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

Vision 2010

India's continued economic success will depend on it providing educated and skilled labour, with this in mind the government has announced an ambitious plan to bring about modernisation in the higher education system.

What should be the roadmap for higher education in the 21st century? According to Balagangadhara Rao, director of the Research Centre Vergelijkende Cultuurwetenschap Ghent University, Belgium, higher education in the 21st century should focus on developing the ability to flourish in a world that is fundamentally diverse and irredeemably different. While MRS Rao, president, Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), opines, 'Education in the 21st century should focus on knowledge creation. The government is thinking on the right lines that instead of a knowledge-absorbing society, India has to become a knowledge-generating society."

Besides, education, today, is without borders. BB Bhattacharya, vice-chancellor, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), asserts that 21st century education is global. 'Indian universities need to prepare themselves for this global system of education. Our universities need complete autonomy in terms of what to teach, how to teach and whom to teach. Currently, laws in India say a central university cannot appoint a foreign lecturer. If a professor from Bangladesh is an expert in SAARC and is willing to come to my university why can't I appoint him? Why should knowledge be restricted? Education should be free." Vivien Stewart, vice-president, Education, Asia Society, adds, "Globalisation poses questions about the excellence, equity and content of our education systems, which we must take into account if we are to adequately prepare our students for tomorrow."

Shifting Paradigms

Collaborative education is growing in importance across the globe, with an increased focus on innovation through R&D in order to advance towards a more 'knowledge-based ' economy. Also, today interdisciplinarity is being recognised to be essential for innovation and universities are unique environments where high academic standards and a vast range of disciplines meet and flourish.

According to M Anandakrishnan, chairman, Board of Governors, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Kanpur, "We need to go beyond multidisciplinary options to towards an interdisciplinary approach. All cutting edge developments in technologies occur at the interface of two or more disciplines." He further added, "In recent years, the spectacular growth of knowledge in science and technology has been made possible by the integrated efforts of scientists, engineers and social scientists, in addressing complex problems from the perspectives of different disciplines. Interdisciplinarity enables integration of concepts, theories, techniques and perspectives from two or more disciplines to advance fundamental

understanding or to solve problems whose solutions are beyond the scope of a single discipline."

Besides knowledge, students should also pick up transferable skills and it should be incorporated in the curriculum. "There was a time when a person would remain in one profession for a lifetime. Now a US survey has shown that on an average a person changes at least 10 professions in his lifetime. Instead of preparing a career for life, we have to prepare a life of careers," says BVR Chawdari, professor, National University of Singapore (NUS).

Universities are becoming aware of the broader need for transferable skills in academic and non-academic environments. According to a survey by European University Association (EUA), the core transferable skills that a student should have, and these are quite independent of the field of knowledge, include social and communication skills, management, creative thinking, capacity of dealing with complex and multidisciplinary work and team.

Exposure to other cultures has become an important aspect of education today. Studying abroad remains a popular option in India; however, not everyone can enjoy the option. As Allan Goodman, president, Institute of International Education (IIE) says: 'Those of us who are involved in the field of international education tend to forget how unconnected most of our citizens are to the world.

Most people still do not travel and the majority of those who do are forced into it by adverse conditions and events. Of the nearly 150 million students in higher educational institutions around the world, less than two percent are studying abroad and in only 20 out of 200 countries." Christian Bode, secretary general, German Academic Exchange Service, advises, "bring internationalisation to your campus through student/ faculty exchange, joint research programmes, and so on."

Is India future ready?

The emphasis placed on education has resulted in India having one of the largest higher education systems in the world, consisting of over 20,000 institutes enrolling more than 12 million students. However, as Amitabh Jhingan, partner, Ernst & Young, puts it, "growth in numbers has not been accompanied by an improvement in the delivery of higher education and consequent outcomes." The challenges facing the higher education system continue to be access, equity and quality. The gross enrolment ratio (GER) has grown but there still exists a wide disparity across regions and gender.

According to a Ernst&Young-FICCI report on 'Making the Indian Higher Education System Future Ready,' the five focus areas should be — financial innovation, innovative use of information and communication technologies (ICT), reinvigorating research, thrust on vocational education and training (VET) and regulatory reforms. The Yashpal Committee first appointed to look into the functioning of the University Grant's Commission (UGC) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), went beyond its mandate

to chalk out a plan to revamp higher education in-sync with international standards.

The Yashpal Committee Report titled, 'Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education,' emphasises the need for flexibility. "Over the years we have followed policies of fragmenting our educational enterprise into cubicles. If a student of science wants to study music, s/he should be given an option to do so whereas our current education system does not give this flexibility," says NR Madhava Menon, a member of the committee. To achieve universal higher education India has a lot of ground to cover but with the new reforms it is steering in the right direction.

Skills for the 21st Century

communication acquiring and processing information synthesising knowledge integrating knowledge from different disciplines leadership; team management, dealing with uncertainty, conflict handling failure management commercial awareness (market, IPR) research management creative thinking (discovery, imaging solutions) negotiation understanding of business environment user requirement consciousness coping with conflicting demands analytical skills methodological knowledge and skills communication and presentation skills management skills international, intercultural experience and competence working in such environments language skills people and relationship management skills computer science skills hard science knowledge (to a certain degree), e.g. statistics interdisciplinary skills and knowledge — broader picture and understanding of the world enterpreneurship social skills in different context (in different socio-economic environments) creative thinking, innovation ethics problem solving. Source: EUA DOC-CAREERS Project

Key Recommendations

Creation of an all-encompassing National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER), a constitutional body to replace the existing regulatory bodies including the UGC, AICTE, NCTE and DEC Institutions of excellence like the IITs and IIMs to be encouraged to diversify and expand their scope to work as fullfledged universities, while keeping intact their unique features, which shall act as pace-setting and model governance systems for all universities Establish a National Education Tribunal with powers to adjudicate on disputes among stake-holders within institutions and between institutions so as to reduce litigation in courts involving universities and higher education institutions Source: Yashpal Committee Report

Access: Availability of suitable number of institutions across regions to fulfill demand.

Equity: Equal opportunity for all sections of society to participate in higher education.

Quality: Provision of suitable infrastructure, trained faculty and effective pedagogy in higher education institutions aimed at delivering expected outcomes. Source: EY Analysis

Source: /timesofindia/28 December 2009

NEWS

2009: A year of reforms in education

Sweeping reforms ranging from scrapping of CBSE's Class X board exam and enacting of a law to make education a fundamental right of every child were in the news on the educational front in 2009, a year that also saw a new CAT format plagued by technical glitches.

With Kapil Sibal, who has been described by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh as one of the "finest minds" in the government, taking over as the new Human Resource Development Minister, a new roadmap for reforms was put in place aiming at transforming the country's demographic dividend into a growth propeller.

Sibal's stint in the ministry began with a host of policy and legislative initiatives with focus on access, equity and quality.

The reforms process started with a major announcement of the government to abolish compulsory CBSE Board exams for Class X from 2010-11 session and introduction of grading system from current year.

The step was taken to reduce the examination stress of students. The CBSE also initiated a "continuous, comprehensive evaluation" which will assess the students' performance on a continuous basis.

Another major step in the education sector came in the passage of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill, which was hanging fire for last four years. The landmark Act provides for free and compulsory education as a fundamental right of children in the 6-14 age group.

The Act also provides for earmarking 25 per cent seats for weaker sections in schools and seeks to do away with the practice of schools taking capitation fees before admission and subjecting the child or parents to any screening procedure.

The Common Admission Test (CAT) was conducted through computers, but was marred by technical glitches. Test of over 8,000 students was disrupted due to the glitches. The issue was raised in Parliament.

The CAT committee, however, stuck to the computer-based system after it reviewed the exam. It announced a fresh exam for those aspirants who could not appear in the test during the 11-day testing period.

The ministry mooted a number of legislations in higher education, which was often in the news for wrong reasons, including corruption and other malpractices.

In far-reaching reforms, the ministry decided to create a National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) as an overarching body in higher education.

The proposed NCHER will replace UGC, AICTE, DCE and NCTE. The ministry has prepared another bill for entry of foreign education providers into the country.

For checking malpractices in higher education, the Human Resource Development Ministry prepared a separate bill. The government wants to have a national accreditation

body for accreditation of educational institutions. Besides, it has prepared a separate bill for setting up of educational tribunals.

However, the government's move to review the functioning of deemed universities remained an unfulfilled task till the end of the year.

There are 130 deemed universities in the country, including around 100 in private sector. There are allegations that many undeserving institutions have got the status in the past few years.

AICTE Chairman R A Yadav was suspended by the government in connection with the corruption case registered against him by the CBI.

The agency on July 16 arrested AICTE member secretary K Narayan Rao besides registering corruption cases against Yadav, Regional Officer Sriom Dalal, Deputy Director Robinder Randhawa and Advisor H C Rai.

Under criticism over the selection of 15 vice chancellors in haste, the government mooted the idea of appointing VCs and directors of IIMs through independent collegium, a move that is likely to make the process broadbased and check any type of interference.

In steps to expand the technical education, the government approved setting up of six new IIMs. It also asked the IITs and IIMs to prepare their future vision plan for expansion and quality of technical education in the country.

2009 witnessed a stand-off between the IIT faculty and the government over the "anomalies" in pay structure. But it later ended amicably after the government assured the faculty that its guidelines on the pay structure are norms which can be relaxed for promoting excellence.

Source: New Delhi /business-standard/28 December 2009

28,000 international students enrolled in IGNOU

Over 28,000 students have been registered from 35 countries so far, to the various academic programmes of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and the number is ever increasing, announced Prof. V.N. Rajasekharan Pillai, Vice Chancellor on Sunday.

There are approximately 38 % of female students enrolled with the university and they mainly prefer BCA, MCA, MBA, B.Ed and Bachelor's Degree Programmes.

Under the pan African e-Network Project, all 53 African country's universities will be partnered with IGNOU.

"Afterwards IGNOU shall provide tele-education to SAARC countries for different professional programmes," he added.

Says Mr. N.M. Hedayathullah, "I was the first student to enroll with IGNOU in Saudi Arabia for the MBA programme. It has been great honour and privilege to be part of one of the largest University in the world."

IGNOU has an assortment of partners. In Gulf countries, the higher education is mostly in the private hands and

therefore in UAE, Kuwait, Doha, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Singapore, Kenya, Mauritius, Nepal and Afganistan, private institutions are our partners.

In the Republic of Oman, an administrative body that manages all the Indian Schools with CBSE affiliation coordinates programme delivery.

Mr.Ghemeri Raju Deepak Kumar, Food & Beverage Manager, Hotel de l'Annapurna Kathmandu, Nepal, declares, "Choosing IGNOU for my Masters in Tourism Management (MTM) has been one of the best decisions in my life. The knowledge and the skills I have obtained so far has helped me in my job."

In Maldives, the partnership is governed by a tripartite agreement, which includes Government of Republic of Maldives, IGNOU and Ministry of External Affairs, Govt. of India.

A similar tripartite agreement involving Govt. of Seychelles, Rajiv Gandhi Foundation and IGNOU takes care of the higher education requirement of students at Seychelles.

In Mauritius, IGNOU has an agreement with Mauritius College of Air, an autonomous body under Govt. of Mauritius.

For Ms. Archana Kabra (MBA), Pulkit International Chief Administrator, "The credit for my present success goes to ICA from where I obtained an IGNOU, B.A degree; I am currently pursuing my MBA from ICA. I am sure new avenues will open up."

In Vietnam and Myanmar, the tie-up is with Distance Learning institutions - Hanoi Open University in Vietnam and University of Distance Education, Myanmar respectively.

IGNOU has kept its option open with the choice of partners and the emphasis is on the experience and the quality of the education provider.

Ms. Sajida Fakhri, IGNOU student and Gold Medalist 2008 emphasizes, "I joined the Masters in English course with IGNOU with some trepidation at my own ability to complete such a demanding course after such a long sabbatical. However, the constant support of the IGNOU staff and the extraordinary study material helped immensely."

In Sri Lanka, the partnership is with Ministry of Higher Education through Distance Education Modernization Projects to offer distance education capacity building programme.

Under MoU with International Institute of Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA) and with Commonwealth of Learning (COL), IGNOU is offering programmes in Ethiopia, Gambia, Liberia, Ghana, Swaziland, Malawi, Nigeria, Jamaica, Namibia, Sierra Leone, Samoa, and Lesotho.

Mr. Mohammed Baleegh Uzzaman Siddiqui, states that, "The B.Com course at IGNOU has given me the balance between practical know-how and management experience what I was looking for. My degree is very broad, offering me wide range of options. On the other hand, the course was

quite structured, which helps me to keep focused in the commerce field."

"With the help of IGNOU's degree certificate, I got job in Accounts & Finance Department of world-class organization Islamic Development Bank and then I took admission in MBA at, Sikkim Manipal University and completed it. IGNOU acted as seeding for my masters," he added.

