the institute is able to fill up all or nearly all the seats for the programmes which it runs.

Facilities for career guidance and arrangement to assist students suffering from psychological disorders are also part of the accreditation procedure

Source: New Delhi /beta.thehindu/16 November 2009

Masters in law may soon be a one-year affair

The HRD ministry's Round Table on Legal Education has decided to look at the possibility of turning the two-year LLM course into a one-year programme.

There was near-unanimity that LLM should be brought at par with international level. Post-graduation in law is a one-year course world over.

The round table also decided to look into the feasibility of introducing law as a subject at the undergraduate level as well as having one-year diploma course in law so that a large pool of para-legal personnel was created. The meeting also decided to explore possibilities of setting up a highbrow legal research institute on public private partnership.

A seven-member committee, including two from foreign law institutes, will be set up to prepare a report on India's legal requirement by 2020. T K Vishwanathan, advisor, law ministry, said that earlier attempts to set up four Centres for Advanced Legal Studies and the Planning Commission, as suggested by the National Knowledge Commission, did not approve Research. Therefore, it was decided that the ministry should focus on setting up one institute.

HRD ministry's discussion paper circulated in the meeting also talked about bringing law into mainstream higher education. It suggested starting degree courses in law and economics dealing with application of economic theory and econometric methods to examine the formation, structure, processes and impact of law and legal institutions. Similarly, the paper recommended courses in regulatory law, business law, international law, environment law, constitutional law, general law and education in law.

As for teaching law in schools, the round table decided to first prepare a compendium of what is being taught in schools.

A few members suggested that there should be a curriculum review but HRD minister Kapil Sibal said Bar Council of India had already set up a course review committee. Therefore, the ministry should first examine the committee's report and then decide what needed to be done.

Source: New Delhi /timesofindia/18 November 2009

Modernisation of Engineering Colleges

The Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme – I (TEQIP-I) of the HRD Ministry was conceived and designed as a long term project to be implemented in 10-12 years in three phases to support excellence and transformation in technical education in the country. 127 institutions participated in TEQIP-I, out of which 18 were

Centrally Funded Institutions and the remaining 109 were State Institutions. The State Institutions were from the Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal. The total allocation for these Institutions was Rs.1339 crore.

All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) also has a scheme aimed at Modernisation and Removal of Obsolescence (MODROBS) in the Laboratories/Workshops/Computing facilities in technical institutions. There is a scheme for upgradation of 200 State engineering institutions in the XIth Plan. Some proposals have been received from the State Governments under this scheme. The proposals shall be approved after the criteria for selection is decided upon.

This information was given by the Minister of State for Human Resource Development Smt. D. Purandeswari, in a written reply to a question, in the Lok Sabha today.

Source: New Delhi /pib.nic.in/25 November 2009

Profit should not be motive for Pvt. Investors in education

At a time when the Centre is keen to open up the education sector and mulling over legislation to rope in foreign players in the education sector, UGC Chairman Sukhdeo Thorat on Sunday said that while investing in education the private players should not go after profit.

''The private sector's role in higher education should not be subject to commercialisation and profit-making. A reasonable surplus can be generated but that has to be invested in education again," Thorat said at a function organised by Calcutta Chamber of Commerce in Kolkata.

In West Bengal, the UGC will provide financial help to 23 colleges, which are proposed to be set up in the backward districts. Thorat said the Centre is trying a step-by-step improvement of education quality along with increasing the number of NET fellowship from 1,600 to 6,000. Thorat said efforts are on to bring in academic reforms like semester system, choice based semester system and replacing marks by grades in the state universities.

Source: Kolkata /indianexpress/23 November 2009

Quota in PhD a reality in all universities

Community based reservations in admission into PhD and M.Phil courses are a reality now in all universities and higher educational institutions in the country.

The University of Madras syndicate had set the ball rolling in this direction on Friday last when it approved the implementation of the quota system in the highest levels of academic programmes offered by the university. Soon universities across the country would be replicating this model in their respective states as the University Grants Commission (UGC) has already recommended quotas in research studies.

In a policy decision notified in the gazette in July this year, the UGC has laid down that: "While granting admission to students to M.Phil/PhD programmes, the department/institute/school will pay due attention to the national / state reservation policy." This mandate forms part of the UGC (Minimum Standards and Procedure for Award of M.Phil/PhD Degree) Regulation, 2009.

Hitherto, higher educational institutions including state universities had largely confined communal quotas in admission of students into undergraduate and postgraduate courses alone. Earlier, the Supreme Court had ruled that reservations cannot be extended to students seeking admission into super-specialty academic programmes in professional courses.

Research studies in the field of arts and science, incidentally, are not considered to be super-specialty courses. Besides, the number of postgraduates who choose to pursue an M.Phil or PhD degree is abysmally low in India. Academics have often opined that there is a need to encourage more students to pursue doctoral studies, particularly in the field of basic sciences. In that context, introducing quota for the OBCs could help in increasing the number of research scholars in universities.

The UGC, however, has not directed the universities to extend any concession to students belonging to the reserved categories, namely Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Most Backward Classes and Backward Classes (OBCs). "Therefore, the usual argument of anti-quota activists about merit being affected due to reservations would not arise," reasoned a professor of a government-aided college in Chennai.

The 2009 regulations make it clear that all universities including deemed universities and institutions of national importance "shall admit M.Phil doctoral students through an entrance test conducted at the level of individual university." However, the institution authorities can decide on setting separate terms and conditions for students who qualify the UGC/CSIR (Junior Research Fellow) examinations, National/State Eligibility Tests.

Admission will be based on the performance of aspirants in the entrance test and an interview to be conducted separately.

"These regulations have come into effect and therefore every university must adhere to it. The University of Madras has taken the lead by setting up a committee to work out the nitty-gritty for the smooth implementation of the communal reservations. It would be a matter of time before other universities adopt the regulations," the professor argued.

This quota is unlikely to kick up dust unlike the stormy protests witnessed when OBC quota was implemented in IITs and IIMs.

Source: Chennai /timesofindia/24 November 2009

Science Express' back in city

The Indo-German initiative launched by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the German Ministry of Higher Education and Research, is back in the city for the third time. This time, the mobile science exhibition in a 16-coach AC train, has more attractions -a dedicated coach on climate change and the 'joy of science' laboratory where students can conduct hands-on experiments. The Science Express will be stationed at Khadki Station from November 18 to 21 between 10 am to 5 pm.

'There is a dedicated coach on climate change - cause, effect and mitigation, as an initiative of the 'Earth Sciences Forum'. There are also exhibits on topics like the glorious legacy of India, future programmes in science and technology, India's achievements in IT, biotechnology, space, Nano-technology, besides film shows on innovations, inventions, discoveries and topical issues. It has more than 300 large-format visual images, over 150 video clips and multimedia exhibits. The exhibits depict the origin of the universe, glimpses of space, black holes, galaxies, on the way to the Big Bang, our home in the cosmos, Earth, simpler cold atoms, ultra short light, building blocks of life from gene to organism, the world of senses, architecture of the mind, renewable energy, technologies and energy sources for future, nano cosmos, bio-engineering, genetics, cell biology, computer applications in medicine and global challenges.

The innovative science exhibition has been specially fabricated for the department of Science & Technology (DST), Government of India by the Rail Coach Factory, Kapurthala. The exhibits have been designed and developed by Max Planck Society Germany, a Noble laureate powerhouse. According to Dilip Surkar, executive director of VASCSC, the main objective of this unique venture is to nurture curiosity amongst our youth and rekindle their waning interest in science.

Though the exhibition is open to all, it primarily targets high school and college students. There is no entry fee for the exhibition.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and German Chancellor Angela Merkel from New Delhi flagged off Science Express in 2007. The 'joy of science' lab is open to high school students to conduct hand-on experiments in Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Maths. Students can participate in small batches of up to 20 students in this lab facilitated by registration. For participation, send an email to vascsc.jos@gmail.com or contact the lab in-charge on 09428405408.

Source: /indianexpress/18 November 2009

Software to catch copycats in universities

For those who prefer to have a PhD degree just to get a job, this one is bad news. In what could change the face of research in universities across the country, the Information and Library Network Center (INFLIBNET), an autonomous inter-university of UGC, is all set to come up with unique software that will trace plagiarism in research papers.

In July this year, the University Grants Commission (UGC) had issued a notification to universities regarding the minimum standards and procedure for awarding MPhil or PhD degree. The notification has incorporated certain changes or conditions for the entire process and has asked universities to submit soft copies of thesis to INFLIBNET.

"The idea is to upload research work across the country on the net and make it accessible to all universities and colleges connected with us. This will enable students and faculties to read the theses," said Jagdish Arora, director of INFLIBNET.

"The anti-plagiarism software will trace the theses which are copied from elsewhere.

Moreover, readers can also easily find out if what they have in front of them is plagiarised. The objective is to expose the person who has done the research," Arora told **DNA**.

He further said that universities will have to submit the soft copies on individual basis to INFLIBNET. But before that, there are various changes that have to be incorporated by the educational institutes.

It's worth mentioning that UGC had proposed holding entrance test, followed by an interview around where candidates can discuss their research area or interest for the candidates of PhD. Such test will be conducted at individual university level. Regarding the number of seats for MPhil and PhD, the universities will have to decide in advance and will be notified on their websites.

"We have already accepted the proposal after discussing it in academic council of the varsity. We will be implementing it from next academic year (2010-11). The move is commendable in the sense that it not only stops plagiarism but also improves the quality of research," said BA Prajapati, vice-chancellor of Veer Narmad South Gujarat University, Surat.

However, other universities are yet to step forward as they will have to adopt the changes after getting approval from the syndicate and senate. According to Arora, the interesting part of the development is that around four individual scholars have submitted the soft copy of their research works.

Source: Ahmedabad /dnaindia/21 November 2009

Students with 45% marks to be eligible for BEd course soon

Students who have got 45% aggregate marks in degree will be able to get admissions to BEd courses as the government will soon issue an order to universities in the state to follow National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) norms for admissions to BEd courses, which makes 45% as the minimum. At present with the exception of Mysore University, all others prescribe 50% as the minimum for BEd admissions.

Principal secretary, higher education A S Srikanth told TOI that there was confusion regarding eligibility percentage for admission to BEd courses and the government will issue a circular to all universities to follow NCTE norms. The confusion arose following the BEd Common Entrance Examination (CEE) prospectus this year, specifying 45% as the marks needed to appear for CEE. Lakhs of students wrote the BEd CEE in November and those with 45% will be in the lurch if 50% criterion is adhered to.

This is significant as all universities in the state, barring Mysore University, puts the minimum percentage at 50% for admissions to BEd course. Mangalore University has already sent a proposal amending the aggregate percentage to 45% to the government for approval, said a university official. For SC/ST/ physically handicapped it's 40%. Jayashree Kamath, assistant registrar, Mangalore University, admitted there was confusion, but unless government approves their proposal, they cannot give admissions to students having 45%.

An official from Centralized Admission Cell, Bangalore, put the onus on education minister to take the initiative to exempt students who have taken CET this year from that clause, if the universities adhere to the 50% clause.

What Gave Rise to Confusion

Regarding how the confusion was created, the official said the education department had sent the proposal for 45% for admission according to NCTE norms for all universities, as Mysore University had got approval for admissions for that aggregate. ``We did not want legal complications from other universities, hence the proposal,'' the official said adding the cabinet had approved it, with a clause that it should be according to NCTE norms. In the meantime, the official claimed that NCTE changed its norms to 50% (45% for others) aggregate in August and the department was caught in a bind as it came to know of the norms after the CEE was conducted in November. But no one, including university authorities is aware of new NCTE norms. Srikanth said even he was not aware of NCTE prescribing the minimum to 50%.