Other collaborative venture of IGNOU in the international education arena relate to provision of training in open learning system and distance education methodologies to personnel of the open universities in developing countries and licensing of IGNOU's course materials to open universities outside India.

Academics and administrators from open universities in South Asia and Africa visit IGNOU either to familiarize themselves with the functioning of IGNOU or to undergo specific training in the development of self-learning materials and various aspects of media production.

The USP of IGNOU is its course materials, much sought after by open universities in Tanzania, Kenya, Mauritius, Guyana, Hong Kong and Sri Lanka with the provision that the University can adopt the courses in its entirety to modify the courses to suit their needs.

The Coordinator of the Center for Open and Distance Education, a Partner Institution of IGNOU in Kenya, Mr. J.M.Mbuthia says, "Our students include professionals, managers and other staff from public and private sector organizations that simply don't have the time to attend a regular class, we give them an opportunity to get quality education in a flexible way."

Dr. Silima Nanda, Director, International Division IGNOU says, "IGNOU has also started its online programs in many subjects facilitating learners in any part of the globe to pursue their education. The open source ware of digitized study materials and videos of lectures and films through the You Tube are accessible to students. The research programs have also attracted a large group of learners and professionals globally."

Source: New Delhi /indiaedunews/21 December 2009

CRY submits memo to President

A delegation from CRY- Child Rights and You met the President of India Ms. Pratibha Patil in the Capital December 16, to hand over a Charter of Demands on education that was signed by 7.7 lakh people across the country including people from different walks of life from the state of Manipur.

They drew the President's attention to the gaps that need to be filled to make sure that the Right of Children to Free & Compulsory Edu. Act 2009 reaches every child in India. The delegation comprised CRY Directors, Ms. Puja Marwah, Ms. Yogita Verma & Mr. Dipankar Majumdar

"Smt. Pratibha Patil acknowledged the fundamental importance of education in human development and the consequent need for it to reach every single Indian child.

We shared with her the results of our `Sabko Shiksha Samaan Shiksha campaign in which more than 7.70 lakh people from 18 States have signed a charter demanding equal quality education for ALL Indian children. We now want the government to accept these demands as voices from the ground and act upon making education a right for every child," said Puja Marwaha, CRY`s Director.

The meeting comes in the wake of a Public Walk and it was organized by CRY on December 11 at Bal Bhavan, New Delhi. The meeting was attended prominent activists like Jean Dreze from the Right to Food Campaign, Nikhil Dey from the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan and Advocate Ashok Aggarwal from Social Jurist spoke out about the urgent need to amend the Act in letter and in spirit, in order for this fundamental right to be attained by all Indian children. "CRY's on-ground experience in the 6700 villages and slums we work in underscores what the recent Suresh Tendulkar Committee report has recommended to the Planning Commission and we are working on increasing support both within the government and outside, on India's need to invest in basic rights such as education" said Marwaha.

From the point of view of India's children, the landmark Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 is limited in its scope. The charter seeks three key amendments in order to ensure this right for every one of India's 440 million children. These amendments are, Inclusion of children below 6 years as well as 15 to 18 years in the Act, 8th pass-outs are in no way adequately qualified? Either for vocations or for life. Similarly, nursery school is the foundation for education. The Act needs to ensure a complete education for every child below the age of 18 years. It needs to build bulwarks to prevent drop outs, especially for girls where the drop out rate is high. The second amendment is to make sure there is a school with qualified teachers and proper facilities within 1 kilometer of any habitation .No minimum standards have been defined for teachers, school infrastructure and facilities, including basics like drinking water, toilets, classrooms, teacher-student ratios etc. Similarly, even though it has been proven that a child learns best in the language spoken at home, the Act does not specify mother-tongue education as a medium of instruction, in addition to learning other languages. Curricula norms need to spell out that the content of education be relevant to who the child is and where she lives.

The teacher, who is the key figure in a child's learning, needs investment in improving qualifications, capacities and attitudes to be inclusive towards all children, and be well paid. The teacher's role as an integral member of the community needs to be respected by not making these appointments on a short-term, contractual basis. Finally amendment in regards to Spend 10% of India's GDP to education. Latest revised estimates show 38% of Indians to be under the poverty line. Unless education gets financial backing by the State, the situation of poverty is not likely to change. No country in the world has been able to reach universal education without the State funding schools. For

440 million children, the government's spending on education has actually reduced. From 3.84% of the Union budget in the year 2008-2009, it is now down to 3.03%. Given that this right is for 40% of India's citizens, the Act is heavily under funded. Unless we put the State's money into education, the Act will remain a paper tiger.

"Sabko Shiksha Samaan Shiksha campaign is a very timely campaign being facilitated by CRY" stated by P.K. Biju a MP from Kerala & member of Standing Committee on MHRD. "without an appropriate financial memorandum, free & compulsory education wouldn't be possible," Biju further stated while being at one with CRY demand for 10% GDP for education, during a telephonic interaction with the Kolkata correspondent of IFP.

Source: New Delhi /kanglaonline/18 December 2009

Education business: Nursery admission fee higher than IIT

Parents successfully clearing the rigorous nursery school admission process of their wards in Delhi find themselves staring at one last but big hurdle - fees that even top the annual Rs 50,000 charged for admission by IITs.

With thousands of parents fighting over a few hundred seats in a limited number of good schools, the private institutions call the shots during the admission season. The current fee structure in the IITs is around Rs 50,000 per annum. Besides, students pay about Rs 20,000 annually for other purposes like accommodation, alumni and admission fees.

But when it comes to reputed nursery schools in Delhi and NCR, the figure increases significantly and quotes anywhere around or above Rs 75,000 a year, which parents have to shell out even after undergoing a rigorous interview and evaluation process.

For instance, a school in Gurgaon charges Rs 75,000 as admission fees, while the composite annual fee is Rs 1,70,000 for 2009-10 school term. Besides, there are extra charges such as Rs 38,000 to Rs 44,000 as annual transport fees, Rs 6,000 to Rs 9,500 as IT fees every year.

A Noida school charges a one-time admission fee of Rs 61,000 plus Rs 26,000 per quarter. Similar is the case with another school in the satellite city, which asks Rs 45,000 as admission fees with additional quarterly fees of Rs 11,000. Delhi Education Minister Arvinder Singh Lovely said he was aware of violations, but his department could only act against a school if it receives complaints from parents.

"If they show us a receipt, we can act on it. Most parents don't come forward," Lovely said.

According to Sumit Vohra, who runs admissionsnursery.com, a website exclusively for parents, the average annual fee for nursery in Delhi and NCR is around Rs 75,000.

"There is no second thought that the fees are more than what students pay in IITs. Private schools give reasons such as high-class education, comfort and care given to kids. And the Directorate of Education, the highest authority for school education in Delhi, is almost silent in its guidelines about fee structures of schools," Vohra said.

While the admission fees add salt to the injuries of parents who had to under go a rigorous evaluation system to get their ward's admission in good schools, school authorities defend their fee structure saying this is proportionate to the service and education they render.

"We are an eight-hour school having a state-of-art infrastructure and a huge teaching staff. We provide high class education and care to each student, and the amount we ask for that is no way disproportionate," said Rekha Bakshi, principal of Vasant Valley School.

"If you want better education and service, you need to pay more. The fee is very much reasonable compared to the costs incurred by the school for the child," said an official at Step By Step School in Noida.

Parents have also accused schools of not giving proper receipts for the amount they deposit.

"A school in Noida asked for Rs 45,700 as admission fee and Rs 11,000 as quarterly fees including transport. But they gave receipt for only Rs 700," claimed a parent on the website.

"Most of the schools have the same policy and they don't issue receipt for the total amount they charge for a nursery seat," said another parent on the site.

"Parents are made to suffer at the hands of the school managements. Despite DoE regulations, there is chaos and uncertainty," said Vijender Gupta, president of the Delhi Abhibhavak Mahasangh.

Another reason for this chaos, experts say, is the number of unrecognised schools that don't follow DoE guideline. "There are about 1,000 unrecognised schools across Delhi and DoE can't take any action against them as they don't fall under the purview the Delhi Education Act, 1973," Vohra added.

Source: New Delhi /expressindia/23 December 2009

Education sector opens up a new chapter for headhunters

A north Indian university, promoted by a well-known business group in the region, recently asked a Mumbai-based headhunter to find a more 'competent' vice-chancellor. The mandate was crucial, since the university was gearing up to face competition from new and existing players in higher education

The headhunter has recently placed the head of research for a top Australian University, which is setting up a research centre in the country, along with a director for a Netherlands varsity, which too, plans to foray into the Indian education market, soon.

Stiff competition and the likely entry of foreign universities into India are bringing about a paradigm shift in recruitments in the education sector. Whereas earlier, hirings would be conducted through an informal network of academicians, headhunters have now been roped in to find

CXOs of universities and educational institutions, including private domestic players, new entrants and international institutes.

Not only are players in the education space moving towards organised recruitments, they are also roping in international expertise.

"We have received mandates for CEO-level positions and some queries for faculty members from those who want to set foot in India," says Sanjiv Sachar, partner, Egon Zehnder. "Some of these foreign universities also want faculty who can conduct guest lectures in their home campuses, because people want to know how things work in India," he added.

Mr. Sachar also said these institutes are ready to pay fat salary packages for good talent. Egon Zehnder has worked with the Indian School of Business, Hyderabad, where it helped position the top brass of the school a decade ago.

A London-based top executive search firm, with a presence in India, recently received a mandate to find a CEO for National Skills Development, a skills initiative set up under the public-private-partnership model with an initial investment of Rs 1,000 crore. A well-known European University, too, has asked the firm to find a CEO and faculty members for its India operations.

India is, currently, a hunting ground for foreign institutions, with over 54 crore people below the age of 25. According to guesstimates, the higher education market is pegged at around $10 billion, here. The market is expected to open up further for headhunters if the Foreign Education Bill is passed — it will allow foreign universities to set up campuses in India. As of now, some institutions are still testing the environment here and the skill sets available.

As far as new private players in the space are concerned, the stakes are huge: Vedanta has pumped in Rs 4,200 crore into its educational venture and HCL has invested Rs 300 crore in its project. Under the circumstances, a professionally run, handpicked management of these institutions makes immense sense.

Transearch, a Paris-based headhunting firm with a presence in 29 countries, including India, is already in talks with six to seven top universities and institutions to map their talent requirement in India. It is reaching out to another 50 such organisations. Executive search firms like Transearch International, EMA Partners, Korn/Ferry International and Executive Access have faced a similar flow of business from the sector.

EMA Partners has recently roped in a partner to focus specifically on education. "It's a logical extension for us. Look at the way this industry is maturing; there is huge potential," says K Sudarshan, managing partner of the firm.

But only players with deep pockets are approaching headhunters. Typically, executive search firms like these charge 10% per search which takes around three months

to close. Assignments generally hover around a pay package of $9-10 million.

Amrop India, which recently completed a CEO search for a joint venture research academy in India, feels the prospects are bright. "The sector has the potential to be the next IT/biotech greenfield sector for growth in India," says Amrop India partner Prasad Medury. The firm is receiving mandates from educational institutes for CEO/vice-chancellor/director-level positions.

Korn/Ferry International client partner — global consumer market Ashutosh Khanna — says work from the education sector has nearly doubled over the past three months, adding they are, currently, looking for a COO for a JV between an Indian business group and an international institution. He adds, the firm is, currently, handling four to five senior executive searches. In the past one year, the firm has handled nearly 15 searches in the sector.

Source: New Delhi /economictimes/23 December 2009

Farm offer for University

Local Jat farmers have offered a part of their land, worth around Rs 10 crore, free to the Delhi government to help their children pursue higher education.

The 540 bighas should be used to open a new state university — as opposed to a central varsity — so their children can get the benefit of reservation, the farmers from a village in Najafgarh, Delhi, have told chief minister Sheila Dikshit.

Although Jats are included in Delhi's Other Backward Classes list, they have been left out of the central OBC list. Since both Delhi University and Jawaharlal Nehru University are centrally run, Jats do not have a quota in either.

Delhi now has two state universities — the Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University and the Delhi Technical University — but both impart only technical education and not the general higher education in which the Jats are mainly interested.

A team of farmers from Ghumanhera village, led by the gram sabha head, met Dikshit yesterday and handed over the title deeds of the land. Their memorandum also demanded that the university be named after Rajiv Gandhi.

The farmers had last month met the Union human resource development minister, Kapil Sibal, with the demand for the state university.

Sibal, in a letter dated November 19, requested Dikshit to "consider availing central assistance for setting up a new state university under the scheme for incentivising states during the 11th plan".