The NCTE norms and standards for BEd courses notified on 18.11.2002 along with the regulations, 2002 prescribed 45% as the minimum marks in bachelor / master degree for admission to BEd course. This was subsequently raised to 50% in the norms and standards for BEd course notified on 21.07.2006. Due to references received from several states for lowering the minimum marks to 45% and restoring it to the norms of 2002, the norms notified by NCTE in 2007 have restored the position stipulated in 2002.

Source: Mangalore /timesofindia/24 November 2009

UGC exemptions from test for lecturers' appointment irks HRD

The HRD ministry has objected to the attempt by UGC to give selective exemption from the National Eligibility Test/ State Level Eligibility Test for appointment as lecturers.

In a communication to the Commission, the ministry pointed out that it was "not competent" to grant such exemption much after notifying in June that NET/SLET is the mandatory minimum eligibility criterion for recruitment and appointment of lecturers. The ministry said UGC's June notification had made it clear that exemptions could be given to only those who have been awarded Ph.D as per set procedure and standard. In the Commission's last full meeting on October 27, the request from several universities for exemption from NET was approved.

The ministry told UGC not to issue any formal order till the matter is reconsidered in the full commission meeting.

What has specially irked the ministry is that many individuals were granted exemption under the UGC Regulation of 2000. HRD said the 2000 Regulation could not be invoked since they no longer apply after the June regulation. The ministry also told UGC to ensure that "ante-dated" proposals are not considered for exemption.

Meanwhile, in the full commission meeting on Thursday, UGC also approved the report of 15 deemed universities prepared by its review committee, which would be sent to the HRD ministry. Sources said the UGC committee had not found anything amiss in these deemed universities. A few inadequacies have been pointed out but these institutions have been given time to fulfill these requirements. Now, the reports of only 25 deemed universities are left to be finalised.

The ministry's own review committee is busy making additional observations in its report that was given to HRD minister Kapil Sibal in September. The committee met for two consecutive days on November 17 and 18 to take a fresh look at the report so that it becomes easier for the ministry to take some action against deemed universities.

Source: New Delhi /timesofindia/20 November 2009

ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

Can India become a global knowledge center?

India —— India is a country of great contradictions as far as higher education is concerned. It is among the countries with the most higher education institutions in the world, and ranks third in student numbers after China and the United States. Yet not a single Indian university is ranked in the top 20 Asian universities, according to a recent list compiled by Quacquarelli Symonds, a company that specializes in education and helps students and businesses network.

In the QS list of top 200 Asian universities, only 11 Indian institutions are named. Besides the string of Indian Institutes of Technology, only four Indian universities have made the cut. The overall quality of higher education in India lags far behind that in comparable countries.

About 12 percent of India's young people, or 11 million students, enroll in higher education. This number is expected to grow at about 5 percent annually. In

comparison, enrollment levels are 25 percent in the United States and 16 percent in China; the average in the developed world is around 22 percent.

India needs more institutions of higher education, as the population from 15 to 24 years of age is expected to hit about 235 million by 2010, or around 19 percent of the population. Otherwise, the country will see a shortfall of 5 million university seats by 2015 and 7 million by 2020.

At India's universities the most popular fields are the arts and humanities, followed by social sciences, business and law. The first two streams together attract nearly two-thirds of students, while engineering attracts only 7 percent. To compete in a fiercely globalized economy, India will need more highly trained professionals.

India's top 10 high-growth sectors are telecommunications, information technology and IT-related services, health-care and pharmaceuticals, banking and finance, engineering goods, real estate and construction, retail and consumer goods, tourism and hospitality, automotive and aviation.

Future employment demand for these industries is estimated at 5 million professionals in 2015 and 6.5 million in 2020. Therefore, there is a need to reorient students to fill these needs in the coming years.

So far, India's moderately well-trained university graduates have permitted the country to move ahead. But the competition is fierce.

China in particular is investing heavily in improving its top universities and research facilities, aiming to bring them on par with elite universities elsewhere in the world. Other Asian countries are also upgrading, with the aim of building world-class universities. Taiwan, a major designer and producer of IT hardware, is considering merging several of its technical universities to create an "Asian MIT" – to compete with the Cambridge-based Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The government has increased its allocation for higher education to 0.7 percent of gross domestic product, which is unlikely to grow further, though it is not enough to meet the rising demand. Therefore, the private sector must play an equal role.

As Sam Pitroda, the chairman of India's National Knowledge Commission, said, "We are on the right course to reach our goal of making India a developed country," with the government taking all possible corrective measures and soliciting the presence of the private sector in the field of higher education.

Currently, there are more than 16,000 registered higher education colleges affiliated to 543 universities and more than 7,700 institutions providing diploma and certificate courses. In addition, there are hundreds of unregistered institutions that have no formal recognition from universities or the state Education Department.

The number of educational institutions will grow because, first, the growth of India's service sector will increasingly demand more skilled manpower. Presently, even India's best educational centers are not enough to accommodate the increasing student numbers. The vast majority of students applying to the Indian Institute of Technology and Indian Institute of Management are rejected due to capacity constraints. Many then tend to study overseas.

Second, according to a report by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India, Indians spend more than US$4 billion annually on overseas education. But foreign-bound students will tend to remain in India if it can offer enough quality institutes and courses.

Third, with globalization demanding increased levels of skilled manpower India, like the United States, Britain and Australia, can become a destination for foreign students from the developing world, particularly Asia and Africa.

Cross-border education has become an important component of higher education, complimenting the globalization of economic production. Countries like to promote their profiles internationally and having quality educational institutions adds value. Besides, the income from foreign student enrollment is attractive to institutions, especially when support from governments is declining. Income from foreign students accounts for more than one-third of total income at some Australian universities. India can learn from this trend.

Fourth, with the rise of India's middle class, expenditure in higher education is bound to grow in the years to come. For instance, in fiscal year 2007, approximately 7 percent of urban India's per capita monthly household expenditure was spent on education.

Besides, banks are more than willing to offer loans for higher education. The country's nationalized banks alone disbursed education loans of approximately 200 billion rupees (US$4.32 billion) to about 1.25 million students in fiscal year 2008. Private-sector banks had a portfolio of approximately 5 billion rupees (US$108 million) in the same period.

In fiscal year 2008, the portfolio of education loans by banks witnessed a growth of 40 percent and the number of students taking loans increased by 33 percent compared to the previous year. A 40-percent rise is expected in fiscal year 2009 and is expected to gain further momentum year-on-year.

Viewed thus, more exciting challenges and opportunities beckon India's higher education sector today.

Source: New Delhi /upiasia/18 November 2009

CBSE open to public-private-partnerships in affiliated schools

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has said that it is now open to public-private partnerships in affiliated schools, not just in infrastructure but in other aspects of providing quality education to its students, including curriculum, assessment, training teachers and classroom technologies.

Education officer of the CBSE, Dr Sadhana Parashar, who played an active role in evolving the recently announced examination reforms and continuous comprehensive evaluation, said, "Curriculum reform began 10 years ago, but it took a long time to implement it. We are now looking at assessment in a holistic manner. The government will look at public-private partnerships in areas besides infrastructure. The CBSE is open to such partnerships for supportive holding in areas such as curriculum, support material and assessment. The modalities will have to be worked out before it is taken as a policy decision." She was speaking at a conference focused on improving the quality of school education in the country, organised by social enterprise, iDiscoveri Education.

Speakers at the conference came up with suggestions to build quality in schools. James Tooley, professor of education policy at Newcastle University, who has researched private education for the poor in India, spoke of "deregulation of high quality schools of tomorrow that India of the lower-middle class and the lower class can access". Speakers called for higher private participation for innovative practices to seep through.

The key speaker, renowned psychologist Dr Howard Gardner, who propounded the theory of multiple intelligences, spoke about the schools of tomorrow. Professor Gardner said that while there could be no one ideal school of tomorrow, an ideal situation would be where each child had his or her own school, own material, own objectives and own ways of achieving them. He said, "In future, schools will probably not exist as a standalone entity. There will be less of a boundary between the home, school and community, with focus on individual education."

Source: Chennai /timesofindia/26 November 2009

Design to learn better

There has been a growing awareness on textbook design. "Textbook design is being looked upon as a serious proposition because of several reasons.

Firstly, teachers are seeking textbooks that are designed in a manner which helps them access key information easily. Secondly, both teachers and students are seeking design layouts that can help simplify the teaching/learning process," says Kate Kunac, head of design, Schoolbooks, Oxford University Press. Further elaborating, she says, "The learning experience can be augmented through design. Right fonts, correct spacing, appropriate font and paper colours, and accurate tints can go a long way in engaging learners and ultimately enhancing recall."

Kunac states that the fundamental principle in textbook design is that design has to complement the subject and communicate its essence. "However, design needs to go beyond this role. It should convey concepts effectively as well," she adds. Citing an example, Kunac says, "For instance, mathematics textbooks need to have a clear layout for equations.

But the UK's curriculum now requires us to add sections to the books that look at how mathematics is used in the context of everyday life. We have spreads designed specifically to illustrate concepts like patterns in nature, measurement/travel distances, shopping/budgeting, and construction of buildings, among others. We have been able to achieve this by employing engaging imagery that eventually helps in augmenting interest of students towards mathematics as a subject."

Talking about the nuances to be borne in mind while designing textbooks, Kunac says, "There is a standard set of requirements around cultural sensitivity including representing all ethnicities (as across the UK), in our books and not specifically referring to any religious or political content that will limit our audience. Moreover, we keep in mind students who have special learning needs and include examples of such people in our titles.

Fonts and typography must be clear — type that is either white or coloured on a dark background is impossible to read. Many of our students have reading problems, and we endeavour to make things as clear for them as possible.

The principles that work are — dark text on light backgrounds, font sizes appropriate to the age of the learning group, generous leading and line lengths that are not too long. We have also commissioned special fonts, which make readability easier (eg. making sure the 'd' and 'bs' look different — these are letters which are confusing for dyslexic students)."

Kunac reveals that textbook designers also need to be aware of what students read in their pastime and which computer games are popular. "The objective is to employ design elements (in terms of heading font or illustration/colour palette) that will truly interest the student, while being readable," she elaborates.

Source: /timesofindia/23 November 2009

Europe of knowledge

Malini Sen Reports from Brussels on how the Bologna process is shaping the future of higher education in Europe while aiming to facilitate student mobility across the globe.

European higher education is currently going through a major transformation involving more than 5600 institutions and 31 million students on the continent. Aimed at supporting mobility within Europe and the rest of the world, the Bologna Process will create, by 2010, a European Higher Education Area through adapting higher education systems so that they are more uniformly structured and their qualifications more understandable.

Though voluntary, the Bologna Process has grown from 29 countries in 1999 to 46 today. "This ambitious reform process also attempts to answer some of Europe's social and economic challenges by enhancing the quality of its education, research capacity and graduate employability," says Andrew Miller, deputy director, Communications, European University Association (EUA).

The Bologna reforms focus on a three-cycle degree structure (Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctorate), quality assurance in higher education and recognition of qualifications and periods of study. "The reforms encourage us to rethink the content of learning, to make pedagogy more student-centred and to consider whether a given programme of study adequately addresses the needs of graduates; and to consider whether graduates will acquire the knowledge, skills and competencies they need to succeed in an ever-changing labour market," says Vito Borelli, European Commission (directorate-general for education and culture).

The Bologna Process is part of a broader effort in the drive for a Europe of knowledge and its success hinges on lifelong learning, student-centred learning, quality assurance, transparency, mobility, recognition and international openness.

According to Marta Touykova, European Commission (directorate-general for education and culture), universities should be encouraged to open their doors to non-traditional and part-time learners and offer more courses for continuous professional development. "Catering for new types of learners requires a fundamental rethinking of how courses are designed and delivered. New learners may not possess all formal requirements for entry into higher education, but they may have acquired the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies through self-study or work. More should be done to integrate these potential students into higher education," Touykova adds.