The letter, a copy of which is with *The Telegraph,* added: "I empathise with the rationale put forward by the delegation…. A possible solution seems to be that the government of NCT (National Capital Territory) of Delhi establishes a new state university where reservation policies of the state government and benefits to reservation

based on the state list of OBCs could be availed by the Jat community and other communities which do not similarly find a place in the central list of OBCs."

Government sources said Dikshit was convinced by the idea and was looking into the technicalities. Perhaps it's the farmers' novel offer of land that won the two politicians over.

''We are convinced that a new state university will come up soon. Our land will help educate our children; what more can we want?" said Kishan Chand Solanki, president of the gram sabha.

In January 2009, farmers living near the Jalandhar bypass had given away land worth crores free to the government for developing the road.

Source: New Delhi /telegraphindia/24 December 2009

Govt. mulls Indian Education Service

Former HRD secretary Anil Bordia's pet theme of starting an Indian Education Service got an encouraging signal with HRD minister Kapil Sibal promising to look into it.

During the round table on school education on Monday, Sibal asked a group of experts led by Bordia to look into the feasibility of such an exclusive service on the lines of IAS, Indian Forest Service or Indian Revenue Service. It needs to be pointed out that a similar attempt by former culture minister Jagmohan to start an Indian Archaeological Service remained unsuccessful.

As HRD secretary, Bordia had pushed for IES and even had a study conducted but the idea did not have enough takers then.

With public-private partnership mode for 2,500 schools yet to be sorted out, the round table decided to set up a committee to study PPP for school education. The committee will consist of Gajendra Haldea, Anita Rampal, Rakesh Bharti Mittal, Harpal Singh, Manju Bharatram and Sailesh Shirali.

The round table felt that in the absence of any indicator of the number of special children going to schools a mapping is necessary. Therefore, a committee under renowned expert Mithu Alur will be set up. Alur will be asked to give her report in three months.

Taking the absence of trained teachers seriously, the meeting felt that teacher education should be under the university system. To explore the idea, a committee consisting of Krishna Kumar, Anita Rampal and Anil Bordia was set up. Related to teacher education, a separate committee was set up to look into in-service training of teachers. The committee consists of VN Rajasekharan Pillai, vice-chancellor of IGNOU; R Govinda, VC of National University of Educational Planning and Administration; and a representative of the National Council for Teachers Education.

It was also decided that once the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan-Right to Education harmonisation committee gives its

report many of the new proposals will be implemented in lagging states.

Sibal also said a system to groom leaders in school education should be started with the active cooperation of states and a report on it published.

Source: New Delhi /timesofindia/22 December 2009

Health care prism

THE healthcare industry in India earns revenue accounting for 5.2% of the gross domestic product (GDP). Experts in the sector predict an increase in revenue in the coming five years to almost 6.2% of the GDP.

Healthcare has emerged as one of the largest service sectors in India and currently employment opportunities are provided to as many as four million people in the core healthcare segment or other related sectors. The burgeoning scope of employment opportunities can be attributed significantly to the fact that today healthcare is not just about diagnosis and treatment of diseases. Instead, healthcare refers to an umbrella of services that affect physical, psychological and emotional well-being. "Beyond the hospital, there is the fitness industry, health promotion, holistic healing, alternative medicine, health insurance, group specialties, medical tourism, medical transcription, hospices, healthcare of senior citizens and even health townships," says S M Sapatnekar, director and dean, CREMA. "With the increasing bandwidth of services there is a requirement for not just doctors but administrators, managers, supervisors and entrepreneurs, among others."

Sapatnekar adds that doctors today are required to undergo greater sub-specialisations in comparison to a few years back "Joint replacements, sensory implants, organ transplants and cosmetic surgery are just some of the services that are being offered by hospitals that necessitate deeper sub-specialisations."

He further elaborates, "Today owing to advances in medical research and better understanding of human body functions there are many more options at the biological level and a greater need for specialists. Moreover, today there is a need for faster transport, real time communications and standardisation of almost all processes and digitisation of data within the medical industry.

For instance, a coronary bypass operation needs a perfusionist who is second only to a heart surgeon. Transplants of organs cannot be contemplated unless there is strong support in terms of tissue matching, tissue preservation, transport of organs and arranging the donor and recipient in real time (they may be at different locations). Each of these steps requires a specially trained health person."

Career Scope

It is evident that in today's context healthcare entails a complex matrix of services. Consequently, healthcare management has emerged as a discipline that holds promise for life science graduates and management graduates. Talking about some of the newer areas within the healthcare sector in which employment opportunities

abound, Col S V Ramany, chief group operations, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, says, "Today within hospitals and medical chains there is a need for people who can ensure that their organisations have strong medical, operational and financial footing to serve the needs of patients, their families and communities. These are essentially trained professionals who work in partnership with physicians, nurses and other professionals. They also help in educating community members about important health issues and work towards ensuring that hospitals and other healthcare organisations provide emergency and ongoing care as well as accurate & timely information about public threats in times of crisis."

Ramany adds that healthcare executives who can be either specialists (in charge of specific medical departments or services) or generalists (who manage or help to manage an entire healthcare organisation or system) can find employment in a variety of settings, such as: hospitals, public health departments, mental health organisations, rehabilitation centres, universities and research institutions, nursing homes, consulting firms, health insurance organisations and healthcare associations, among others.

The initial jobs in the healthcare sector range from entry to mid-level organisational positions in specialised support areas, such as: finance, government relations, human resources, information systems, marketing and public relations, medical staff relations, material management (purchasing of equipment and supplies), nursing administration, patient care services, planning and development, healthcare financing, human resources, health policy and law, marketing, organisational behaviour and other healthcare management topics.

"The core skill-set one develops in a healthcare management sector provides a competitive advantage within the healthcare field. In addition, these skills transfer readily across a variety of other industries, providing one with flexibility for non-health sector positions as well," adds Ramany.

However, graduates of other programmes (apart from life sciences) can also begin their careers as staff employees in various clinical and administrative departments of hospitals or health-related organisations. "Graduates may assume roles as managers and supervisors in smaller organisations, such as primary-care offices, clinics, outpatient laboratories and public health or human service non-governmental agencies," informs Ramany. "A graduate education in health services management provides the initial education for a professional career in health services management.

However, degrees in other areas, such as business, nursing and liberal arts or computer software, may also qualify one for a career in this area. A Bachelor's degree is sufficient for some entry level positions, a few top positions in smaller organisations and for some middle-management jobs in larger organisations," he explains.

Source: /timesofindia/28 December 2009

IIT, IIM alumni are now on a teaching curve

Alumni from the coveted Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) have found a rather unusual route to serving society. Turning their backs on corporate-sector jobs, graduates from these institutions are now heading nearly all the top coaching classes that gear students to crack the entrance tests to the IITs and the IIMs.

So what exactly draws graduates from these premier institutions to the parallel education system? Love for teaching, for one. Besides, the coaching industry pays better than many corporates. The mainstream education system, a few point out, no longer provides quality education and teachers are usually underpaid. They say the coaching sector provides them with the right balance between doing what they love and making money.

"I have retired IIT professors working for me, who now earn more in one year than they did in their entire lives at IIT," says Praveen Tyagi, MD, IITian's Pace, which gears students for the Joint Entrance Examination to the IITs.

According to Arks Srinivas, an alumnus of IIM-Calcutta and the director of TIME which coaches students for the Common Admission Test (CAT) to the IIMs, freshly minted IIM graduates can earn as much Rs 10 lakh a year in a coaching class and work their way to earning Rs 50 lakh a year.

Many of them have been teaching since their student days. For instance, IIM-Bangalore alumnus Gautam Puri, one of the founders of Career Launcher, a CAT coaching class, has been teaching since he was in school. "Teaching came naturally to me. Besides, I always wanted to start something of my own, rather than work for anybody else," he says.

As a student at IIT-Delhi, Tyagi, too, would tutor junior college students, as well as those from other engineering colleges.

For Srinivas, teaching was a great alternative to the corporate sector. "I was doing well at my job but the sheer monotony drove me to join the coaching sector," he says. So does teaching ever get monotonous? "No. You get to be with a fresh bunch of students every year. And you have the satisfaction of seeing your students joining the likes of McKinsey and Goldman Sachs," he adds.

While coaching classes have been much reviled by mainstream educationists, alumni from IIT and IIM heading coaching classes point to the fact that there's little quality offered by the formal education system. They feel they can do more to change the education landscape as part of coaching industry.

"As a student, I found that there was a tremendous lack of involvement in education system. Students find it very difficult to approach a teacher with their problems-not all of which are academic in nature," says Arindam Lahiri, director and co-founder of Career Launcher and an IIM-Lucknow alumnus.

"The coaching industry is thankful to the incompetence of the formal education system for the opportunity that it gives us," says D K Goel, chairman, FIITJEE, an IIT coaching class. "Since there is zero encouragement for entrepreneurship in education from the government & banks, the only way out is to begin with coaching & slowly diversify into formal education," adds Goel, an IITian.

Source: Mumbai /timesofindia/19 December 2009

India education: Engineering going off the rails?

India's bid for full membership in the Washington Accord — an elite international association to standardize engineering education — was declined last month over concerns about faculty members and students in Indian engineering programs.

The group agreed to extend India's provisional membership as it works toward alleviating the concerns. The accord was signed in 1989 by accrediting agencies from the United States and 12 other countries, including Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea and the U.K.

Members were concerned about the effects of India's extensive quota system, said Raman Unnikrishnan, dean of the College of Engineering and Computer Science at California State University at Fullerton and one of two mentors assigned by the group to India during the review process.

In that system, many slots for faculty and students are set aside for those from economically and socially disadvantaged castes or classes. Unnikrishnan said members felt the set-asides would dilute the quality of faculty and the student body.

Unnikrishnan said the problem "is much more convoluted than just the quota system," in a telephone interview in November.

"After graduation, students get accepted in graduate programs, at which time again the quota system is applied, accommodating lower levels of quality students for admission," he said. "And in application for faculty positions, the quota system is again applied.

"Instead of continuous improvement, it is continuous slippage."

S.S. Mantha, acting chairman of the All India Council for Technical Education, which accredits engineering programs and coordinates with the Washington Accord on membership issues, said he doesn't see the rejection as problematic.

"The very fact that we were given an extension is, I believe, a positive thing," Mantha said, adding that mentors made valid observations and offered good suggestions. India received a two-year provisional membership in 2007.

But there appear to be some differences in perception between Indian officials and the accord's members. Nearly 50 percent of seats in India's public colleges are reserved for the economically and socially disadvantaged classes and castes. But Mantha said he doesn't believe that class equity in higher education harms quality.

"We have to look at all sections of society and make sure higher education is provided to everyone, but this doesn't mean standards will get lower," Mantha said. "We told them this is not a concern."

All students take a single, national, college-admissions test to apply to colleges accredited by the regulator, he said: "The quotas apply only after a student passes the test."

Unnikrishnan disagreed.

"That's incorrect," he said. "The quota system begins at the entrance-exam level. There is no passing of the exam. Students are ranked, and many students are admitted to engineering colleges based on reasons other than merit."

Mantha agreed with mentors that engineering colleges be given more autonomy. Excepting India's elite Institutes of Technology, public engineering colleges must be affiliated with a university, which has final say over the curriculum and examination system.

Educators in India worry that the country risks losing in the global race for talent. Membership in the Washington Accord assures a country that its engineering programs are recognized by, and are considered on par with, those in other member countries.

The All India Council for Technical Education has been accused of corruption, citing that officials in exchange for money made approval to colleges with poor facilities.

In July, under the direction of a new, reformist education minister, India's Central Bureau of Investigation filed corruption charges against R.A. Yadav, the council's chairman at the time, and three other top officials. They are accused of demanding bribes to allow an enrollment increase at an engineering college.

In September, the Central Bureau of Investigation raided several engineering colleges in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu following allegations of flagrant violations of the accreditor's norms, according to a report in The Times of India newspaper recently.

Following the raids, the investigative agency filed charges against the trusts and trustees that run the institutions, as well as the regulatory officials who allegedly helped them bend rules.

The council has begun changing its accreditation process, focusing more on teaching and curriculum quality, and less on the an institution's infrastructure quality. Those changes were among the recommendations Unnikrishnan put forth in his report.

"We expect that all this by next year will satisfy the requirements for full membership of the accord," said Mantha. "We want our people competing at the world level as international engineers, and we are serious about engineers' mobility. Besides, we have some very good institutions, and we want that to be recognized."

Source: /globalpost.com/27 December 2009

Management beyond MBA

Did you ever imagine that your analysis of Shakespearean characters during graduation days could fetch you a job in the corporate world as a human resource expert? Or did you think that your graduation or Master's qualification in sociology or psychology could help you secure a seat in an Indian Institute of Management (IIM) without cracking the Common Admission Test (CAT)? With IIM Calcutta's increasing interdisciplinary approach towards management, this is possible. The institute is seeking variety in terms of students with respect to its PhD programme.

"Management is not restricted to MBA. There is increasing scope for students from science and humanities backgrounds to pursue research in management," says Bhaskar Chakrabarti, chairperson, fellow programme and research, IIM-C. "The institute wants to promote management research which is interdisciplinary in nature. For instance a person with a background of sociology can leverage his/her knowledge to pursue research in corporate social responsibility," he says.

According to Chakrabarti, since management is an applied subject it is important to know and respond to the latest developments in the field. Managerial actions impact not just companies but the society as a whole and hence it becomes important to bring in the knowledge of other domains. It is for this reason the institute has now started reaching out to universities to attract students from various disciplines. "We were getting students from other disciplines earlier. However they were enrolling through word of mouth. But now IIM-C is going to various universities and telling about the benefits of pursuing research in management," he says.

The institute this year went to various Indian Institutes of Technology, Madras University, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) and Allahabad University to attract students to its PhD programme. "We are planning to conduct information sessions at Jawaharlal Nehru University and Delhi University as well in the coming months," informs Chakrabarti. Speaking on the benefits that would accrue to students after pursuing a PhD from IIM-C, he says, "We have a diverse faculty with expertise in topics like heritage management, regional development, history, geography and anthropology. In the second year of the research programme, we create a separate course for each research scholar that would serve the research interests of students."

Explaining how students from various backgrounds can benefit from a management education Chakrabarti cites an example, "A student from English literature pursued a research in human resources. She leveraged her ability to analyse characters during the research. She was hired by a corporate house to help them understand people's behaviour." He also informs that people from biochemistry, molecular biology are coming in management research to apply their knowledge in the management of science organisations.

Ministry questions foreign varsity bill

The health ministry has questioned the benefits to India of a proposed bill aimed at regulating the entry of foreign universities, unleashing the most scathing criticism the draft legislation has faced from within the government.

The draft Foreign Education (Regulation of Entry and Operations) Bill contains loopholes that could deny India benefits to medical education and could even hurt the sector, the health ministry has said.

The criticism of the bill is based on three arguments that have been communicated to the human resource development ministry, health ministry sources said.

These concerns were discussed between the health and HRD ministries at a meeting on December 12, sources said. The bill was referred to a committee of secretaries to finetune its contents after concerns raise by the Prime Minister's Office.

But the PMO's concerns mostly related to technical aspects of the bill emerging from worries that the legislation may not adequately reflect the education reform plans of the government.

The health ministry is concerned over the absence — in the draft bill — of any cap on the fraction of foreign students who can be admitted to the Indian campuses of these foreign universities.

This, the sources said, could lead to a situation where foreign universities set up campus in India because of cheaper costs but charge fees too high for many Indians but below education costs elsewhere.

One of the arguments in favour of the bill is that it will help bring the best institutions globally to India.

The medical community, the health ministry sources said, was looking forward towards the bill as a route to increasing quality institutions churning out Indian doctors — the country suffers from a major doctor shortage.

"But a large number of foreigners studying at the campuses here could mitigate the hoped benefit of helping bridge the gap in doctors required by our country," a ministry official said.

The second concern raised by the health ministry before the HRD ministry revolves around a fear that the IITs and the IIMs have also raised independently.

The health ministry and these institutions are concerned that the foreign universities could lure some of the country's best faculty away from public institutions by offering better remuneration packages.

The health ministry has asked the HRD ministry to introduce clauses in the bill regulating the remuneration packages offered by foreign universities entering India.

The third concern raised by the health ministry carries shades of a turf dispute with the HRD ministry. The health ministry is at present the nodal ministry in charge of India's

regulators in medical education. These regulators — the Medical Council of India, the Pharmacy Council of India, the Nursing Council of India and the Central Council for Homoeopathy — set quality standards that institutions offering education in these fields must follow.

But the HRD ministry draft bill only mentions the University Grants Commission and its proposed successor — the National Commission for Higher Education and Research — as regulators.

The health ministry has demanded a role in determining the standards of medical education under the proposed bill.

Source: New Delhi /telegraphindia/17 December 2009

National Institute of Technology - Karnataka inks major pacts

National Institute of Technology - Karnataka has signed two memoranda of understanding with a leading Japanese university and a global major in power generation and rail transport. These MoUs, according to director of NIT-K Sandeep Sancheti will put NIT-K, recently recognized as the best technical institute in India by the Indian Society for Technical Education, on the fast track to educational success.

NITK's first MoU was with Kumamoto University, Japan, signed during the 24th Indian Engineering Congress held on NITK campus in the second week of December. The areas of cooperation between the University and NITK include academic exchange of students and faculty, exchange of technical publications, collaborative research in areas of mutual interest in the field of science and technology.

Sandeep Sancheti and Morozumi Mitsuo, dean of the University, signed the MoU on behalf of their respective institutions. Kumamoto University is a National University established in 1949 and fully funded by the government of Japan. It is located in the heart of Kyushu island of Japan. It has seven faculties, seven graduate schools and 13 research centres, supporting a wide spectrum of educational and research activities.

The second MoU was signed during the 39th ISTE annual convention held at NITK with ALSTOM Projects India Limited. The MoU provides opportunities for NITK students to do their internships at ALSTOM offices and/or industrial sites, offer guest lectures upon request, set up scholarships for meritorious students, sponsorship of important technical festivals of NITK, organize industrial visits for NITK students.

It also facilitates students to participate in conventions, organize group discussions with NITK faculty, provide case studies for faculty and students to analyze, organize network events between the two institutions, help faculty to submit research projects to ALSTOM. NITK will also help organize training sessions for the company's employees. Sancheti and Amaresh Singh, HR director (India), signed this MoU.

ALSTOM have supplied more than 25% of the world's installed power generation capacity using green technologies. They have provided turnkey integrated power plant solutions and associated services for a wide variety of energy sources. They are global leaders of railway transport equipment and specialize in a wide range of technology, especially in the field of high speed rails systems (TGV).

Source: Mangalore /timesofindia/27 December 2009

Selection panel taken to task for promoting teachers of AU

The authorities of Allahabad University held the selection committee for promoting half a dozen faculty members of the department of Music and performing arts under Career Advancement Scheme (CAS), on Monday.

The interviews for the promotions under CAS were for the post of Reader and for the scale of senior lectures. Although the varsity authorities had planned to hold selection committees for around four other departments but because of absence of subject experts, the selection committees for the same had to be been postponed. These include department of Geography, department of Psychology, department of Journalism and Mass Communication and department of Physical Education.

Sources at AU informed that the selection committees for the leftover departments were also scheduled for Monday as the varsity authorities had finalised the list of subject experts and the visitors nominee (who is the country's President in case of all the Central Universities). As the University Grants Commission (UGC), had not send the list of visitors nominee, varsity has taken had taken the permission for having the same persons, which were there in the earlier selection committee held recently. But couple of days before, the UGC sent a list having new names as the visitors nominee. Since, some of the subject experts or the visitors' nominees were not free to attend the selection committee, the authorities postponed the same.

Source: Allahabad /timesofindia/22 December 2009

Smart cards in higher education

The latest flashy proposal of Delhi University -- biometric smart cards to ensure teacher attendance and reward those who work overtime -- reminds us of Sanjay Gandhi's Emergency, certainly not of Harvard Yard or Oxford's dreaming spires.

A recent piece by an ex-energy adviser on India's carbon intensity reduction holds lessons for our educational CEOs. It makes the point that India's low carbon growth in recent decades has left untouched 500 million Indians without electricity, and 700 millions who use some sort of biomass for the bulk of their domestic energy requirements. The lesson is not that we should abjure, mock Gandhi-style, energy-efficient gadgets. It is rather that a sub-continental polity like ours can ill afford to clone enclaves and islands, surrounded by a stagnant water body of disprivileged citizenry.

Quick-fix solutions are being flashed on websites of the HRD Ministry and several front-ranking universities. In both instances, there is a gesture towards openness and feedbacks from stakeholders and civil society. But instead of the responses being placed on the same website -- creating an open access -- these inputs are shredded into files or simply ignored.

This seems to be the case with the Ministry's plan to create 14 world-class universities, funded by the state but "unencumbered by history or culture of the past" -- something that no world-class institution would dare boast about. The underlying idea is to build islands of excellence by relying on "the highly skilled Indian diaspora." While other publicly funded universities -- even premier ones like Calcutta and Delhi -- are clearly hobbled by their sheer size, teacher politics, and professorial apathy, the new 'national' edifices will simply skip over resident Indian talent. The message is that even those who returned home with research degrees from world-class universities to put their shoulder to the wheel before the new dispensation need not apply.

For their part, older institutions such as Delhi University cannot quite effect Bertolt Brecht's sardonic suggestion: if dissatisfied with the existing lot, "elect another people." For desi vishwa vidyalayas, the parameters are given: a national intake of students from unequally diverse backgrounds and a sudden doubling of enrolments to accommodate all categories of reservations. And of course the problematic lot: more than 7000 teachers, as with Delhi University, some of them of indifferent quality, but a large number of dedicated professionals who are responsible for the brand of the university's flag-ship undergraduate Honours courses.

Naturally, our Vice-Chancellors are not immune to the buzz about India as an emergent knowledge giant. And so they no longer see their role as one of steering an overburdened ship buffeted by the squall of equity, access, and quality. For them, it is not the receding horizon that is the limit. If they could, they surely would abandon ship and 'take off' from the crowded deck. As that is not possible, the basic contours of a university need to be quickly altered. This, it is argued, will help improve our ranking on the international table of world class universities. 'You cannot lift a bucket of water from mid-air; you have to lift it from the ground' -- this modern Chinese saying has a lot to commend to our educational planners in a hurry, especially those advocating a Great Leap to catch up with China.

It is against this background that its administrators, to make it conform to the highest Ivy League, Oxbridge standards, are currently genetically modifying Delhi University. Its flagship undergraduate Honours courses in more than two dozen disciplines, affecting a 100,000 students in some 80 Colleges, have to be slashed, and retrofitted into smaller, 15-week-long semester courses.

The current practice of allowing Honours students to specialise in one basic subject, leaving a quarter of the scores to a wide choice from specially designed units in other disciplines, is to be replaced by a Major and one Minor, from the very point of entry. That in the United States an undergraduate is not required to decide on a Major straightaway; that there is, in fact, a medley of 'Minor' subjects that she or he could choose from seems of no consequence. The fluffy mantra, "A critical level of knowledge of a second discipline is being increasingly realized globally," is supposed to take care of any criticism.

Clearly a hybrid semester system cannot remedy all that ails India's universities. The vast number of first-generation learners has to be enabled to develop core competences; teacher truancy has to be curbed; and new pedagogical synergies need to be developed. The latest flashy proposal of Delhi University: biometric smart cards to ensure teacher attendance (and reward those who work overtime), as reported recently, is no doubt front-page news. Beyond that, it reminds one more of Sanjay Gandhi's Emergency, certainly not of Harvard Yard or Oxford's dreaming spires.

Somebody needs to tell Manmohan Singh about this 'fingerprint and thrive' strategy being chalked out for India's premier university, which is proud to count the Prime Minister among its scores of distinguished faculty.

Source: /beta.thehindu/22 December 2009

UGC assures HC on providing 3 pc seats to disabled

The University Grants Commission has assured the Delhi High Court that all vacancies of teachers for disabled persons in colleges would be filled up by the end of this financial year.

The regulator of higher education submitted before the court that a four-member committee has been appointed to ensure compliance of provisions of Persons with Disabilities Act which makes it mandatory to provide three per cent reservation of jobs for the disabled person which Universities and Colleges have failed to abide by.

"As a one-time measure all vacancies in respect of three per cent reservation for disabled persons shall be filled up latest by 31st March 2010," the UGC submitted before a bench comprising Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Ajit Bharihoke.

Source: New Delhi /ptinews/20 December 2009

UGC committee critical of functioning of Amity, MLUC

Inspections conducted by the University Grants Commission (UGC) into the functioning of private universities have found a number of irregularities, including running non-approved courses by some of them, like Amity University.

None of the innovative professional and technical courses offered by Amity University has got approval of relevant statutory bodies, a UGC committee has found.

The UGC had set up separate committees to inspect the functioning of eight universities as part of the process to

include them in the list of recognised universities being maintained by it.

The committees were critical of the functioning of two universities — Amity University in Uttar Pradesh and Martin Luther Christian University (MLUC) in Meghalaya. The committee, led by Prof B S Sonde, visited the Amity University in July this year. In its report, the committee said, "The University is offering a range of innovative professional and technical programmes in emerging areas. None of the programmes has received the approval of relevant professional councils".

The Bar Council of India's approval is for the school of law and it was obtained before the university was born, it said. The approval needs to be revalidated by the university now, it said.

Giving details, the committee has said the university, set up by an Uttar Pradesh Act, is operating at Lucknow and Noida. It conducts a number of distance learning courses in professional subjects like MBA and MCA.