However, not everyone shares the optimism. Balagangadhara Rao, director, Research Centre Vergelijkende Cultuurwetenschap, Ghent University, Belgium, opines, "The Bologna Process mixes up two kinds of education (universities and polytechnics) with different goals to produce a mixture that will have neither. The distinction between these two kinds of education (research and skills) postulated a need to focus on research that is unencumbered by instrumental or utilitarian goals and by abolishing this distinction, Europe goes back to Napoleonic times where 'benefits' (either to the individual or to the society) was the sole criterion to justify education."

Matthew Wood, director, Communication, European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD), says it is not just a question of re-labeling a traditional system of higher education. "The main objective of Bologna was to make different national systems more compatible. A lot has been achieved in restructuring the system, however, a lot of work remains to achieve the goals."

Erasmus Mundus

The Bologna Process goes beyond the European Union (EU) and involves other countries including India. Erasmus Mundus, the EU's scholarship programme for worldwide academic co-operation, offers scholarships to students at all levels of university education and academic staff, with a

special focus on the socio-economically disadvantaged groups.

Attributing the programme's early success to the 'generous' funding, Joachim Fronia, head of unit, Erasmus Mundus and External Co-operation , says, "Scholarships worth 21,000 euros per-year are given to graduate students for the Erasmus Mundus joint Master's courses, which is a generous amount. Additionally, they enjoy a multi-dimensional experience, both in terms of education and culture, as they study in more than one university across Europe."

The second phase of the programme, which was recently launched for 2009-2013, has expanded to include doctoral studies. A consortium of universities from Europe and other partner countries including India jointly select students and research projects. Erasmus Mundus comprises 150 Master's and 35 doctoral programmes across disciplines that students can choose from.

The study programmes are broadly interdisciplinary, for example, colour in informatics and media technology encompasses photonics, computer vision and imaging science, computer science and multimedia technology as a mix of relevant theoretical and practical knowledge, and the course is offered in partnership between four European universities. Meanwhile, students opting for the Master's in earthquake engineering and engineering seismology will be able to acquire technical competence in both areas.

The biggest challenge, however, to this comparatively young scholarship programme is the student visa. "We are aware of the problems that students encounter while traveling from one country to another to complete their course. We are working with member-states and embassies to raise awareness to make student mobility as smooth as possible," adds Fronia.

Around 675 students and 138 scholars from India will benefit from this programme for the academic year 2009-2010. Commenting on India's participation in the success of the programme, Fronia says, "In Europe, there is a growing awareness to partake in the increasing dynamism in India due to globalisation. Academia and industries in Europe feel the need to align to such dynamism for mutual benefits."

India Perspective

Higher education in India, too, is on the threshold of change with HRD minister Kapil Sibal announcing a slew of reforms to bring about modernisation and on several occasions, the minister has referred to the Bologna Process.

While outlining what India can learn from Bologna, Touykova says, "One important aspect is the establishment of quality assurance measures, which should ensure that the quality of higher education delivered is comparable across countries. This is a strong incentive for Indian universities to try and implement internationally recognised quality assurance procedures, which should in the end enhance the overall quality level of higher education."

On whether a similar system of higher education to encourage comparability and mobility would work for India, H A Ranganath, director, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), replies, "Since India's education system has a wide diversity, it is all the more important for a comparable and uniform system of higher education.

Irrespective of the rural-urban divide, or the status of colleges/institutions, the way to ensure quality in higher education is uniformity. Only when the basic quality is ensured can we think of excellence. For example, the character of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) is different from Delhi University (DU), but to get the best out of a system, minimum uniformity is a must."

Following the convergent impact of Bologna, European higher education is potentially in a much stronger competitive position internationally.

Source: /timesofindia/16 November 2009

Focus on fusion

The scientific community today needs professionals who can effectively work across the traditional boundaries of academic disciplines.

Dr RA Mashelkar, former director general of Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) and president of Indian National Science Academy (INSA), aptly summarises the course of scientific development and research around the world as 'borderless.' He substantiates by illustrating the example of Venkatraman Ramakrishnan. Winner of the 2009 Nobel Prize for chemistry, his work on the structure and function of the ribosome successfully combines the traditional domains of physics and chemistry.

"Even modern biology has become very mathematical, based on genetics, quantum mechanics and other streams. Also, it is unlikely to come across people in the West who believe that traditional disciplines can work in isolation. Unfortunately, in India, the compartmentalisation starts very early as students study biology because they do not like maths. Given the way scientific developments are taking place all over the world, this is a serious handicap," agrees Professor PJ Narayanan, dean (R&D), IIIT-Hyderabad.

Centres of Excellence

P Banerjee, director NISTADS, Delhi, says that at present, there is a palpable demand for interdisciplinary professionals in the fields of environmental science, health sciences and computing specialisations. "In India, leadership in interdisciplinary sciences has been shown by the ISI, Chennai Mathematical School, Delhi University, Hyderabad Central University, Jadavpur University, Anna University, IIT Kharagpur, IIT Kanpur and IIT Chennai. As to why we have not been able to bring about a change of approach in our scientific and engineering community, in India most convergence education happens at the doctoral level. But that is changing fast," he informs.

An Interdisciplinary Ecosystem

Several institutions are working to bring about a change. "We are aware that the existing curriculum is restricting for a capable student. Not only are we sprucing up the different streams in engineering, we are starting a school of medical sciences and a school of law on campus to help create an ecosystem that promotes interdisciplinarity.

We are setting up several interdisciplinary programmes at the Master's level together with the electrical, mechanical engineering, biosciences, cyberlaw and infrastructure engineering streams," shares YV Rao, director of NIT-Warangal , which has played a mentoring role for technology institutions in the south India.

Some institutions have reorganised their entire curriculum to suit the interdisciplinary approach.

IIIT-Hyderabad, for example, which specialises in robotics, computer vision and natural language processing, has Master's level programmes , which draws from disciplines of the arts, biology, mechanical engineering and artificial intelligence.

"Our interdisciplinary approach starts at the undergraduate level and this year, about 30 international publications have come from them. Science itself has become largely computational in all the new frontiers of technology, and a rigid approach would handicap students. Students should focus on strong fundamentals and then pick up the other disciplines as and when they need," advises Narayanan.

Employment Wise

HR head of Dr Reddy's , Prabir Jha is of the opinion that while science is getting more and more interdisciplinary students, it is equally important to have a strong foundation at the basic level.

"While an increasing number of interdisciplinary groups are working together, an appreciation of multiple sciences is absolutely essential in the pharma work space today," he adds.

According to P Aanandan, managing director, Microsoft Research India, corporates today have realised the importance of multi-disciplinary teams that can be crucial while finding solutions to complex problems. "In Microsoft for example, we have a equal number of sociologists and technologists in our ICT team for development programmes, which focus on new technology for developing countries," says Aanandan, who is also a former assistant professor of computer science at the Yale University.

A Liberal Mindset

Education always responds to the requirements of society. As Mashelkar says, "We actually started thinking of indigenous products and solutions only after we liberalised our economy in 1991, not before that. Most of the innovations that you see today are interdisciplinary and we are in the nascent stage when it comes to sectors like telecommunications, pharma and alternative health sciences."

He also considers the cell phone revolution and the making of the Nano car exemplary examples of the application of interdisciplinary science to modern day needs and feels that indigenous discoveries and inventions in pharmacy and technology were delayed and hampered due to our closed minds.

New Career Avenues

Biomedical Engineering: It deals with the integration of medicine and instruments, i.e. material engineering sciences with life sciences catering to the endless needs in diagnostics and internal medicine sensors (bioinstrumentation).

Prominent biomedical engineering applications include various diagnostic and therapeutic medical devices, ranging from clinical equipment to micro-implants, common imaging equipment such as MRIs and EEGs, biotechnologies such as regenerative tissue growth, and pharmaceutical drugs and biopharmaceuticals. All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi (www.aiims.ac.in) and Jadavpur University (www.jadavpur.edu) offer courses in it.

Cognitive science is the study of mind or the study of thought. It embraces multiple research disciplines, including psychology, artificial intelligence, philosophy, neuroscience, linguistics, anthropology, sociology and biology. It is used extensively in the fields of artificial intelligence and robotics. Courses are offered at the Centre of Behavioural and Cognitive Sciences (CBCS), University of Allahabad (www.cbcs.ac.in)

Nanotechnology is very diverse, ranging from extensions of conventional device physics to completely new approaches based upon molecular self-assembly and developing new materials with dimensions on the nanoscale. The IITs in Mumbai, Kanpur, Chennai, Guwahati and Delhi offer courses in this discipline.

Applied linguistics is an interdisciplinary field of study that identifies, investigates, and offers solutions to language-related real-life problems and is used widely in the technology space. The University of Delhi offers an advanced diploma course in it.

Biophysics is an interdisciplinary science that employs methods of the physical sciences for the investigation of biological systems. Courses are offered at University of Madras (www.unom.ac.in/guindybiophysics.html).

Astrobiology is the study of the origin, evolution, distribution, and future of life in the universe. It makes use of physics, chemistry, astronomy, biology, molecular biology, ecology, planetary science, geography and geology.

Cybernetics is the interdisciplinary study of the structure of regulatory systems. It connects the fields of control systems, electrical network theory, mechanical engineering, logic modelling, evolutionary biology, neuroscience, anthropology and psychology. The IITs offer courses in this discipline.

Neuroscience is the scientific study of the nervous system. University of Chennai (www.unom.ac.in) and NIMHANS (www.nimhans.kar.nic.in) are institutes of repute for studies in this discipline.

Econophysics is an interdisciplinary research field, applying theories and methods originally developed by physicists in order to solve problems in economics.

Computing Graphics are graphics created by using computers. It has revolutionised the animation and video game industry, it blends fine arts, pixel art and vector graphics.

Materials Science aims at revolutionising the construction industry, and is essentially built around materials, nanotechnology, engineering, architecture, design and environmental sciences

Nanotechnology
Developing new materials with dimensions on the nanoscale

Biomedical Engineering
Deals with the integration of medicine and instruments

Cognitive Science
Study of mind or the study of thought

Applied linguistics
Offers solutions to language-related real-life problems

Biophysics
Employs methods of physical sciences for the investigation of biological systems

Astrobiology
Study of the origin, evolution, distribution, and future of life in the universe

Cybernetics
Study of the structure of regulatory systems

Neuroscience
Scientific study of the nervous system

Econophysics
Applies theories and methods of the physical sciences to solve problems in economics.

Source: /timesofindia/30 November 2009

For a future ready education system

With more than 400 universities and over 20,000 colleges, the student enrolment in India has crossed 12.9 million in 2007-2008, clocking a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6.2% since 1985-86. Also, participation of the private sector has increased, with about 63% of the total higher education institutions in the country being private unaided institutions. It's a big leap, considering the fact that in 2001, the share of unaided private institutions was 42.6%.

With the Indian higher education sector growing and the country all set to become a knowledge superpower, a FICCI-Ernst & Young report (Making the Indian higher

education system future ready) was recently released at the FICCI Higher Education Summit 2009.

The report notes that despite a significant growth, the Indian higher education system continues to demonstrate structural shortcomings, which in turn create challenges. The report analyses these challenges across financing, use of ICT, research, skill development, and regulatory oversight, which are adversely impacting the performance of the Indian higher education system in terms of quality, access and equity.

Amitabh Jhingan, partner & national leader, Education Practice, Ernst & Young, points out, "Our online survey of over 50 higher education institutions across India show that the key financial challenges include regulation of fees, attracting private investments and limited government grants. The survey also indicates that obtaining research grants, developing industry partnerships and quality of human resources are the challenges faced in improving the quality of research."

While the report highlights the importance of industry collaborations and public-private-partnerships as the fulcrum of a future agenda, India still seems to be averse to the idea of private institutes. Amit Mitra, secretary general, FICCI, says in response that though private unaided institutions have made significant contribution in maintaining the supply of skilled manpower to the industry, the quality of new graduates is a critical issue that needs to be addressed. "Self regulation through transparency in procedures and disclosures along with good faculty and teaching-learning processes would help in creating the trust amongst students, parents, industry and government," he adds.