"As per UGC regulations, they are not authorised to do so. Further, they have not obtained the approval of the UGC-AICTE-DEC joint committee for running these programmes," it said.

The University conducts many programmes and awards many degrees to attract a large number of students in "fancy courses". "This is not desirable, as the curriculum is too broad and lacks depth," the committee found.

The committee also said the university requires a "vibrant quality assurance activity". There is an urgent need for getting its programmes accredited by the National Accreditation and Assessment Authority or National Board of Accreditation.

It found the university does not follow reservation policy in recruitment of teaching and non-teaching staff and admission of students. This violates the University Act and the UGC Regulations 2003.

A separate committee has given an adverse report against Martin Luther Christian University (MLCU), which has opened many off-campuses.

"MLCU may be asked to close down its off-campus centres with immediate effect. MLUC is not yet ready to receive recognition, as there are deficiencies," the report said.

The committees inspected the Eastern Institute For Integrated Learning In Management, Sikkim; The Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts of India University, Mizoram; Jagan Nath University, Jaipur, Sarva Vidyalaya Kelvani Mandal Gandhinagar Gujarat, Pandit Deendayal Petroleum University, Gujarat; Amity University, MLUC, Shillong and Ganpat University, Gujarat.

Source: New Delhi /business-standard/26 December 2009

ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

Apprentice Scientists

As part of Bonjour India 2009, Nicole Ostrowsky, Professor Emeritus, Université de nice Sophia Antipolis, France, was in india. Ostrowsky talks to Sakshi Khattar on Nurturing Budding Scientists.

Why is there a lack of interest in science education, both at the secondary and higher level? How can we nurture budding scientists?

There is a decline in interest in science education, which starts at the secondary level and thus reaches the higher level, not only in India but also across Europe. A major reason is that students find other fields far more lucrative and glamorous, but we have to make the younger generations understand that science is not about making money, but about expanding one's knowledge and perception.

Also, teachers and scientists are partly responsible for this lack of interest, as they do not always succeed in passing on their knowledge and enthusiasm to the students. Scientists, for example, have become specialised in their own narrow disciplines and few are capable of explaining the essential part of their work in simpler ways. Similarly, teachers should try and spark an interest in children from an early age.

Where are the loopholes and what needs to be done?

In the absence of curiosity and the ability to question, students do not feel inclined towards the subject. Though well trained in their subjects, teachers often lack the necessary skills for effective communication. And at times, they tend to forget the problems they faced as students. The role of teachers is crucial to sustain student interest in a subject and we need to sensitise teachers to respond to individual student needs.

What are the new innovations in science education?

The hands-on approach to try and get students involved in scientific activities is being developed across the world. Never forget the old adage: 'Tell me, and I'll forget, Teach me, and I'll understand, Involve me and I'll remember.' An important aspect of 'hands-on science' is that it makes teacher-student communication much easier. Questions arise spontaneously and difficulties are easy to spot. Even a failed experiment can teach a lot to both students and teachers.

Computers can also be used as a teaching aid. A major advantage of a computer is that it allows students to work at their own pace. Students don't feel that they are being left behind even if they are slower than others, which ultimately helps in their overall learning and development.

As regards good practices, you should ensure that 'all' students are involved. This can be achieved with hands-on, low-cost scientific activities that are engaging for students. If the class strength is big, say over 25 students, one should work in smaller groups. I met several teachers in India who were enthusiastic about this approach but

lamented about the resistance encountered from parents who felt that these activities were interfering with serious learning. Parents should also be made to appreciate that games are equally educating, often more than dry memorisation of facts.

Can you tell us about your book, Apprentice Scientist?

Apprentice Scientist is a walk-through science book proposing 365 simple activities. Each day starts with a question, and a short description of 'what-to-do' to get an answer. It is illustrated by whimsical characters, apprentice scientists themselves. At the bottom of the page, a few lines give the answer and put the question into perspective. The agenda explores a wide range of topics, ranging from geometry to familiar technical objects, covering most experimental sciences, including probability, statistics and computer sciences. One of the key aspects of the agenda is to let the apprentice discover things by him/herself.

This 'do-it-yourself ' approach allows nurturing curiosity while developing a critical spirit, the essential foundation of research. Furthermore, this book is 'level free' which means that it can serve as an inter-generational bridge. While the book is currently available in French, we have approached an Indian editor about publishing an English version, and waiting for a decision.

Source: /timesofindia/21 December 2009

Behind the differential reach of primary education

Among other factors, class-related disadvantage and its correlates call for a variety of remedial measures.*We need a multi-pronged approach to deal with educational underachievement. It is important to have greater facilities in schools and Sishu Shiksha Kendras*

Streamlining and simplifying curricular demands at the primary stage of education would worry some people who see ambitious attempts, even if not successful, as good ways to perform better. We are not against anyone trying to do more than what is required from compulsory school curriculum. If intelligently planned, a reduction of curricular load could still leave open the opportunity for better performing students to try more, particularly at home, perhaps with guidance from teachers. What is argued here is that for normal primary education, "home tasks" should be completely unnecessary (but supplementary study at home would not, of course, be "banned" for those who would want to do more). In particular, the students' success at examinations and school tests should not have to rely on what they have to do at home, outside the school.

This is the way Europe and America have educated their children in primary schools when they were at the same stage of educational development as India is today. This is how they still do it across the world right now to make basic school education accessible to all, even though the ability of the families themselves to help young children with homework has grown as the overall population has

become more and more literate. Home tasks for schoolchildren begin at various ages across the world, but hardly ever at the very basic stages of early primary education, where the concentration has to be on reading, writing and simple arithmetic. This is where the particular issue of curricular overload in early primary education in India is critically important.

The Pratichi Trust (India) report discusses some issues of overload that are particularly worth addressing. However, for effective planning and implementation, it would be necessary to investigate carefully the issue of syllabus reform for early primary education, bearing in mind the major goal of making children able to learn the elementary skills of the three Rs on which everything else depends. There should be no room here for dependence on — and demand for — home tasks for very young children, for which parental help may be necessary (which many parents cannot give), or assistance from private tutors (which most parents cannot afford). There is a great deal of expertise on the subject among teachers and educational experts — and among many parents — and it should not be too difficult to rise to the challenge of reasoned curricular reform, with a view to altering fundamentally the dysfunctional system of primary education we have in operation at this time.

No one should expect that the practice of private tuitions would go away with proper curricular reform (the attraction of competitive advantage of the privately tutored would be hard to eradicate). But the basic dependence on private tuition for elementary education — for what could easily be done in the class — has to be eliminated through a variety of means, in which curricular reform has to be included. This is a crucial issue that has not been discussed adequately in critically appraising what has gone wrong in the delivery of primary education in India in general and in West Bengal in particular.

Class divisions

The differential reach of primary education emerges strikingly in our studies. Bearing in mind the fact that belonging to the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes, and coming from Muslim families, is not merely an indicator of caste or community background, but also, statistically, something of a proxy for class-related handicap, we can use the differences in educational performance of these groups, vis-a-vis others, as partly a reflection of class handicap. It is thus important to note that while 13 per cent of SC children in classes 3 and 4 could not read, and 25 per cent of Muslim children and 29 per cent of ST children could not either. For the rest of the population this proportion was merely 8 per cent.

Similarly, compared with 8 per cent of the group of "others" in classes 3 and 4 who could not write, 13 per cent of SC children, 27 per cent of Muslim children and 43 per cent of ST children could not manage any writing. While there is nothing to celebrate in the fact that 8 per cent of children other than from SC, ST and Muslim families could not read or write, the much higher proportions of educational failure

of deprived groups demand concentrated and urgent attention.

Focus on SSKs

This general picture of class-related disadvantage (along with its correlates) calls for a variety of remedial measures. We have stressed in previous reports the importance of having greater facilities in schools and Sishu Shiksha Kendras (SSKs) in which the proportion of class-disadvantaged children is high and which are often neglected in terms of amenities. The SSKs in particular demand special attention, and would need to be upgraded at some stage as regular primary schools, both for the purpose of general enhancement of facilities, but also because SC, ST and Muslim children depend on them disproportionately. Schooling can be a major force in breaking down class barriers, and we have to be especially careful that instead of that, the educational system with differential facilities does not end up perpetuating the rigidity of class boundaries. It is also important to establish minimal norms, such as having at least one teacher per classroom.

The issue of home tasks and private tuition also relates to the question of class divisions. The need for "home tasks" is particularly difficult to meet for parents from disadvantaged classes — these children may be the first generation to receive school education. Parents with the disadvantage of having received little education find it especially difficult to help their children with home tasks. It is not surprising that they long for the ability to engage private tutors for their children, but often they cannot afford to help their kids in this way. The result is not only frustration and despair, but also continued transmission of education backwardness from one generation to the next.

The necessity of "home tasks" for early primary education has to be comprehensively challenged for young children engaged in learning basic reading, writing and arithmetic, in primary schools and SSKs. If the case against home tasks for young children in primary schooling is strong on grounds of educational effectiveness, the case becomes stronger when the impact of the divisiveness of class is taken into account in planning elementary education for all children as a basic human right.

There is no magic bullet to solve the manifold problems faced by primary education in West Bengal (and for that matter in India in general). We need a multi-pronged approach to deal with the diverse sources of educational underachievement. There is nothing defeatist in this recognition. Indeed, the significant improvements that have happened in West Bengal over the last seven years between the surveys of 2001-02 and the resurveys of 2008-09 indicate that informed diagnoses and determined policies can bring about a substantial change rapidly.

Though the new focus of this report has stressed the need for a radical reform of primary school curriculum to make home tasks redundant for very young children and to eradicate the necessity of dependence on private tuition. That has emphasised the importance of taking explicit note of class divisions, the older policy recommendations, presented in our earlier reports, have continuing relevance. Even in those areas in which much success has been achieved, for example in instituting regular arrangements for serving cooked mid-day meals, and in making greater use of parent-teacher meetings, still more can be fruitfully done — to expand their reach and quality. Similarly, the success of SSKs show the positive force of the participation of the wider community in the enterprise of schooling, and that constructive force has to be consolidated, even as the SSKs are ultimately upgraded to regular schools.

We present a variety of recommendations in this report, some of which carry forward what were discussed in earlier reports. We have tried to spell out the reasoning behind them explicitly. We hope they will get attention from the government, the unions, the public and the media, as in the past.

I will end with a special plea for the consideration of two central issues that we have particularly stressed in this report. There is, first, a particular need to recognise the fierce urgency of curricular reform at the primary level to make home tasks redundant and private tuition unnecessary. Secondly, the importance of recognising explicitly the role of class barriers in educational underachievement needs recognition.

These two issues are interrelated. More generally; there is in fact, a basic complementarity between the different components of the kind of multi-pronged approach for which we are arguing. The complementarity gives us further reason to believe that multi-pronged action based on clear diagnoses will bring major results fairly quickly. There is need for urgency here, since the problems are serious and involve long-standing injustice to millions of young children. Patience can be, alas, another name for continuing injustice.

Source: /hindu/20 December 2009

Expand higher, school education withholding quality – Sibal

Kapil Sibal, Union Minister for Human Resource Development (HRD), met Lord Mandelson, first secretary of state for Business, Innovation & Skills, U.K., here today.

During the discussion, Sibal underlined India's intent to expand both the higher and the school education sector without compromising the quality.

He said that, "Indian entrepreneurs and industry will need to get involved more in education in order to supplement the government's efforts. This is required for adequate capacity building in education."

Sibal pointed out that the Prime Minister has said that 500 million Indians must be skilled by 2010.

"Not only is capacity building required for this," the Minister said, "But we need to work with industry for skills to be developed for the market."

Kapil Sibal is scheduled to tour U.K. in January. There, he will take a firsthand look at the education system, especially

the school education system in the context of accreditation, vocational training and skill development.

Source: New Delhi /indiaedunews/22 December 2009

High Growth Potential Projected for Indian Higher Education Sector

Higher education sector in India has high potential to record substantial growth, provided enough attention is paid to infrastructure development, says RNCOS in its latest report.

Availability of sound education system is considered to be a crucial factor for the development of human resources for a country, ensuring that fruits of economic growth reach the masses and the development is sustained. The thrust of global economies to emerge as the knowledge economy has also reinforced education as the key economic and business driver. Likewise, in India, need and demand for higher education have continued to witness rapid growth over the recent past, owing to the country's emergence as a knowledge-based economy, says our latest research report, "Indian Education Services - A Hot Opportunity".

They have done extensive analysis of the higher education system in India to ascertain the prevailing trends and ongoing developments in the country. Their research finds a wide gap between the demand and supply of higher educational resources, particularly infrastructure, in the country, which is deteriorating the sound development of the higher education system in the country. The study envisages that the country would require several billions of rupees in funds for the development of its infrastructure in order to meet with the growing demand for highly qualified professionals in the country.