Apart from addressing key issues of higher education, the report has identified five 'game changers' that can strengthen the higher education system. In fact, the imperatives that are likely to make the system future ready include financial innovation, ICT, reinvigorating research, thrust on vocational education and training (VET), and regulatory reforms.

While India's public expenditure on higher education may be comparable to other countries, when it comes to 'per-student expenditure' it is extremely low. Among the other challenges in this area, India lacks a robust scholarship and student loan schemes, which can make higher education accessible at a more aligned tuition fee structure, the report reveals. So the recommendations focus on increasing the number of institutions to plug the demand-supply gap and provide access in low GER areas.

In the area of ICT, lack of infrastructure and poor quality of digital content (especially in regional languages) are causes for concern. To enable a healthy ICT environment, the report recommends development of collaborative networks along with creation of a common centralised repository for e-journals, digitised PhD thesis, research papers, e-books, etc. Vocational education and training (VET), too, needs attention, while facilitating mobility between VET and mainstream education through a system of credit transfer should be a priority, the report recommends.

As far as research is concerned, India has a low base of researchers and the academic sector contributes less than a seventh of the total number of researchers. According to the recommendations, to reinvigorate research, the immediate need is to facilitate industry-academia collaboration, increase collaboration between universities and government R&D labs and also, increase the number and quality of doctoral students.

Finally, one of the greatest challenges in the higher education system has been the issue of a regulatory framework. The issue of multiple regulators — with overlapping roles and lack of accreditation and transparency — has been plaguing the education sector for long. According to the report, creation of an independent body for regulating higher education, promoting institutional autonomy and addressing structural shortcomings could help the Indian higher education system reach a holistic solution.

Source: /timesofindia/30 November 2009

Free higher education for children of Lankan refuges: Madras University VC

The University of Madras has decided to provide free higher education at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels to children of Sri Lankan refugees in the country, particularly to those residing in Tamil Nadu.

"Children of refugees from Sri Lanka living in India, particularly those in Tamil Nadu, will be given free education from the next academic year at the university, especially if they are willing to pursue education through the distance mode. A political solution alone is not enough to resolve the refugee issue. These people have suffered. Education is the right tool to uplift them," said university vice-chancellor G Thiruvasagam. The decision was taken at the syndicate meeting held on Friday.

The university will also uphold the reservation policy of the state for candidates who want to pursue PhD at the university or in affiliate colleges. "They have to pass the entrance exam but admission to PhD courses will be in keeping with the reservation policy. A four-member committee headed by the registrar will look into the modalities of the admission process. The policy will be implemented from the batch that commences in January 2010," professor Thiruvasagam explained.

Responding to reports of delays in publishing examination results, the VC said that a core committee had been formed to speed up the process by looking into the exam schedule, conduct and validation. The committee will comprise principals, faculty members and officials. All colleges affiliated to the university will be closed from December 21 to January 6 to enable the college faculty to take up evaluation work. To offset the loss of working days, the colleges will have to work on Saturdays, he added.

The measures will help publication of the exam results of UG and PG regular streams by February 7, and within 10 days of publication of the results mark sheets will be dispatched to colleges. "More attention will be given to publishing the exam results of students pursuing distance education courses. Exams for UG and MCA students in the distance education stream will begin on December 19, the PG exams on January 2 and certificate diploma exams on January 4. All exams will end by February 13. This will ensure that all UG and PG results will be published on March 30," professor Thiruvasagam pointed out.

The exam results for those pursuing distance education courses will be published on March 30, and by April 15 mark sheets will be ready. Provisional certificates will be given by April 30.

The VC also announced changes in the exam pattern to be implemented from May 2010. "To make academic programmes application- and practical-oriented, 60% of the question paper will have theory questions while 40% will be problem-based. In theory subjects, to make students apply their mind and to discourage rote memorisation, 40% of the paper will have case studies."

To give students with multiple disabilities a level playing field on a par with the others they will be allowed to use scientific calculators during exams. The VC had pledged to provide free education to students with physical disabilities in mid-October.

Source: Chennai /timesofindia/22 November 2009

Higher education worth preserving

Public institutions of higher education across the country are in a fiscal crisis. The financial downturn has highlighted the reality that leaders in higher education must redouble efforts and continue to make compelling cases for adequate state support. Higher education, as an industry, has experienced substantial and draconian budget reductions. Examples of such cuts abound nationwide.

In September, Idaho's governor announced 6 percent midyear budget holdbacks for universities, colleges and community colleges. Nevada's governor is proposing a 14 percent reduction in public higher education funds for the next fiscal year. In California, state support has been reduced by nearly 20 percent, resulting in employee furloughs, cuts in enrollment and major tuition increases.

Here, in the state of Washington, four-year institutions saw an overall 21 percent reduction in the current biennium. Once federal stimulus dollars were included and a 14 percent tuition increase added, the percentage drop was still more than 10 percent. That translates into a $54 million cut over the biennium for Washington State University. During an eight-year period that saw general state spending increase by nearly 38 percent, the state's investment in higher education dropped by more than 7 percent.

Reductions of this magnitude have both immediate and long-term impacts. We will not recover quickly, but we must begin the process.

This problem is not focused on a single institution or set of institutions. It is pervasive and threatens our economic future.

Washington State University and the University of Washington combine to provide 35 percent of all undergraduate degrees awarded in the state and 92 percent of all the state's doctoral degrees. Our Legislature and those around the nation are struggling with their obligation to provide adequate support for higher education.

The benefits of a college education are well documented:

➢ Lower crime rates.

➢ Higher individual tax base.

➢ More upward and careermobility.

➢ Greater job and financial security.

➢ General improvements in the quality of life.

Our colleges and universities serve as economic drivers for the state and nation. That is one of the major reasons why reinvestment in higher education is of paramount importance. Otherwise, the nation will lose a generation of students due to higher tuition costs and reduced student access. If states are to achieve the goals of access, affordability, economic vitality and improvement in the quality of life for their citizens, swift action must be taken.

Those of us in higher education must do more than lobby for additional funds. We must be held accountable for how those funds are used.

To re-establish the public's confidence in and support for public higher education, the following steps are recommended during the current fiscal crisis and beyond:

➢ Coordinating and governing boards should no longer allow higher education institutions to provide programs and degrees outside of current missions unless expressly authorized. In other words, unplanned and unfinanced "mission creep" should stop.

➢ Institutions should maintain and seek to increase enrollment levels without eroding quality.

➢ Institutions need to align their academic programs and majors with state priorities. Furthermore, higher education institutions should base programs, services, and academic priorities on verifiable community needs.

➢ Each institution should closely examine its programs and focus attention and resources on those it can do best. Efficiency must be achieved and duplication avoided.

➢ Partnerships/cooperative agreements and collaborative efforts should be forged with local, state, federal and private entities to leverage and maximizeresources.

➢ Legislatures should agree to stable and predictable funding through dedicated and identified funding sources.

➢ Assign tuition-setting authority to each institution's board of regents in order to better align state appropriations with tuition rates.

Bold initiatives and fiscal discipline are required during these times. Without them, the excellence of our higher education system will be endangered, and we will have only ourselves toblame.

Source: /spokesman/15 November 2009

India calling

The open doors survey 2009 shows an increase in the number of American students selecting India as a study destination.

The Open Doors Survey 2009 reveals that while India remains the leading country, for the eighth consecutive year, to contribute the largest chunk of international students to the US there has also been a sharp increase in the number of American students going to study in other countries and India is among them. The International Institute of Education (IIE) with the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs conducts the survey annually.

Pointing out the reasons behind the heightened influx of US students to India, Allan Goodman, president and CEO, IIE, says, "India is the world's largest democracy but probably one which is least understood by Americans. Five to 10 years ago 70,000 Indian students were studying in the US while a mere 700 American students studied in India. Today the number of American students in India has scaled up to 3,000. But this is far from enough. We need more American students and universities to go to India in order to have a better understanding of the country." The recent survey, which is based on international students enrolment in approximately 3,000 US higher education institutions, shows that Indian students constitute 15.4% of the total international student population in the US.

In the academic year 2008-2009 there were 103,206 Indian students studying at various levels as compared to 94,563 students last year that indicates an increase of 9%. Incidentally, China with 98,510 students remains the second leading country to constitute international students population in the US. Interestingly, China still commands the second position despite the fact that the percentage of Chinese students going to study at US universities in 2008-2009 has risen by 15% from the previous year which is higher than the percentage rise (9%) of Indian students going to US universities this year.

The total number of international students in the US stands at 671,616 in the academic year 2008-2009. Did recession have any impact on the total number of international students going to the US? Goodman said, "On the contrary, the findings indicate that there has been an increase in international students' population in the US by

8%. However, the data does not reflect the full impact of the past year's economic downturn, since students decided to come to the US before the financial impact."

As to whether he foresees a negative effect of the economic downturn in terms of the number of international students to the US, he said, "To get a snapshot of increase or decrease in international students' enrolment for Fall 2009, we conducted an online survey. The survey indicates a mixed picture. Around 50% of those responding campuses continued to witness increase in applications while 24% reported a decline."

According to Goodman, education is valued across the globe and, hence, people would not stop spending on quality higher education. However, the survey reveals that there is a rising trend in terms of exploring less expensive destinations and shorter stays. "The notable increase in the number of US students going to countries like China, India, Ireland, Austria and South Africa reiterates this trend," he states.

US Higher Education: At a Glance

State with maximum international students: California University with maximum international students: University of South California Popular subjects: Business and management followed by engineering and physical science International students' contribution to the US economy.

Source: /timesofindia/30 November 2009

India's workforce should improve skill sets

Maintaining that enhancing the skill sets of the workforce in the country is a challenge, President Pratibha Patil on Thursday regretted that large chunk of workforce in India did not have skill certification, contrary to the developed countries.

Participating in the silver jubilee celebrations of the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), Pratibha Patil said the Open University system being flexible and innovative can be useful for a wide section of society and should help in improving skill sets. President said, "Only five percent of the workforce in India has some kind of certification. This is in contrast to over 85 percent in the developed countries. Encouragement of work-integrated learning followed by examination, certification and accreditation through distance education will be of help. However, to make it effective there would be a need for active two way collaboration with industry and other players."

Pratibha Patil said that the spread of education among women is very important. "By spreading education amongst them, not only is an individual educated, but rather the seeds of progress of the next generation are planted," she added.

She said that the gross enrolment ratio (GER) in India in higher education is very low as compared to the world average. She pointed out that strenuous efforts are required to reach our goal of enhancing the GER in India to 20 percent by 2020.

The President announced the Rajiv Gandhi International Prize for Education and Technology Development, instituted by the IGNOU, given to individuals or institutions, which have made significant contribution for development of educational technology.

The award ceremony is held on Rajiv Gandhi's birth anniversary every year.

Union Minister for Human Resource Development Kapil Sibal said though the internet is a large resource pool, the cell phone can also be used both for dissemination as well as for receipt of information, which helps learning with mobility.

Source: New Delhi /expressbuzz/20 November 2009

Invest in The Future

A child growing up in India today can aspire to be an astronaut sending rockets into space, a cricket batting legend, a government minister, a Bollywood film star or a teacher set to inspire a new generation of children. As the world celebrates the 20th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) today, India has a lot to be proud of in the strides being made for its children. Home to one-fifth of the world's children, India ratified the CRC in 1992, embracing standards in health care, education and legal, civil and social services.

What difference has the convention made to India? Fewer children under five die as the national mortality rate fell from 117 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 72 in 2007. More children have access to improved drinking water, rising from 62 per cent in 1992-93 to 88 per cent in 2005-06. More girls go to primary school as attendance rates for girls aged between 6 and 10 increased from 61 to 81 per cent over the same period. When 12-year-old Rekha Kalindi, from a remote village in the Purulia district of West Bengal, stood up against child marriage, she was relying on knowledge gained while attending the National Child Labour Project School run by the government's labour department to rehabilitate working children and help mainstream them in the education system.

The passage of the Education Bill in Parliament this year, and the prohibition of Child Labour and Child Marriage Acts are prime examples of how the Indian government is championing the rights of the children. Progress has been made towards identifying and legally addressing child protection violations and targeting essential services to marginalised groups and disabled children. The government in March 2007 established the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights and now five state commissions have been added. This year's rollout of the Integrated Child Protection Scheme, a programme focusing on transforming legislative commitments into action for child protection, is truly a cause for celebration.

True, many challenges remain. One million newborns die each year during the first month of their lives, another million die between 29 days and five years. These statistics call for ensuring that every child has access to the basic right to survival. Society must save the large number of lives snuffed out within the first few days of life. UNICEF, along with other aid agencies, is closely working with the government to encourage women to have institutional deliveries and ensure both mother and baby receive critical post-natal care for at least 72 hours.

Eliminating malnourishment should be our top priority as it directly contributes to child mortality, school dropout rates, gender equality and poverty reduction. Almost 55 million children under five in India are underweight for their age. Children who are chronically undernourished before their second birthday are likely to have diminished cognitive and physical development for the rest of their lives. As adults, they are less productive and earn less than their healthy peers and the cycle of under nutrition and poverty repeats itself, generation after generation.

During the South Asian conference on sanitation last year, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said that sanitation should be a birthright. Eighty-eight per cent of all diarrhea-caused deaths in children under five are related to poor water quality, hygiene and sanitation. More than half of India's population, or 665 million people, practice open defecation. Though India has been able to double the total number of people using improved toilets, from 19 to 38 per cent between 1990 and 2006, further acceleration is needed.

The CRC provides clear parameters on how schools can be child-friendly and now we must make concerted efforts to ensure that every child attends and stays in school. The Right to Education Act is a powerful way forward, placing the obligation on the state that all children receive at least eight years of schooling. But today millions of India's children are not attending school. Child labour also remains a major area of concern, especially among teenagers in the 14 -18-age bracket who do not have access to education and continue to work in hazardous occupations.

Widespread and entrenched exploitation, gender discrimination and caste bias in India cannot be wished away overnight. The recent global fuel, food and economic crises will certainly affect the country's social progress, possibly slowing or even stalling recent gains in child survival and education.

We are all aware that rights can be declared and policies formulated, but unless the life of the child in the family and community is improved, all our efforts are meaningless. As common citizens, we must pledge not to accept work from children, not tolerate child marriage and ensure all children, especially girls, go to school. India's children are its future. The rights spelled out in the convention must become a reality for each and every child in this nation.

Source: /timesofindia/20 November 2009

Knowledge is money

Till yesterday knowledge was power, today it is solid money. A look at the Forbes list of billionaires, whether of Asia or the world - be it Azim Premji or Bill Gates - shows that we have nearly arrived in the age where knowledge is

big capital. Maharajas, money magnates, even petrodollars have taken a beating. Thanks to it, JK Rowling (of Harry Potter fame) is a billion dollar writer. Earnings are no longer physical-asset intensive.

Time was when capital was the most important and scarcest factor of production. It commanded the highest price and dictated the terms. Today it has been displaced by know-how and technology. Ever more efficient and user-friendly technologies are replacing outdated ones and making vast fortunes with first-to-be-there advantage. How promptly Windows 7 has replaced Windows Vista within a matter of months. That partly smacks of a trick but, nonetheless, we lesser mortals have to accept it. Let us recall how our computer tapes, floppies, CDs and even pen drives were and are being replaced over the years. Every step of the way has involved massive creation and transfers of wealth.

Peter Drucker popularized the term knowledge worker in the fifties. But it is coming into its own now. The money which knowledge commands is mind-boggling. It is paid for as R and D and technical fees, shares and salaries etc. The property about whose safety we are increasingly worried is not physical property but intellectual property. We are in a knowledge race.

In the context of the knowledge worker there is little scope for exploitation of labour. The boot is rather on the other leg. The worry is excessive attrition and how to retain a worthwhile work force. Besides knowledge is an appreciating asset. It grows.

Gone are the days when employees could be taken for granted. There is a shortage of skilled workers and they are poached upon. You employ intelligence agencies to keep track and take timely corrective steps at your end. Otherwise you lose your precious employees.

These days able-minded workers are harder to come by than able-bodied ones. This being so, the quality of education and skill-development assumes a key importance. To meet the demands of the knowledge age, we need an education that is creative, not just mechanical. To use Alvin Toffler's language, we need 'third wave' education which comes not by learning by rote but by fostering creativity and capability for self-growth. At its core is the development of mental power.

Such education requires patience and a supportive environment. It develops cognitive faculties of the mind and the capacity to brainstorm or to withhold judgment as necessary. It needs to be conducted in a multicultural or even international context so that it is prejudice-free and inculcates right outlook and correct perspective.

The uneven and even unacceptable quality of a lot of our early education and the wasted years which it implies constitute one of the worst drains on our limited resources. There is need to get over that fast if we would not like to be left behind.

We should seek to justify financial support for this inevitably costly education in terms of economic return on intelligence rather than merely as an item of expenditure on a social service. That will put things in a better perspective. That input-output ratio will beat that of most other investments.

Just think how the world began to take notice of us? It was our performance as knowledge workers, our nuclear tests and our IT competence. But there is a long way to go yet and we have to multiply the number of worthwhile knowledge workers many times. Our eleventh Plan envisages setting up of seven IIMs, eight IITs and 30 Central Universities . The target for IITs has perhaps subsequently been revised to 20. That is a step in the right direction and so is the target of gross enrolment of 15 per cent of class twelve-pass outs into higher education (up from 10 per cent). We will have to go a long way in that direction and raise it to 50 per cent or more, as it is elsewhere in the progressive world.

Besides, institutions like All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) Medical Council of India (MCI) and National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) will have to be tolerated with much more teeth than today, if we mean serious business. So far they have played a very docile role - amply commented upon by our courts - toeing the government line rather than guiding it. The regulator should have the strength and should be in a position to assert itself against unfair pressures. Otherwise, we will have as much of a surfeit of politically powered institutes of higher learning - some of it already in evidence - as we have of them at the school education level already. Turning out unemployable knowledge workers would be a tragedy.

As pointed out above, our school education deserves a lot more attention. Looking to the size of our economy much more needs to be done in the less glamorous but altogether more crucial field of school education. That is the intervening make-or-break stage. We must particularly investigate educational practices, which work well with underprivileged children. Commenting on the U S educational scene in 2007 Baumol and others say 'Our educational practices are much like health care was before the 19th century when doctors proceeded without evidence and resorted to little more than bloodletting and cupping as the universal remedies for most illnesses'. How true that sounds for us too!

Knowledge happily is a highly competitive and also a democratic commodity. Despite intellectual property rights, which assure a minimal return to the originator it does not allow for extended monopoly nor for excessive concentration in a few hands. New ideas and new concepts replace old ones and they can spring up anywhere. Knowledge is not heritable either. In fact, today it is at the fingertips of anyone with an access to Google. It is all lying out there.

Knowledge capitalism of the sort that is coming into evidence is capable of solving the riddle of capital-labour dichotomy too. It can usher in an era of social harmony, which has only been dreamt of till now. That conflict

belongs to the industrial society. It need not be there in the information society.

Today's capitalists are yesterday's knowledge workers. Having made money, they employ others in a widening circle of prosperity and in the end many of them even bequeath large portions of their massive wealth to charities for general welfare thus giving it back to the society. Is knowledge then our threshold to a new Atlantis?

Source: /centralchronicle/29 November 2009

Learning with the Times: India doesn't have any 'national language'

What does the Constitution say on languages?

Article 343 of the Constitution and the Official Languages Act say that the official language of the Union will be Hindi. However, the attempt to adopt Hindi as the official language was strongly opposed by several non-Hindi speaking states, especially Tamil Nadu, which erupted in violent protests leading to a compromise in allowing the use of English also for official purposes. Thus, the Constitution and the act allowed English to be used for transaction of business in Parliament, by Centre and states and for certain purposes in high courts for 15 years. Later, the act was amended in 1967 to allow continuation of English for official purposes. It is argued that while Hindi is the official language it was never given the status of national language, as India, being a multilingual country, has no single national language. Article 351, a directive, says it is the duty of the Union to promote the spread of Hindi language, so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India, never using the term national language to refer to Hindi.

How many languages does the Constitution list?

The Constitution listed fourteen languages — Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu — in Eighth Schedule, in 1950. Since then, the list has been expanded thrice, once to include Sindhi, second time to include Konkani, Manipuri and Nepali and yet again to add four more languages — Bodo, Santhali, Maithili and Dogri — bringing total to 22 scheduled languages. The claims of many more languages for inclusion are under consideration.

What's the three-language policy that was recommended for education in the country?

The three-language formula recommends the study of a modern Indian language, preferably a south Indian language, apart from Hindi and English in Hindi-speaking states and the study of the regional language along with Hindi and English in non-Hindi speaking states. The All India Council for Education in 1956 recommended the adoption of the three-language formula and it was endorsed widely and adopted by the chief ministers conference. This three-language policy was reiterated by the National Policy on Education in 1968, yet again in 1986 and was adopted as a Programme of Action by Parliament in 1992. Yet, an official review of the three-language formula in the National Curriculum Framework for School Education in January 2000 found that in many states, apart from Hindi and English, Sanskrit, Arabic or even European languages like French and German were being allowed in place of a modern Indian language.

Why has the attempt to increase use of Hindi led to controversy?

Large states with non-Hindi speaking populations have always resented what they see as an imposition of Hindi and huge budgetary allocation each year for promotion of Hindi as official language and incidents due to acrimony over this issue have increased in recent years. For instance, Tamil Nadu assembly passed a resolution in December 2006 to make Tamil the official language of Madras HC. Earlier, West Bengal too had sought to introduce Bengali in Calcutta HC. Article 348 (2) of the Constitution and Section 7 of the Official Languages Act, 1963, together entitle Hindi-speaking states like Bihar, UP, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan to use their official language, Hindi, in their respective high courts. Tamil Nadu CM M Karunanidhi wants an extension of this constitutional provision to Tamil as well. SC rejected request of both Tamil Nadu and West Bengal claiming it would impact transfer and posting of high court judges all over India as it would be possible to post only Tamil-knowing judges to the Madras high court and would involve voluminous work of translating thousands of orders and laws in Tamil. But, of course, the same problem could be faced by judges from the south or other non-Hindi speaking states posted to Bihar, UP, MP and Rajasthan high courts. Again, in September this year, a Union minister from Tamil Nadu, M K Alagiri, asked to be allowed to answer questions and speak in Tamil in the Parliament. The Lok Sabha secretariat turned down the request saying that only MPs asked for interpreters in the past, not ministers, as the business of the house had to be transacted in Hindi or English.

Source: /timesofindia/16 November 2009

Majority of Indian students don't have good enough English

*A decade after he wrote The Future of English, British linguist **David Graddol** is back with a report on global English. He tells **Faizal Khan** that India will get no special advantage if elsewhere in the world everyone speaks English:*

Your report English Next says global English may mean the end of English as a foreign language.

English has become a second language for most people across the world. People are using it more and more in their own countries. They are not learning it as a foreign language. It is largely to communicate as a language of business and employment.

You say in India "very many know a few words, but only a few have a high level of competence in both local and more

standard varieties" of English. What is the basis of this conclusion?

The majority of students in Indian higher education do not have good enough English. There is no hard data on this, but in 2007, the International English Language Testing System examination conducted by the British Council in India showed that only a third of the candidates had good enough English to be studying at the under-graduate level. It was a self-selected group of students from across the country that wanted to study abroad. Only a third of them scored 6.5 or higher out of 10. Universities have expanded, but the problem is still there. Most of these students are in affiliated colleges. We are not talking about Delhi University or JNU. If you move out of the main highways, you hear less English in India.