Their report also provides reason-based analysis of the need for opening up of universities (particularly foreign) in the country over the next few years. In this regard, the report gives the entry and operation regulations for foreign universities/institutions providing technical education in India. Along with this are covered insights of the critical factors, which are, must for the substantial development of higher education system in India.

"Indian Education Services - A Hot Opportunity" provides in-depth research and rational analysis on the current status of the higher education system in India. The report provides overview of the number of universities, technical education institutions and colleges available in the country. Besides this, our report gives prudent analysis on the type of courses that will remain in high demand over the next few years. The report also briefs about the regions, which are most appropriate for setting up of new institutes, including medical and technical institutes, in the country.

Source: NOIDA /pr.com/19 December 2009

IIT-Kharagpur best technology school in India - survey

The premier Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur is the best technology school in the country followed by IIT-Delhi, revealed a new survey released recently.

The survey that studied 111 engineering and technology schools in the country said, "IIT Kharagpur has topped the list for the third consecutive year."

On a scale of 100, this elite engineering institute has scored 81.9 points, which is closely followed by IIT-Delhi that has scored a close 78.49 points. The survey was carried out by research firm IDC and technology magazine Dataquest.

"The six prestigious IITs dominate the list of Top 10 T-Schools survey," it added.

The IITs located at Madras, Kanpur, Roorkee and Guwahati took the next four slots in the survey. The top 10 was completed by International Institute of Information Technology (IIIT) Hyderabad, Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS) Pilani, National Institute of Technology (NIT) Surathkal and Institute of Technology, Banaras Hindu University (IT BHU) at number seven, eight, nine and 10, respectively.

"Interestingly, IIIT Hyderabad is the youngest college, set up in 1998, to make it to the Top 10 list. IIT Bombay did not participate," the survey revealed.

While NIT Warangal, is the 11th best technology school in the country, the Delhi Technology University (formerly Delhi College of Engineering) has occupied the 12th spot.

These engineering and technology colleges were reviewed on several parameters like quality of teaching, placement, industry interface, IT facilities and research papers.

Individually, IIT Kharagpur scored high on Human Resource (HR) perception, while IIT Delhi ranked high on placement records. The HR perception score is based on how recruiters rate each college during their campus visits. Placement score is based on percentage of students placed, number of companies visiting campuses as well as the maximum and average salary offered per annum.

The survey revealed a drop in overall placements to 73 percent in 2009 from 84 percent in 2007-08. Slowdown affected the placements, with number of companies visiting campuses as well as number of jobs offered showing a dip.

Only 16 of the Top 111 T-Schools reported 100 percent placement to its students. These included BITS Pilani, IIT Kanpur; Institute of Technology, BHU, Orissa Engineering College, Bhubaneswar and several NITs.

The average annual salaries of IIT graduates registered a drop of 5 percent to Rs. 588,000 during 2009, while the average salary of NIT graduates salary improved 6 percent to Rs. 436,000 annually.

"The T-Schools must focus on the quality of faculty and original research to improve the employability of students and funding of research projects," said Ibrahim Ahmad, Group Editor of Dataquest.

Source: New Delhi /indiaedunews/28 December 2009

Increasing private tuitions a worry

Concerned over increasing number of private tuitions, the pre-university education authorities have launched a drive to contain the menace.

A special squad comprising of college principals has been formed to keep an eye on private tuitions offered by lecturers attached to government/aided institutions. On Tuesday night, the squad members raided four such tuitions at different places in the city. There were over 100-15- students at each tuition.

Acting on a clue, the squad members led by deputy director of pre-university education (DDPU) Chandramma discovered that some lecturers of aided institutions were running tuitions outside the colleges. The authorities have recorded it on cameras for evidence.

Chandramma told The Times of India that following a direction from the deputy commissioner the special squad was formed and raids were conducted in four places in Vijayanagar, near Vivekananda Circle, Ramanuja Road and in Saraswathipuram. All the four lecturers, who were running private tuitions, are attached to aided colleges. They have violated the norms, she stated.

The DDPU said some lecturers were fleecing students. This is affecting the economically weaker students. "It has also come to our notice that even the Government College lecturers are running private tuitions, which is illegal," Chandramma said and added they would continue their operation again private tuitions in future.

A report would be submitted to Deputy Commissioner and other higher education authorities concerned for further action, the DDPU asserted.

Source: Mysore /timesofindia/23 December 2009

Indian universities must become hub of research: Sam Pitroda

National Knowledge Commission chairperson Sam Pitroda Thursday said Indian universities must become the hub of research to capture the synergies that exist between teaching and research.

"Universities must become the hub of research to capture synergies between teaching and research. This goes on to enrich the two areas beautifully," Pitroda said in an interview to Indira Gandhi National Open University's newsletter.

Emphasising the need to expand the higher education system in the country, Pitroda said: "India has around 350 universities and this number is simply not enough with reference to our needs in higher education. We need to create many more, appropriately scaled, universities."

"This is necessary to raise our enrolment to levels comparable with most developing countries. We have also recommended 50 national universities that can provide education of the highest standard," he said.

Source: New Delhi /thaindian/17 December 2009

IT Training on the cheap

Keep your IT knowledge up-to-date without breaking the bank with these simple tips.

Unless you've been living under a rock for the last year, you know that the United States is in the midst of a deep recession. As such, companies are doing pretty much anything they can to cut costs. According to a lot of the people I've talked to, one of the first things to go is the IT training budget. But that doesn't mean you have to go without training: You just have to be a little bit creative.

This was something that I figured out a long time ago. In 2001 I quit my job as a CIO to become a full-time freelance writer. One of the things I quickly discovered was that the only way I could prosper was to keep my knowledge current and to learn as much as I possibly could about a wide variety of technologies.

As much as I love training classes, there's no denying that they tend to be expensive and time-consuming. In my line of work, attending traditional training classes just doesn't make sense for me. Many of the classes that I'd be interested in cost about $2,000 per week. Not only would I have to pay the tuition out of my own pocket, but the time I spent in class would be better spent making money by writing articles. Fortunately, I've discovered a lot of different techniques over the years for keeping my education current without breaking the bank. Given the current state of the economy, it's an opportune time to share some of these techniques with you.

Microsoft Events

When I mention Microsoft events, your mind probably turns to the large events like TecháEd. Although I find TecháEd to be an extremely worthwhile event, it's far from being the only event that Microsoft has to offer. What you might not realize is that many of Microsoft's events are completely free. Microsoft offers free TechNet and MSDN events all over the country. If you happen to live in or near a major city, then chances are you'll be able to take advantage of some of these free events without even having to worry about travel costs. You can find out which events are happening in your area at www.microsoft.com/events.

User Groups

Another free source of training that I've used on occasion are user groups. Before moving out of the area, I used to be a member of the Carolina IT Professionals Group. This particular group had monthly meetings that featured technical presentations by Microsoft experts and well-known IT professionals. As an added bonus, the group's sponsors typically gave away several thousand dollars worth of door prizes at each meeting. Granted, each user's group is unique, but it's not unthinkable that other user groups may offer similar benefits to their members.

Technical Conferences

One of the best ways to further your professional education is to attend various IT conferences. The presenters typically have a great deal of knowledge on the subjects they're talking about, and can often give practical advice about how to apply a particular technology to real-world situations. As great as going to conferences is, however, they can be expensive. The price of admission is usually well beyond a

thousand dollars, and you also have to take travel expenses into account. But, believe it or not, there are ways to make going to conferences far less expensive.

Generally speaking, if you have an expertise that's specifically related to the conference agenda, that expertise can be your ticket into the conference. For example, I speak at several IT conferences each year. Being a speaker gets you into the conference for free. As an added bonus, you usually get paid for speaking, and the event organizers even pay for your travel expenses.

Obviously, not everybody is cut out to be a speaker. I know some very intelligent people who would rather die than have to get up on stage in front of 200 people. Fortunately, there are other techniques for getting into conferences for free. One method is to be a volunteer for the conference. Some conferences that I've attended will allow you to attend for free if you'll spend a certain number of hours answering attendees' questions on a specific topic.

Yet another way of getting into conferences for free is by being a member of the press. If you regularly contribute content to any of the better-known, technology-related Web sites or magazines, then you can often obtain press credentials for IT conferences. Not only does a press pass get you into the conference for free, it often comes with other perks such as access to media-only events and media lounges with free food and drinks.

One last strategy for attending a conference on a budget is to get an expo-only pass. Many conferences offer tickets that allow you to visit the exhibit hall but that won't allow you to attend any of the technical sessions or other conference events. Expo-only passes are almost always either free or very inexpensive -- less than a hundred dollars.

Although only visiting the exhibit hall may not sound that enticing, it may very well be worthwhile. I've had some of my toughest technical questions answered by vendors in the exhibit hall.

Books

Prior to going freelance, I worked for several different companies as a network administrator. One of those companies had hired me under the condition that I obtain my Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer (MCSE) certification within a certain amount of time. Unfortunately, MCSE training classes were completely out of the question. There was no way I would've been able to take the time off from work to attend certification classes. Furthermore, the organization I was working for had agreed to reimburse me for the cost of the certification exams once I had passed, but there was no reimbursement for the cost of the training itself.

Ultimately, I ended up purchasing several different books that prepared me to take the various exams. If memory serves me, I spent about $400 on the books. Since that time I've attended several Microsoft certification classes, and looking back, I feel as though I received almost as much knowledge from the books as I did from the

certification classes. The biggest difference was that the certification classes are hands-on in nature; you learn about a particular technology by working through various hands-on labs. In contrast, the books don't really give you any hands-on experience, unless you set up some computers and work through the labs

Most of the certification books on the market are pretty good. In fact, I've passed certification exams for products that I've never even worked with just by reading some of the certification books.

Something obvious but worth noting: When purchasing certification books, keep in mind that some are better than others. When I was studying for my MCSE exams I was initially reluctant to purchase the study guides from Microsoft Press because some of the other publishers' guides cost much less, and I was on a tight budget. For the most part, the third-party study guides were fine. However, I failed a particular exam three times even though I had memorized the corresponding book. I couldn't figure out where I was going wrong until, out of desperation, I bought the Microsoft Press study guide and discovered that the book I'd been using had omitted a lot of important information. Sometimes it pays to pay up.

Video Training

There's a series of commercials on late-night television that advertise video-based training for computer novices. Although I can't help but laugh every time I see these corny commercials, video-based training is actually a good idea. After all, for far less money than it costs to attend a Microsoft certification class, you can have a video-based class that you can play over again any time you want. More importantly, though, video-based training makes it possible to train the rest of your IT staff at no additional cost. You pay for the video once, and then use it in whatever way is the most beneficial to your organization.

There are several good video-based training products on the market. One that I particularly like is Clip Training. The essence of Clip Training is that, rather than requiring you to watch a huge, monolithic video, the program is task-oriented. In other words, you can simply click on the task you need to know -- for example, setting up an Exchange mailbox -- and then watch a short video that shows you how to perform the task.

Another video-based training product that I find useful is the Video Mentor series from Pearson Education. These videos go into a lot more depth than the Clip Training and are very similar to attending a certification class.

Train the Trainer

Back when I had a corporate job, I had a boss with an unorthodox philosophy regarding training. Rather than sending the entire staff out for training, he usually only sent me. Upon completion of the course, it was my responsibility to train my staff on the material I'd just learned.

At first I wasn't pleased with this arrangement. However, I soon realized there were benefits beyond the money the

company saved by not sending everyone to training classes.

The place where I took the training classes had a policy that allowed you to retake any class for free once you had paid for the initial session. Because I was responsible for training my subordinates, I made an arrangement with my boss that allowed me to take each class twice; often back to back. This helped me in a few different ways.

First, it meant that I got to spend a lot less time in the office dealing with day-to-day support issues. That was definitely a good thing. More importantly, though, taking classes back to back helped me absorb much more of the material than I would have been able to if I'd only taken each class once. That better prepared me for teaching the material to others in my department and for passing the certification exams.

Finally, spending so much time in training helped me to build a good relationship with the trainers at the facility. This was probably the greatest benefit of all, because any time that I ran into a jam on the job, I was able to pick up the phone and ask one of my buddies at the training facility for advice. Needless to say, doing so was much less expensive than opening a Microsoft support incident.

As you can see, I've picked up a lot of different techniques over the years for getting free or cheap IT training. These techniques all work well, but don't forget another great resource: the Internet. The Internet is chock-full of free technical articles and webcasts on just about any subject imaginable.

Source: /redmondmag/1 January 2010

Madrassas to impart technical education also: WIF Chairman

The madrassas, known for imparting religious and moral education to children will now start imparting technical education. This was disclosed by Maulana Isa Mansuri, Chairman, World Islamic Forum, during his maiden visit to the city.

Mansuri who came from UK, said, "The Muslims in India are lagging behind in literacy because the Indian Muslims did not get justice from the Central government as far as educational facilities are concerned. In the last 60 years, none of the governments at the centre ever tried to pay heed to the basic requirement of education to the Indian Muslims. This has also been said in the Sachhar Committee report. "

Mansuri, who is visiting the historic Jama Masjid along with Maulana Yaqoob Bulandshehri, chairman of All India Dini Madrassa Board, said, "We are also starting technical education in the madrassas. To start with, we inaugurated a computer centre yesterday at Saharanpur in Marif Quran madrassa and also at a madrassa which educates girls in the same city. "

He said, "We will travel across 15 states of India with a mission to identify the difficulties being faced by the Muslims in getting educated and will submit a report to the UPA government, which has shown intent raise literacy levels of the Muslims. There are more than 1 lakh madrassas in India."

He said, "The European media links madrassas with terrorism, which is not true."'

Shahi Imam of Punjab, Maulana Habib-ur-Rehman Sani Ludhianavi, said, "We are also going to uplift the standard of ther madrassa being run at Jama Masjid under Al Habib Charitable Trust. We have 120 students here. From coming session, we will will also impart education to these children up to class V in accordance with the syllabus prepared by Punjab School Education Board, Mohali, and will later extend it to class X. A computer centre is also being opened for these children shortly."

Source: /indianexpress/19 December 2009

Mere 12 p.c. enroll for higher education: Sibal

HRD Minister Kapil Sibal on Tuesday harped on a national mission to increase the enrolment rate in higher education from 12 per cent now to 30 per cent by 2020 and asked institutions and policy makers to work towards this goal.

There will be additional 40 million students in institutions of higher learning if the country achieves 30 per cent of gross enrolment ratio by 2020, he said at a function organised by DAV College Management Committee here.

Currently, about 220 million students enroll into schools.

Of them, only 26 million opt for higher studies. That means a whopping 194 million do not reach colleges, he said.

"That negates our country's advantage of having the largest number of youth in the world as they cannot be properly utilised and many of them find it difficult to find a job," Mr. Sibal said.

Vocational training and diploma courses will help students to find avenues in semi-skilled sector and these programmes should be part of higher secondary curriculum, he said.

Mr. Sibal said students should be allowed to choose their own field.

"Each and every student cannot become a doctor or an engineer. They should be allowed to choose their own field. If the student gets a chance to learn the subject of his choice, then he cannot fail," Mr. Sibal said.

He said the requirements of education have changed with the global changing scenario. The education system should change so that students are no longer a passive recipient but they actively participate in the process, he said.

"Presently in classrooms, teachers are doing 90 per cent of the talking and students only 10 per cent. It should be reversed. Students should contribute to 90 per cent of the discussion while teachers should do the role of guides," the minister said.

Mr. Sibal asked the state governments to study their local requirements and then revise curriculum accordingly. "We

will also include their recommendations in ICSE and CBSE syllabus," he said.

Mr. Sibal justified his ministry's move to scrap Class X board examination to reduce stress on students.

The ministry is planning to start a national testing scheme, which would be a type of entrance test into university education in the subjects of science and commerce.

''The basis should not be marks (for admission). They should acquire knowledge from outside the classroom on issues like pollution and climate change. So their burden should be reduced to make learning more interesting and ensure their active participation," he said.

Source: New Delhi /beta.thehindu/22 December 2009

On A Steep Learning Curve

The past decade has witnessed a stunning explosion of education across the world, especially in developing countries. The most dramatic rise has been in higher education, where the number of students jumped from about 100 million in 2000 to 151.7 million in 2007 - a phenomenal increase of over 50 per cent in seven years. The highest increases have taken place in sub-Saharan Africa, with a nine percent increase every year, and East Asia and the Pacific, where student numbers rose by over 10 per cent per year. China has set the pace with a searing 19 per cent increase every year in the last decade. Developed countries have shown a slower growth rate because enrollment levels were already high. The rest of the world is just catching up with the West.

Mark Bray, director of Paris-based UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning, said this trend is likely to continue, even strengthen, in the coming decade. The developing world has a lot of catching up to do - the proportion of young people in higher education is 11 per cent in South Asia, 34 per cent in Latin America and six per cent in Africa, compared to 71 per cent in North America and Europe. "The challenge of providing quality education has risen with this growth in numbers," he says.

An important aspect of this growth is that women are at the forefront. In 2003, for the first time ever, women and men's enrollment reached parity, and since then women have outstripped men every year. Data suggests a direct link between facilities and women's enrollment - where opportunities are less, women tend to be excluded more than men.

Global data also shows that social sciences, business & law are the most common fields of study in higher education, followed by education (teachers' training) and engineering/manufacturing. Agricultural sciences are the least popular.

The past decade has seen increasing cross-border flows of students, with a 53 per cent rise in outbound students between 1999 and 2007. Women now make up 49 per cent of these students, up from 43 per cent in 1999. Bray says, "Cross-border does not mean same physical location

of teachers and students: technology can allow them to be anywhere in the world and connect on the internet." Destinations too have become more dispersed, with the US and UK declining and France, Japan, Italy, Australia and New Zealand gaining.

Barring a handful of countries, like the US, Japan, South Korea, Australia and a few Latin American and East European countries , expenditure for higher education is mostly borne by governments. In India, with a gross enrollment of about 11 per cent, the government contribution for higher education is nearly 60 per cent of GDP per capita. In the coming years, contribution of private institutions may rise, but the accompanying challenge of equal access for all may need continued government spending.

A mission for universalisation of education till the secondary stage has been launched on the lines of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan . But the dearth of trained teachers - a shortfall of almost 8 lakh teachers - could hurt the effort to provide quality education. Expansion of technical education will also be on the agenda - providing students with more relevant and marketable technical education programmes in the future.

Source: /timesofindia/26 December 2009

Private not the same as for-profit

There has been considerable debate in India regarding privatisation of higher education. In this debate, there is generally an implicit assumption that privatisation is essentially the same as corporatisation — i.e., private investment comes due to the potential of returns.

In the higher education field, privatisation and corporatisation are actually quite different. Privatisation is regarding who controls the educational institute and the role of government in the management and funding of the institute, while corporatisation is about making profits. To make this distinction clear, universities may be classified as: public (i.e., those that are supported by government and are assumed to be not-for-profit), private not-for-profit, and private for-profit. The two types of private roles can have different purposes in higher education.

Let us see the role of private universities in other countries. In UK all but one universities are public — the only exception is the University of Buckingham, which started only in 1970s and is in the category of private not-for-profit (is registered as a non-profit company for education charity). In Australia private university is also a recent phenomenon and there are only two private universities — Bond University and the University of Notre Dame Australia. The former may be for-profit, but has not made any profit.

The US is the leader in the diversity of models it allows. There are about 650 public institutes that offer four-year degrees, 1,500 private not-for-profit institutes, and about 500 private for-profit institutes. It should be pointed out that all the marquee names that are quoted in support of

privatisation of higher education — MIT, Stanford, CalTech, other Ivy League Universities — are all private not-for-profit.

The private for-profit universities are a relatively recent phenomenon even in the US — University of Phoenix is the best example of this type. However, it is the fastest growing segment, as government investment in higher education is on the decline. It should also be pointed out that in the US, all institutions give the degrees under their own name, as there is no concept of affiliating universities and affiliated-colleges.

In India, there is no doubt that private not-for-profit universities need to be encouraged to increase the education opportunities, and the fact that there is no other alternative — the government simply cannot create enough public universities to satisfy the demand. However, guidelines for private not-for-profit universities should be made clear, simple, and transparent to ensure that they are truly not-for-profit, and offer a level playing field to all those who might want to set a private university.

For example, rules can allow private universities to be set up if the entity setting it up donates Rs 50 crore up-front and commits to at least another Rs 50 crore for the next 10 years. And this fund cannot be recovered — it is a grant/donation to the university.

There could be some other constraints on the governance structures — that there must be a board which must have certain number of ex-officio members and certain number of independent members, and that the board follows democratic processes. Essentially those rules that are needed to ensure that the university is not treated like a business, and not like a family asset that is handed over from father to son. If these criteria are satisfied, then there should be minimum controls regarding what courses they want to offer, what fee they charge, what salary they offer, etc, — these issues should be left entirely up to the institute administration. And the government should facilitate their creation by enacting a suitable Act empowering them, giving cheap land, etc.

For private for-profit universities, caution in moving forward is highly desired. However, as some thinkers have suggested, the right approach is to not take a definite view on it or its feasibility, but allow this model on an experimental basis. Then study the impact in due course of this model and then make suitable policy based on this experience.

One area where for-profit enterprise can work well is in affiliated colleges — where the syllabus is defined by the parent university and the college has a limited task of teaching the syllabus. As colleges are regulated by the affiliating university, the risk of abuse will be minimised, while expanding the education opportunities at the bachelor level — where the demand is the most. Another area where for-profit could be useful is skill-based training and education — like ITIs and other such diploma programmes. Again, this is an area where the for-profit

model may actually improve education as the government-owned ones seem to be lacking in facilities and equipment.

In cases of all private colleges, it is best that they are required to convert as not-for-profit (section 25) or for-profit companies. Then the company laws will ensure that audited accounts are filed every year and there is greater transparency and proper governance, than what exists today — it will also make the status of the college fully clear to the students and parents. Today, in the garb of a Trust, many colleges are being run effectively as for-profit business.

In summary, private not-for-profit universities should be facilitated but with clearly defined norms and high entry bar which ensures only sincere players. Private for-profit universities may be experimented with in a limited manner to gain experience. Both private not-for-profit and private for-profit models can be allowed to thrive in colleges and diploma institutes, and those operating as businesses should be encouraged to come out in open clearly and become education companies.

This mixed model will allow creation of private universities that can become Stanfords, MITs in times to come. And it can bring in private investment for expanding education opportunities. It will allow a diversity of models to exist, which, in years to come, will give us valuable information and will help us decide, as a society, which one should be pursued more vigorously.

Source: /economictimes/26 December 2009

Saving for child education top priority for parents: survey

Parents in Ahmedabad seem to be more concerned over child education. This could be gauged from the fact that around 99 per cent parents in the city accorded high priority to saving for a child's education.

A research report on the saving habits of young parents in Ahmedabad and across India reveals that for 99 per cent of the parents surveyed in the city school education is a key driver for savings for their children's education.

"Around 63 per cent of parents begin investing for the future education even before the child turns three years old," said the study titled 'Aviva Young Scholar Insights'.

The research was undertaken by Indian Market Research Bureau (IMRB) on behalf of Aviva in 10 cities of India, including Ahmedabad, Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bhubaneshwar, Lucknow, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Kochi.

Around 60 per cent parents gave priority to a child's future over their retirement or protection.

"As the survey suggests, parents in Ahmedabad believe education is insurance to secure brighter future for their children. This is reflected by the growing urgency among parents to combat the rising cost of education and provide for holistic education for their child," Rishi Paiparaiya, director, bancassurance and business partnerships, Aviva India said while releasing the findings of the report. Around

58 per cent respondents believe in child plans by insurance companies to secure their child's future.

As many as 94 per cent parents in Ahmedabad and 77 per cent across the country believe that the cost of education for their kids would be far more higher than it is today.

Nearly, 67 per cent parents in India placed education for children ahead of their retirement or protection in financial planning done by them.

The findings of the study were based on 2,250 face-to-face interviews, of which 250 were in Ahmedabad.

Source: Mumbai /business-standard/24 December 2009

Tatas woke up Britain: UK Minister

The Tatas' acquisition of Jaguar and Land Rover (JLR) had woken up Britain to growing Indian strength, UK Secretary of State for Business and Innovation Peter Mandelson today said.

"Tatas investment in JLR brands has woken Britain up to the growing strengths of Indian manufacturing," Mandelson said at a CII function here.

Mandelson, who is here to "bang the drum" for British manufacturing, hoped the Tatas' investment in his country would send a clear signal to the rest of Indian industry about the manufacturing potential from Britain.

Tatas had acquired the British marques JLR in 2008 for $2.3 billion. At the time of the buyout JLR was struggling financially but the Indian group has been nurturing it back to health with sales showing improvement.

Mandelson said, the UK supply chain companies need to get into India.

He said, Britain is also keen on increasing 10-fold partnership in the field of higher education.

"There are about 250 partnerships between Indian and UK universities and institutions. I want to see this grow 10-fold in the next five years," he said.

Mandelson described India as a "racing car" which is revved up and ready to roar off but still has "handbrakes" on.

He said India stands at a critical point. "My question is shouldn't India ease off the handbrake?"

Mandelson also listed the low carbon business as an area of cooperation with focus on climate change.

Source: New Delhi/business-standard/22 December 2009

Teachers not sincere, they idle away: Edu. Minister

Under pressure with one-third teaching posts still remaining vacant, state school education minister Partha De turned the heat on teachers, saying they are not working sincerely and idling away.