You argue that for India to become a superpower, it would need better English-speaking skills. What is the correlation between economic prowess and English-speaking skills, especially since economic superpowers like Germany, Russia and Japan use little English?

In Russia, English has become the working language. It's the corporate language for Germany. Brazil is going to teach English to its students from class I starting next year. The way wealth is created is different after globalisation. Even in mid-1990s, Belgians were teaching English to Chinese so that they could communicate with German and Italian engineers installing machines in their steel factories. In India, not many know the changes that have happened outside. India used to think 'we speak English, so we have an advantage'. You don't get special advantage if everyone speaks English. Twenty years ago you had this special advantage. China is teaching English to a much wider demographic whereas in India, it continues to be to a fairly elite group.

Your report mentions it will be China who will determine the speed at which other Asian countries shift to a global English model?

I think China sets the trend. If China hadn't started learning English, India could have remained more competitive. Everyone has to improve his act with regard to this.

Source: /timesofindia/23 November 2009

NACC certification must for all universities & colleges: UGC chief

UGC Chairman Professor Thorat said the move is an attempt to assess and thereafter ensure the quality of education offered in institutions of higher education in the country.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has framed a regulation making it mandatory for all universities and colleges to be certified by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), UGC chairman Professor Sukhdeo Thorat said here on Sunday.

The move is an attempt to assess and thereafter ensure the quality of education offered in institutions of higher education in the country, Professor Thorat said.

Currently, certification from the NAAC, an autonomous body with its headquarters in Bangalore established by the UGC in 1994, is voluntary.

"While there has been progress in the absolute numbers of students with access to higher education since the time of Independence, the enrolment rate of about 11 percent in India is much less than the world average of 23 percent and not much higher than the 7 percent of Africa," he said.

The problem has been addressed in the 11th Five-year Plan, with the government announcing the creation of 1440 new institutions including seven Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) and seven Indian Institutes of Management (IIM), which he described as the "second wave of higher education in the country."

The government's allotment of Rs. 47,000 crore in the 11th plan, instead of the Rs. 400 crore previously has given adequate attention to higher education, which was "neglected for the last 40 years," he added.

Professor Thorat also enumerated vast inequalities in gender, religion, caste and income groups, inconsistencies in quality and the lack of relevance to industry among the problems that ail higher education in the country.

"There is a considerable presence of the private sector in higher education," said Professor Thorat at a session on 'Private Participation in Education – Implications for Equity' organised by the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce.

In 1991, there was only one State Private University, whereas today there are 42. Of the 130 deemed universities, 90 are private universities and 95 percent of all colleges are private colleges, he said adding that in the coming years the numbers were only going to rise.

Source: Kolkata /beta.thehindu./22 November 2009

Reform our school education

India's education system has produced an awesome pool of skilled human capital. Yet, when it comes to creativity measured by the number of patents and copyrights owned or of the research articles published in top journals, our most brilliant students are not nearly as creative or innovative as their American or European peers are.

The root of the problem lies in our school education system that rewards ability to memorise rather than ability to think critically and analytically.

By virtue of my own experience in higher education in academic institutions abroad and also witnessing my daughter undergoing her school and college education in the US, I have come to believe that we should reform our education system on the lines of the liberal arts tradition of the west in order to address this problem.

An important feature of this tradition in the US is that high school students are not rigidly divided into science, arts or commerce streams. College students majoring in science and engineering are allowed to choose a wide range subjects in arts and humanities.

Similarly, college students with, say, history major can take physics, chemistry and biology courses and get admission to medical colleges for MD degree after qualifying the medical entrance examination.

Liberal arts education imparts an all-round training.

It sensitises human mind by delving deeper into a subject, critically analysing it from a multi-dimensional perspective and expressing such analyses in a cogent manner. Considerable emphasis is given to development of writing skills.

As the skill of communicating original ideas develops, it spurs new ideas. Thus, analytical writing synergises creative ideas. Besides, such education also ensures that children do not get burnt out due to academic pressure in high school.

We should reform our high school education system on the lines of liberal arts tradition in Boston Public School system where the core curriculum consists of the following subjects: English language and Literature, one foreign language, Mathematics, one science subject and one elective subject in a year.

Wide options are given for choosing the elective subjects ranging from world history to accountancy to computer programming. A lot of emphasis is placed on project work where students work in a group and present the group work in classroom. Not more than one science subject is offered in an academic year. Usually, biology is offered in class IX, and physics and chemistry in class X and class XI.

There is a separate honours class for students who demonstrate proficiency in specific subjects. In class XI and class XII, Student can take advanced placement courses under colleges Boards in different subjects.

To be sure, the primary school system must be reformed first. Primary schools (from nursery to class V) must provide a mentally healthy and enjoyable environment to attain their academic goals of imparting reading, writing and arithmetic skills and to prevent dropouts.

Students should acquire the basic social skill of working in a group and communicating with one another. There should be a system of identification of talent or proficiency in sports, music, dance, recitation and drama, poem and essay writing, and fine arts.

All students should get promotion to the next class till they reach middle school. Minimum level of arithmetic and language skills should be prescribed for a graduating primary school student and schools must ensure that all students acquire such minimum level.

Middle schools (class VI to class VIII) should further nurture development of social skill, mathematics and language skills, and non-academic proficiencies identified in primary schools. Middle school graduates should complete basic lessons in Indian history, geography, social and political ethos, including those of a democratic polity.

All should be promoted to the next class till class VIII at the end of which they graduate to high school after passing tests on writing ability, algebra and on basic features of Indian social and political ethos. The enjoyable and playful environment of the primary school should be maintained at middle school and special care must be taken to prevent dropout by holding tutorials for needy students.

School education system must encourage learning of concepts and, for that examination system, should be re-designed on the patterns of concept-oriented systems such as IB, advanced placement and subject SAT. These reforms will draw students from abroad and promote exchange programmes with foreign educational institutions. Education will thus become a thriving activity in India with huge employment potential.

It is, therefore, time that our school curricula and examination system are reformed on aforesaid lines of liberal arts education. Of course, these reforms will not be fruitful unless schools have the requisite infrastructure and trained faculty, and textbooks are rewritten to focus on conceptual learning.

Source: /economictimes/25 November 2009

RoE, RoCE and a lot more 'R's

Reading, 'Riting and 'Rithmetic cannot flourish if you ignore the other 'R's.

Over 2 million children in 2,200 private schools across the country use his 'Smartclass' every day. 4 lakh kids so far are registered with online tutorial site _WiZiQ._ 4 lakh teachers have been trained just this year in skills they would have learnt if they had done a basic Bed. 14,000 computer labs have been built in government schools … If you're looking for confirmation that Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal is on the right track while saying the law will be changed to allow for-profit firms to enter the education business, Shantanu Prakash's Educomp Solutions Limited's success provides enough of this, writes _Sunil Jain._

Much is known about 15-year old Educomp and its success — Revenues are up from Rs 112 crore in 2006-07 to Rs 517 crore in 2008-09. Return on Investment (RoI) from 12.92 to 16.04 per cent in the same period; Return on Capital Employed (RoCE) from 28.5 to 27.8 per cent; Return on Net Worth (RoNW) from 24.1 to 35.6 per cent. So I really want to meet Prakash for his take on whether Sibal's bitten off more than he can chew while making Class 10 exams optional. on whether we even need to have regulators like the All India Council For Technical Education (AICTE) for education [think of the Indian School of Business (ISB)which is doing well without an accreditation]; on what's wrong with the not-for-profit model if it allows people like him to expand the way they have; and yes, does Prakash's move to bricks-and-mortar schools suggest the current model of computer-aided teaching tools (that's the Smartclass for which parents in these 2,200 schools pay Educomp Rs 150 per month) is flagging?

We are lunching at Olive Beach, the still-trendy Mediterranean food joint at Chanakya Puri. We are sitting outside, partly since the weather has just started getting nice and partly because, like most other restaurants, there is a gaggle of kitty-party women inside — for a long while, only women stream in, prompting Prakash to say that we are the only men in the place, apart from the stewards of course.

While we're cutting the freshly-baked bread that's served on the side and deciding on orders, we speak of what looks like a very well-planned march from Smartclass to pre-schools (400-plus Eurokids and 170 Roots-to-Wings), online tutoring, bricks-and-mortar schools (23 with 16,000 students), high-end vocational education with Raffles University, a distance education tie-up with the Pearson Group of the UK (it owns Penguin and the _Financial Times_). We joke about the title of the book, _Stay Hungry Stay Foolish,_ by Rashmi Bansal on 25 IIM Ahmedabad (IIM-A) graduates like Prakash and Naukri's Sanjeev Bikhchandani who decided to venture out on their own — a friend's wife, Prakash tells me, thought it was a new dieting book! (Disclosure: I almost bought _Chicken Soup for the Mother's Soul_ so I could make soup for my son.) Prakash refuses to get drawn by my comment that IIMs are just a fancy recruitment process and don't really add much value — the fact that IIM-A is, after all these years, celebrating just 25 graduates getting into their own ventures, I suppose, does tell a certain kind of story.

Prakash, to get his CV out of the way, began life as a businessman, much to the dismay of his father, a SAIL officer who, like so many others, wanted his son to study for the IAS. Began, in the sense, he schooled at the Delhi Public School in Mathura Road, went to Shri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC) and then to IIM-A and, immediately after, joined an SRCC colleague in the education-aids business — if you schooled in Delhi, chances are the skeleton you examined in the biology lab was sold by Prakash.

Our orders finally arrive (a Bruschetta followed by a Contadina pizza for him and a Caesar's salad followed by a sea bass for me) and after a bite, Prakash smothers his pizza with Tabasco — it's unlikely it's that bad, so presumably he just ordered wrongly. I do not do the same with my fish; the flavouring's delicate, subtle. Sipping his Diet Coke (after all the cheese, keeping a watch on calories is probably par for the course), Prakash says this is around the time CBSE introduced computers as a curriculum — so he left his friend, borrowed money at high rates and started buying computers to install in schools, the growth was slow but steady and, most important, profitable. This is where, Prakash says, he learnt the most valuable lesson in business — sells to consumers who can get others to pay! The schools got the computers free (the same applies to the Smartclass), and this made them look hi-tech and attractive to parents who paid Prakash separately. The rest then followed and, today, with 400 people just developing education content, in ten Indian languages, Prakash says, he has the largest team doing such work in the world.

As for whether the distance education model is flagging, Prakash points to how its share in his revenues (65 per cent at the moment) is rising — just 2,200 of the 75,000 private schools have his Smartclasses and just 14,000 of the 925,000 government schools are covered by his computer labs, an indication of how much more scope there is. So why the 23 bricks-and-mortar schools (apart from the pre-schools) and plans to go to 150 by 2012? According to a CLSA brokerage report, Prakash says, Indians spend $25 billion (Rs 112,500 crore) a year on education till Class 12 and another $5.5 billion on tutoring — needless to say, he wants to be part of this great business where, to quote him, demand outstrips supply by a huge margin and the business is cash-flow negative.

To understand why for-profit is so important, you need to understand Educomp's model for bricks and mortar. The school has to be run by a not-for-profit trust, that's the law. So while the trust runs the school, Educomp is a vendor to the trust. Educomp buys the land and sets up the building (in a new school), provides the course material and so on and then charges the trust for its service. The trust gets to retain its profit, but Educomp has created a business model through which it is able to profit as an education vendor — it then uses this profit to attract investors and keep its model going. Obviously, a for-profit model where investors can invest directly is a better one, but what is wrong with the not-for-profit one, I ask. Before answering, Prakash points out that while the trust model does not pay any taxes, his model converts this into a for-tax model since Educomp pays taxes on the income it earns as an education service provider to the trust. That important clarification out of the way, Prakash says there is no problem with the existing not-for-profit model, provided you do not want to expand fast. The money lies with the trust, and that is it. If, on the other hand, you want to expand, you need equity funding … only for-profit can deliver that. We have a discussion on venture capitalists (VCs) that are not fit to print here, none of which, Prakash insists, applies to his VC who brings a lot of ideas to the table and actually understands business.

Which brings us to Sibal? Isn't it foolish to abolish the Class 10, and eventually class 12, boards since the boards provide a neutral way in which to judge a student's ability; if the tension over the Class 12 board is to be replaced with the tension over a college entrance exam, what is the difference? Since I am convinced I am right, Prakash says that even if you accept the argument that Sibal is getting a few things wrong, the important thing is that he is moving in an area where policy has been static for decades. You mean it is like putting a spec of dirt in an oyster, the shake-up it causes produces a pearl. Exactly, Prakash seizes upon that. But why have regulators, why not let parents and students decide which school/college is the best, I persist. I mock Sibal's latest plan to set up 2,500 schools on a public-

private-partnership (PPP) basis which are to be regulated by the government — another layer of bureaucracy!

Yes and no. Obviously choice is important, says Prakash, but schools/colleges, like ISB, are free to decide if they want to align to a certain standard. Aligning to a CBSE, or even an AICTE, allows parents/students to know they can expect a certain standard, that's all — yes, if the government said CBSE/AICTE was the only standard and everyone had to adhere to it, that would have been a problem. But surely, prescribing 100 square feet of balcony space outside each classroom, or some such number, as the Delhi government does, I ask, is stupid? Even the Sheraton prescribes standards, Prakash counters. The standards can be changed if they're out of whack, but there's nothing wrong with standards or regulations, he insists, what's wrong is the licensing that most state governments carry out — you require an "essentiality" certificate before you commence and that means the usual palm-greasing.

With all this emphasis on learning, does Prakash still read, considering he fondly recalls his father's big treats were books? Not that much, he admits, struggling to recall the name of the last book he read. Perhaps when he starts adult education courses? Re-Kindle, so to speak.

Source: New Delhi /business-standard/17 Nov 2009

The price of quality education

Teaching with computerized lesson plans?

In response to the article "Should teachers put price tags on lesson plans?" [page one, Nov. 15], my first feeling is one of repulsion.

Teachers are paid to teach our children using the knowledge they learned in school, not by plagiarizing what other teachers do. Plagiarizing is the one thing teachers drill into our children's minds through all the years of schooling.

The article discussed sharing ideas among others, which in my opinion is still OK, but the idea that my children will one day be taught by computerized lesson plans enrages me.

I pay taxes to provide an education for my future children and the children of their children, not to provide school educators an easy way out of their responsibilities of creating interesting ways to provide our future providers with the knowledge to live.

— **Brittany Hake, North Bend**

Giving students the basics

I would like to comment on The Times editorial "State should join race to reform education" [Opinion, Nov. 15].

The issue of tying teacher pay to student performance is a poor idea, and will not raise academic achievement.

Could we instead be talking more about giving students the basics? Many classrooms do not have up-to-date textbooks or enough money to buy supplies for classroom projects and activities.

This year my district lowered our individual stipends from $350 to $200 to buy classroom supplies, but our classroom sizes went up. Our class sizes are too high. One of my colleagues teaches science to more than 32 students in a room not equipped for science instruction.

How do you propose we fairly measure the worth of an art, music or physical-education teacher? Are there not some subjects where the standardized testing model does not fit?

I teach one high-school class of mostly special-education students. These students historically do not perform well on written standardized tests. Would I be making a smart move to not teach these students anymore? I am pretty sure that my students need me there in that classroom with them.

— **Kelly Roger Hayes, Seattle**

A note from Bishop Blanchet on charter, Catholic schools

Local K-12 education has been in the press of late. Gov. Chris Gregoire visited a school to help the state win coveted federal grants, local high schools have discussed high-school graduation requirements, Seattle Public Schools is wrestling with new boundaries, and columnists have devoted columns to investigating how poverty affects student performance.

In all this talk about education, it is surprising that no one has mentioned how Catholic schools are an important part of the educational landscape.

Washington's Catholic school system is the second-largest so-called district in the state, educating more than 30,000 students at a fraction of the cost public schools spend per pupil. While Catholic schools spend less per student, the results are far from inferior. Studies show that Catholic schools are strong academic institutions where students succeed.

While Seattle public high schools argue over whether or not a D is sufficient to get credit, the Catholic high schools in Seattle send 99 percent of their graduates to college, and about 57 percent of them receive scholarships to colleges.

This record of academic success is remarkable.

Many argue that Catholic schools are elite institutions. Not true. Catholic schools are most successful with poor and minority students. A quick glance at the demographics of a sample Catholic high school in Seattle would show that nearly 40 percent of its students receive financial aid.

Catholic schools ensure success regardless of students' race or income level.

It is good to see education in the news, but it's time to include all the players, including Catholic schools. This is not a new idea. Forty states have charter movements that include Catholic and private schools. Perhaps it is time for Washington to make sure all its schools have a seat at the policy table.

Source: /seattletimes/20 November 2009

UGC frames teachers' appraisal rules

College and university lecturers and professors had better abandon their outdated notes and the chalk-and-talk method of teaching. Because, their promotions are at stake now.

The UGC has come up with guidelines to evaluate teachers' performances. Their promotion will be based on evaluations made in accordance with that. Included in the long list of criteria is "familiarity with up-to-date teaching material".

Teachers are expected to imbibe new and innovative teaching methods, including imparting lessons with the help of CDs, the internet and other audio-visual aid. Besides, they will also be required to spend a specified number of hours on tutorials and seminars and will be judged on the time they actually spend on them.

Their evaluation will also be based on the extent to which they develop new curricula and teach new courses, produce relevant teaching material, exam methods they develop and the extent to which they participate in external and internal exams of the institutions they teach in. Attendance will be significant too.

Colleges and universities will have to design annual performance appraisal systems for their teachers and will be free to conduct such appraisal in accordance with their own design.

The UGC has fixed a scale of 150 points to judge teachers' performances on criteria outlined under the head of teaching'. Another 50-point scale has been set out to evaluate their performance under the professional and related activities' head. To score the 50 points, teachers must contribute to professional activity by undertaking institutional governance responsibilities, becoming members of its board of studies, securing nomination on higher education-related committees and also by contributing to profession-related activities of higher educational institutions other than their own. Assessments under this head will be based on evidence submitted by teachers for performance appraisal.

Another criteria outlined by the UGC is teachers' contribution to research and development activities. Under this head, teachers will score 10 points for every work of theirs published in a journal recognised or indexed as an international publication and 5 for those published in a journal not indexed as an international publication. Teachers will also score three points for each publication in a national-level research paper with ISBN or ISSN numbers.

They will be awarded two points for presenting a full paper in conferences. They will also score 20 points if international publishers publish books written solely by them and 10 points for books edited by them, 10 points for books published by a national or state publisher, and 5 points for books edited by them. Contributions by teachers to edited volumes published by international publishers will fetch them 5 points while the reward for similar contributions to volumes brought out by Indian publishers will be 3 points.

Teachers will be awarded 10 points for each major project worth more than Rs 5 lakh and 5 points for minor ones. Consultancy projects will earn them 10 points while reports they prepare for external agencies will fetch 20 points if the project is a major one and 10 points if it is a minor one. Each patent they get attached to their name will be rewarded with 25 points.

When a professor guides a student for an MPhil degree, he will receive 3 points for each candidate and 10 points for guiding a PhD student.

Faculty members who organise orientation or refresher courses, research and methodology workshops will receive 20 points while those participating in an international conference will be awarded 10 points. Points for participating in an Indian conference will fetch 5 points while 2 points will be awarded for a regional conference. Scores for organising international, national, regional and invited lectures will be 15,10, 5 and 2 points respectively.

International, national, state and local awards received by teaching faculty members will fetch them 50, 25, 10 and 5 points respectively.

Teachers can score up to 200 points, depending on the extent to which they meet various criteria outlined under the final head of co-curricular work and student mentoring activities.

Source: Kolkata /timesofindia/19 November 2009

University courses should be job-based: President

President of India Pratibha Devisingh Patil today stressed the need for universities in the country to assess the job-market requirement before structuring their courses so that the students passing out get employed.

She was delivering the convocation address at Goa University's 22nd annual convocation ceremony held at the university's sports complex at Taleigao plateau on Tuesday, in the presence of Chancellor of Goa University and Governor Dr SS Sidhu, Chief Minister Digambar Kamat, Vice-Chancellor Prof Dileep Deobagkar, Registrar Dr Mohan Sangodkar, executive council members, deans of faculty and other dignitaries.

On the occasion, the Goa University conferred an honorary D.Litt degree on the president. Pointing out that in India, it is often said that the problem is more of employability than of unemployment – meaning that the skills that people have are not appropriate for securing employment, the president said the onus is on the universities to do the needful.

"It is imperative that our universities assess the requirements of the job-market well in advance and structure courses in a manner that will help their students enter the employment market prepared for jobs available", she said.

In her address, she also called for interaction of students of the university with local industry and several socio-economic organisations to help understand the dynamics of business. Higher education, she said, should also encourage the youth to set up their own enterprises. The president tried to emphasise that universities are not just centres of learning. "Universities help a nation in giving its economic vitality, scientific prowess, a broad outline of social change and global competitiveness, through innovation and research."

In her opinion, universities should have outreach programmes that enable students to interact with local communities and understand their issues. The educated, she said, must work for the upliftment of the disadvantaged sections of the society, undertake social welfare work, and become messengers of change.

She expressed her satisfaction that the Goa University has a platform through which educational programmes can be telecast for community development and mass awareness programmes.

Drug menace: One area, which is of concern to the president, is drug addiction – the issue, which she also raised at the civic reception, held in her honour yesterday. "Drug addiction is becoming an increasing threat for our youth. It is said that first you consume drugs and then drugs consume you", she said with a hope that the awareness about the ill effects would be taken up by the university through the same platform.

Ragging: Coming out strongly against ragging, she said ragging in all the universities in the country and educational institutions "must stop". Ragging, she said, is a crime against humanity and shameful behaviour.

Referring to globalization, the President said India's institutions of higher learning must gear to face challenges of the contemporary world.

Quality: She had a word of advice to policy makers on the education front. As more institutions of higher learning are opening up, she said, "We have to be careful that by concentrating on quantity, we don't compromise on quality."

Quality faculty is important to maintain high standards of the universities in the country so that world-class graduates, post graduates and doctoral students are produced. "This is a challenge of the future, which our universities have to overcome jointly with the government", she said.

Youth: Another matter of worry for the president is that India's youth – 54 crore, which is one of the largest young populations in the world – receive "proper education". Stating that there is a tendency to rush for subjects like commerce and management, she said these are no doubt important but is equally important to study basic science subjects at the university level and focus on research and innovation.

Earlier, the governor conferred degrees, diplomas, awarded prizes, medals to doctoral candidates, and others who topped in their respective fields.

Source: Panjim /oheraldo.in/24 November 2009

RESOURCE

Decrease in drop-out rate of school children

Selected Educational Statistics (SES) 2006-07 reveals decline in drop-out rate since 2001-02, including that of SCs/STs at primary and elementary level. Ministry of Human Resource Development collects the information on various educational indicators from the States/UTs annually through SES.

Year	Primary (I-V)			Elementary (I-VII)		
	Overall	SC	ST	Overall	SC	ST
2001-02	39	45.2	52.3	54.6	60.7	69.5
2006-07	25.6	35.9	33.09	45.9	53.05	62.5

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is implemented in partnership with the States/UTs in which, inter-alia, one of the goals specifies retention of all children upto the elementary level. A multipronged approach has been adopted under the SSA for reducing drop-out rates. These include, inter-alia, strengthening of schools and improving the quality of education through improvement in school infrastructure, recruitment of additional teachers, provision of annual school grants, regular training of teachers. In addition, interventions under SSA aim at building community support, flexible schooling for the hardest to reach children, residential hostel buildings in remote tribal areas, special provisions for SC and ST children including free text-books and remedial teaching. The Mid-Day Meal programme also complements the strategy to reduce drop-outs.

The Minister of State gave this information for Human Resource Development Smt. D. Purandeswari, in a written reply to a question, in the Lok Sabha today.

Source: New Delhi /pib.nic.in/25 November 2009

Hands-on training for vocational students

The State government is in talks with the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) to enhance hands-on training for students of vocational stream at higher secondary level. Minister for School Education, Thangam Thennarasu here, stated this on Monday.

Launching Thalir - a life skill programme and value education for school students here, he said, the move follows a set of recommendations by the panel constituted to study about students passing out of schools with vocational stream background. The first round of talks with the CII, which could be carried out under public private partnership (PPP) and corporate social responsibility (CSR) is already over, he added.

Laying stress on conducting moral instruction classes, which are gradually being encroached upon by other classes, he said, "This made us start library hours, in order to drive students towards libraries for reading books," he noted.

The Minister said, this novel initiative experimented on pilot basis in five schools for a year in different parts of Tamil Nadu would be extended to 4000 other schools using audio video kits.

Source: Chennai /expressbuzz/24 November 2009

Jawaharlal Nehru University M.Sc Agri. Biotechnology 2010 Exam

The Jawaharlal Nehru University is one of the premier institutes in India providing higher education. JNU came into existence in 1969 under the Jawaharlal Nehru University Act, 1966. This Central University in India seeks to promote national integration, social justice, and democratic way of life, secularism, international understanding and scientific approach to solving problems of society.

JNU M.Sc Agri. Biotechnology 2010 Exam Courses offered M.Sc (Agri.) Biotechnology

JNU M.Sc Agri. Biotechnology 2010 Exam Eligibility criteria Candidate must have a bachelor's degree of minimum 3 years from any of the reputed Institute with at least 60% aggregate.

Application for JNU M.Sc Agri. Biotechnology 2010 Exam

Jawaharlal Nehru University - JNU M.Sc (Agri.) Biotechnology Entrance Exam 2010 application forma is available on official website. They can get all information wombat application related information from official website.

How to Apply JNU M.Sc Agri. Biotechnology 2010 Exam

The Interested candidate can also apply online and sent some along with recent passport size photograph affixed on the right hand corner of the application and attested copies certificate and a demand draft in favors of the Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Selection Procedure JNU M.Sc Agri. Biotechnology 2010 Exam

Selection of the candidate is based on the personal interview and written test of the candidate. The candidate selection is also based on the rules and regulation of the Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Important Dates

The Jawaharlal Nehru University - JNU M.Sc (Agri.) Biotechnology 2010 Entrance Examination as important dates coming soon.

Contact address

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Phones: +91-11-26717676, 26717557.

Source: /education4india/23 November 2009

New opportunities are emerging in UK

British Council's new regional director for India and Sri Lanka, Ruth Gee, has been involved with HR development in a big way in many of her previous roles. In her previous career in the UK, she concentrated on education and training within schools, colleges and the university sector. She is known to be a strong advocate of equal opportunity and diversity, and supports the development of people through coaching, mentoring and work shadowing. She spoke to ET Bureau about the growing importance of India as a market for British Council. Excerpts:

There are a large number of Indian students going for higher education to the UK and the numbers are growing. Do you see this as the most important educational link between the two countries?

That is one part of the educational partnership, but I would also like to see many more undergraduates from the UK coming to India for studies. That would be a sign of success of the growing ties. Besides, the UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKREI) programme has formed the foundation of partnerships between schools and colleges in the two countries over the last three years.

There have been over 500 partnerships forged through UKREI since 2006. Moving ahead, UKREI will probably have a new skills-related agenda.

Why do you think UK is such an attractive destination for Indian students?

Many Indian students will choose the UK because of the international exposure that they will get. Our campuses have students and faculty members from all over the world, and that is what the global citizens are looking for. But we will look forward to partnerships in India to create international campuses here as well.

There has been a lot of debate surrounding the new student visa regulations in UK. Do you think that student numbers from India to the UK will go down this year?

So far, there has been an increase in numbers from Chennai while there's been a slight dip in the North. We value international students for their knowledge, and Indians form a large part of this segment. And even though traditional job opportunities may have shrunk for students after they finish their courses in UK, new opportunities are emerging in entrepreneurship and with small and medium enterprises.

Is the British Council involved with any skills-based programmes in India?

We are involved in a big way in the teaching of English language in India. The BPO industry, for instance, employs 1.5 million people and requires English language skills in a big way.

We work with our partners in India in three different ways— at the state level, we collaborate and analyse the English

language resources in the primary level classrooms for the governments.

We also work with companies as specialist consultants and lastly we work with individual English teachers through our training centre.

Source: /economictimes/22 November 2009

Revision of Centrally Sponsored National Programme for Mid Day Meal in Schools

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs today approved revision of the National Programme for Mid Day Meal in Schools according to the following norms:

i. The food norm for upper primary children has been revised to increase the quantity of pulses from 25 to 30 grams, vegetables from 65 to 75 grams and to decrease the quantity of oil and fat from 10 to 7.5 grams.

ii. The cooking cost (excluding the labour and administrative charges) has been revised to Rs.2.50 for primary and Rs.3.75 for upper primary children with effect from 01.12.2009 and to further revises it by 7.5% on 1.4.2010 and again on 01.04.2011. The cooking cost will be shared between the centre and the NER States on 90:10 basis and with other States / UTs on 75:25 basis.

iii. A separate provision for payment of honorarium of Rs.1000 per month to each cook-cum-helper has been made. Also, a norm for engaging cook-cum-helpers in schools has been prescribed. Now, one cook-cum-helpers in schools has been prescribed. Now, one cook-cum-helper can be engaged in a school having upto 25 students, two cooks-cum-helper can be engaged in a school having 26 to 100 students, and one additional cook-cum-helper for every addition of upto 100 students. The expenditure towards the honorarium of cooks-cum-helpers will be shared between the Centre and the States / UTs on the same pattern as given above.

iv. Determination of cost of construction of a kitchen-cum-store on the basis of State Schedule of Rates and the plinth area norm laid by the Department of School Education & literacy on the basis of number of children studying in the school. The cost of construction of kitchen-cum-store will be shared between the Centre and the states / UTs on the same pattern as given above.

v. Transportation assistance in the 11 special Category States [8 NE States, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Uttarakhand) has been made at pat with the PDS rates prevalent in these States.

vi. The payment of cost of foodgrains to FCI will now be made at the district level.

vii. The above revision would involve an additional expenditure of Rs.10140.33 crore for the Central Government and Rs.4280.79 crore for the States / UTs for the balance period of the 11th Five-year Plan.

The expected number of children to be covered under Mid day Meal Scheme during 2009-10 are 8.41 crore for primary and 3.36 crore for upper primary (total:11.77 crore children) per school day. On an average 8.33 crore children of primary and 2.86 crore children of upper primary classes (total 11.19 crore children) were covered under the Scheme during 2008-09 by spending Rs.6687.99 crore and utilizing 20.23 lakh MTs of foodgrains.

The MDM is an ongoing scheme. The overall responsibility of implementation of the Scheme lies with the State / UT Governments. The revision of cost will be publicized through media and displayed outside the school walls for the information of all concerned and effective timely implementation. The target groups under the Scheme are all children attending classes I-VIII in Government, Government aided and Local body schools, Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative & Innovative Education (AIE) Centres including Madrasas and Maqtabs supported under SSA. All such children are to be given a mid day meal on all school days.

The revised norms will facilitate the implementing agency to serve mid day meals to the children in prescribed quantity and of good quality. This will help children fight classroom hunger, concentrate better on classroom activities, break social barriers and foster social harmony besides providing nutritional support.

Source: New Delhi /pib.nic.in/19 November 2009

Roadmap laid out for 6 new specialised universities

Amid hectic parleys on the last day meant exclusively for business visitors at the India International Trade Fair, a brainstorming session was on at hall number 8 between academicians, vice chancellors as well as past and present policymakers to transform Delhi into the country's knowledge capital. The conference was organized against the backdrop of the Delhi government's vision to create a new university system. This envisages setting up of six new specialized institutes of learning in the city.

Titled `Delhi as the knowledge capital', and jointly organized by the Department of Training and Technical Education, government of NCT of Delhi and Delhi Technological University (DTU), the conference on Wednesday discussed a strategic framework for giving shape to the varsity system.

Three out of the six universities are already functional. They include the National Law School University (NLU), IIIT-Delhi and Dr B R Ambedkar University.

"Under the new model of higher education, a number of discipline-focused smaller universities are being set up, which would be managed by a common apex system. The new institutes planned are the University of Science and Technology, University of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Research, and University College of Medical Sciences," said Delhi chief secretary Rakesh Mehta.

The conference is being seen as a platform for creating a plan of action for the proposed initiatives of the Delhi

government. It also discussed the public-private partnership model (PPP) of education where the Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University (GGSIPU) was cited as an instance. In this system, a majority of the affiliated colleges are privately run.

The chief minister's principal secretary, P K Tripathi, said that after the success of GGSIPU, the government is keen to see if a university along these lines (with private partnership) can function on a wider scale. Others who participated in the meeting included DTU vice chancellor P B Sharma, NLU VC Ranbir Singh, GGSIPU VC D K Bandyopadhyay, International Management Institute director C S Venkataratnam, former director of IIT Kharagpur K L Chopra and former special secretary (ministry of new and renewable energy) S K Chopra.

Speaking on technical education, K L Chopra said: "In order to change technical education system for good, we have to address the issue of lack of equity, role of private institutions, lack of qualified faculty, inadequate infrastructure, questionable quality of curriculum, negligible research and development and inadequate entrepreneurship activity among other factors."

Chopra added: "We want our IITs to be like MIT, but the latter enjoys much greater autonomy. How can we compete when we have a minister who wants 80% marks to be the eligibility for JEE or have a say in the appointment of directors?"

Drawing out four building blocks for creating a knowledge capital out of Delhi, Venkataratnam said: "We have to network all higher education institutes, create an interface with all sections and sectors of society, establish technology and industrial parks and incubators, and imagine the future creatively. There is no escape from the PPP model, as different parts of the system are not working in sync. There is a huge gap between aspiration and reality and government investment alone is not adequate. The choice is between educating and not educating even at the cost of commercialization."

The framework is expected to be presented to the government for further action later.

Source: New Delhi /timesofindia/19 November 2009

Steps being taken as part of SSA

The Government is committed to universalisation of elementary education and has taken significant steps to enhance access, retention and quality through its flagship Programme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA).

Under SSA The followings Provision are adopted:

(i)1.47 lakh primary schools have been opened across the country.

(ii)1.23 lakh primary schools have been upgraded to have upper primary classes.

(iii)9.86 lakh teachers have been recruited.

(iv)Children are provided free textbooks.

(v)Teachers are provided periodic in-service training.

(vi)Mid-day meal is provided to all children in classes 1-8 in Government and Government aided schools. These interventions have contributed to the following improvement at primary and elementary level as under:

Item	2001-02		2006-07	
	Primary Level	Elementary Level	Primary Level	Elementary Level
Reduction in drop-out rates	39.03	54.60	25.43	46.03
Improvement in GER	96.3	82.35	111.24	96.92
Improvement in GPI	0.83	0.81	0.94	0.93

The Minister of State gave this information for Human Resource Development Smt. D. Purandeswari, in a written reply to a question, in the Rajya Sabha today.

Source: New Delhi /pib.nic.in/20 November 2009

Contribute

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

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

Please email your contributions to aserf@apeejay.edu

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