The minister said this while speaking at the annual conference of All Bengal Teachers and Employees Association, an RSP-backed organisation, on Friday. "In some schools, teachers are idling away. This cannot be

tolerated," De said. When their salary had been increased, there is no reason why teachers should not work sincerely and give attention to students, he added.

The All Bengal Primary Teachers Association (ABPTA), the CPM-backed association is also toeing De's line. "We cannot say that such a problem does not exist. We being the largest teachers' organisation in the state are in discussion with other bodies on how to improve the performance of the teachers," said Samar Chakraborty, Kolkata District president of ABPTA.

He added that the organisation has asked teachers to report to school before prayer each day and not to leave before classes are over. The ABPTA also plans to award teachers so as to inculcate more dedication among them.

Congress-backed teachers' organisation, WBPTA, however, is not convinced that teachers are insincere. They dub De's statement as a gimmick to evade the real issue. "We are ready to assess the performance of teachers but that is not the real issue. The issue is lack of teachers and a series of litigations that the government is facing in the High Court. It is trying to divert our attention," said Bhimsen Biswal, Kolkata district president of WBPTA.

Recruitment drive: Written test held in 16 districts

The state government has started a recruitment drive for nearly 56,000 vacant teachers' posts in the state. By Friday, the written examination has been conducted in 16 districts across the state. On December 24, the Calcutta High Court had asked the state government to recruit teachers based on the rules laid down by government in 2006 for 32,000 posts. According to government officials, in six months, schools will get a new lot of teachers.

Source: Kolkata /indianexpress/26 December 2009

Too many students, not enough proper teaching

An unusual market has taken over the tangle of alleyways known as Bayn Al-Sarayat across the road from the main Cairo University campus in Giza. It sells lecture notes, essays and even PhD theses.

Sharif Abul Khalil runs a small store with four whirring photocopiers. He employs students to record classes and sells the transcripts for 20 cents.

''Some academics are angry,'' he admits. "They think students don't go to lectures, they just learn our notes off by heart and repeat them in exams. It makes them lazy."

The trade in documents has been boosted by a system that relies on rote learning rather than research and the development of a questioning mind. A main reason for this is the severe overcrowding at universities that makes access to professors, libraries and laboratories difficult.

With 30 per cent of students advancing to higher education, the number of regular undergraduates at Cairo University has risen to 180,000, too many for the available facilities and faculty. It is a similar story at other state universities.

The result is that employers complain about the low quality of graduates, and a mismatch between what they learn and the requirements of the job market.

Most undergraduates also know the limitations of their degrees. A commerce student remarks that curriculums are so outdated he is not taught about the stock exchange where he would like to work. "You have to get the certificate, but what they teach you is worthless," says Abdul Rahmen Mustafa.

The government has increased the annual budget for the sector to $1.7bn and promised to shift its emphasis from access to improving the standard of services. However, officials say there are difficulties financing plans for 2.8m students.

"There is political will but the big challenge is that we are going for an overhaul of the entire system and the funds needed are really much higher than what is available," says Mohsen Elmahdy, who oversees reform projects at the higher education ministry.

As Egypt's constitution protects the right to free education, the idea of introducing tuition fees remains contentious. However, new schemes have been permitted in which students – who can afford to – pay limited charges of about $1,000 for parallel courses at public universities. With smaller classes and better resources, the degrees are considered higher quality but are still taught by the main faculty who get a boost for their low salaries. Critics argue the system creates inequality.

"This is unheard of, to have one student in an air-conditioned room and others packed in a crowded classroom. Good teachers try to work with the paying groups. It makes matters worse," says Mohamed Abul Ghar, a professor of medicine at Cairo University who campaigns for reform.

He also questions the integrity of some new private universities set up by wealthy investors. The establishment of the institutions has been promoted in recent years with tax breaks and other incentives. There are now 18, teaching more than 60,000 students.

"As the owner of the university you decide who succeeds in their degree and it can create corruption," Dr Abul Ghar claims. "If you find out many students will fail, you may be tempted to raise their grades as you are scared other students will not join the next year."

The higher education ministry insists it retains oversight of all institutions but is increasingly encouraging non-profit ones. Nile University is among the newest, specialising in research and postgraduate studies in engineering technology and business administration.

About 300 students have begun courses at its gleaming, glass-fronted premises in the Smart Village technology park just outside Cairo. The university has forged close links with leading local industry and with overseas business schools, with which it exchanges lecturers. "Our whole concept is to become a part of the technopolis," says Tarek Khalil, the president.

Many officials argue partnership with the private sector is the only way higher education services can be upgraded.

Cairo University plans to open an international campus in Sixth of October City, 20 km from its original site within three years. It says this will help stop its faculty leaving for new universities and restore its world-class reputation.

Prof Elmahdy maintains that, in the long term, it may also be hard to avoid a public debate on tuition fees.

"If you want education to be a priority and you want quality – they both have costs and someone has to pay the bill," he says. "You cannot offer free education forever to just anybody."

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Source: /ft.com/16 December 2009

We don't need more babus

The human resource development ministry is mulling over the idea of establishing an Indian Education Service (IES), on the lines of the IAS, IFS and IRS. The new service will apparently recruit and train a dedicated set of officers who will then be deployed as education administrators. HRD minister Kapil Sibal reportedly said it was an idea worth exploring at a round table on school education in the capital this week. Well, we think it's an idea that should not be entertained.

Education, especially school education, is a much-neglected sector in our country. The funds set aside by the government for education, in which the state has a vital role to play, is woefully inadequate. Public education infrastructure is crumbling and the qualifications and commitment of teachers in public schools leave much to be desired. But the way around these pressing problems is not the creation of more bureaucracy. India has more bureaucrats than necessary; and the general ineptitude of our babus is well known. Why should an already flabby establishment be further fattened at taxpayers' expense?

The recent drift in education management has been towards decentralisation. The IES proposal runs counter to that. Moreover, education is a state subject while the proposed cadre will come under the Centre's purview. Unless the IES is superimposed upon state administrations, which is not such a great idea, it will have little clout. Each state has differentiated frameworks within which they operate in the area of education. That's because of the diverse socio-economic realities of different regions within India.

It makes little sense to have a one-size-fits-all administrative framework for education across the country. There is no dearth of visionaries at the top when it comes to education in India, but there is a severe shortage of people who can deliver at the ground level, whether they are teachers or administrators. Instead of investing in a fresh bunch of officers, government must identify those already

within the system who can be trained to become efficient education personnel.

Source: /timesofindia/24 December 2009

RESOURCE

Amendment to "The Right of Children to Free & Compulsory Education Act, 2009"

The Union Cabinet today approved the introduction of a Bill in Parliament for carrying out certain amendments to the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 has been enacted by the Parliament to provide for free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years. After receiving the assent of the President, the aforesaid Act was published in the Gazette of India on 27th August, 2009.

The Department of School Education and Literacy received representations from various organisations (a) working for the welfare of the children with disabilities and (b) who set up minority institutions, seeking certain amendments to the legislation. Consequent upon examination of the issues/points raised in these representations it is proposed to make the following amendments in the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009:

(i) Inclusion of children with disabilities within the meaning of 'children belonging to disadvantaged group'

(ii) Providing that children with disabilities as defined in the National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999 shall have special rights to pursue free and compulsory elementary education; and

(iii) School Management Committee constituted under the Act by aided minority institutions shall perform advisory function.

A Bill will be introduced in the Parliament.

Source: New Delhi /pib.nic.in/24 December 2009

Amendment to the Copyright Act, 1957

The Union Cabinet today approved the proposal to introduce a Bill to amend the Copyright Act, 1957. The Ministry of Human Resource Development has proposed the amendments in order to gain clarity, remove operational difficulties and to address the newer issues that have emerged in the context of digital technology and the internet.

Amendments are being made to bring the Act in conformity with the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) Internet Treaties, namely WIPO Copyright Treaty (WCT) and WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT) which have set the international standards in these spheres. The WCT deals with the protection for the authors of literary and artistic works such as writings, computer programmes, original databases, musical works, audiovisual works, works of fine art and photographs. The WPPT protects certain "related rights" which are the rights of the performers and producers of phonograms. While India has not yet signed the above two treaties it is necessary to amend domestic legislation to extend the copyright protection in the digital environment.

Amendments related to bring the Act in conformity with WCT and WPPT :

- Through a new section in the Act, it is proposed to ensure protection to the Right holders against circumvention of effective technological measures applied for purpose of protection of his rights like breaking of passwords etc. while maintaining an appropriate balance between the interests of the right holders on the one hand and of Technology innovators, Researchers and Educational Institutions on the other.

- The existing Performers' Rights are proposed to be further enhanced by introducing a new section to provide exclusive rights compatible with WPPT.

- "The Moral Rights of Performers" are proposed to be introduced in a new section.

- Amendments have been proposed to protect the interests of researchers, students and educational institutions so as to ensure that Technological Measures do not act as a barrier for further development of the technology. These amendments also address the issue of access to information in the digital context and the liability of Internet service providers.

- The period of copyright for photographers is proposed to be enhanced to "Life plus sixty years" instead of only sixty years as at present.

Amendment to protect the Music and Film Industry and address its concerns :

- Statutory licence for version recordings and authorship to ensure that while making a sound recording of any literary, dramatic or musical work the interest of the copyright holder is duly protected.

- Term of copyright for cinematograph films has been extended by making the Producers and Principal director as joint authors.

- A copyright term of 70 years to Principal Director which automatically extends the copyright term for the Producers for another 10 years provided he enters into an agreement with the Director;

Amendments to address the concerns of the physically challenged:

The physically challenged need access to copyright material in specialized formats, e.g. Braille text, talking text, electronic text, large print etc. for the visually challenged and sign language for the aurally challenged. Currently the cost of production of material in such formats is very high.

With additional requirement of royalty payments the price of such material to the target groups would be even higher.

- A clause is proposed to be introduced as a fair deal clause to allow the production of copies of copyright material in formats specially designed for the physically challenged.

- A separate compulsory licensing provision has been proposed to allow for publication of copyright works in formats other than specifically suited for the physically challenged.

Amendments for rights to authors:

- Amendment is proposed to give independent rights to authors of literary and musical works in cinematograph films, which were hitherto denied and wrongfully exploited, by the producers and music companies.

- An amendment is proposed to ensure that the authors retain their right to receive royalties and the benefits enjoyed through the copyright societies.

- Another amendment ensures that the authors of the works, particularly songs included in the cinematograph film or sound recordings, receive royalty for the commercial exploitation of such work.

- It has been proposed to introduce a system of statutory licensing to ensure that the public has access to musical works over the FM Radio and Television networks and at the same time the owners of copyright works are also not subject to any disadvantages.

- It is proposed to amend existing provisions to provide compulsory license through Copyright Board to publish or communicate to the public such work or translation where the author is dead or unknown or cannot be traced or the owner of the copyright work in such work cannot be found.

Other amendments

- Amendments are being made for incidental changes, which are required in the context of digital technology to cover "storing of copyrights material by electronic means".

- Amendments in relation to operational facilities, such as registration of Copyright Societies by providing that only authors can register and procedure for tariff schemes of copyright societies and commercial distinction between assignment and licence; and

- Enforcement of rights such as border measures, disposal of infringing copies and presumption of authorship under civil remedies.

Background: In order to formulate the proposed amendments and to carry out wide-ranging consultations with all stakeholders, the Ministry of Human Resource Development had constituted a 30-member Core Group in the year 2005 under the Chairmanship of the Education Secretary with representatives of the other

Ministries/Departments concerned with the subject and other key stakeholders like copyright-industry organizations, stakeholders, subject experts and Institutions of repute in related fields. The Core Group had deliberations at length in five sessions to cover all the provisions of the existing statute and made recommendations with regard to the proposed amendments. The Core Group then created a Drafting Committee to draw up the text of the proposed amendments and to fine-tune the recommendations of the Core Group.

Source: New Delhi /pib.nic.in/24 December 2009

HRD Ministry mulling close cooperation with UID Authority

The HRD Ministry is mulling close co-operation with the recently set up UID Authority. The HRD Ministry is keen on this as this will provide all school going children and teachers with a UID number, so that a countrywide monitoring of schooling and educational outcomes can be undertaken. Shri Kapil Sibal, Union Minister for Human Resource Development, stated this during the meeting of the Consultative Committee of Parliament for the HRD Ministry held here yesterday. The subject of the meeting was, 'The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009'.

The Ministry officials made a brief presentation on the salient features of the Act. These include, besides the right of a child to free and compulsory education in a neighbourhood school till completion of elementary education, the consequent duties of the appropriate Government and Local Authority. It was also shown how the Act provides for minimum qualifications for teachers in elementary schools. The academic and infrastructure standards, which schools are required to adhere to as per the Act were shown as was the requirement of the Constitution of school management committees.

Many members of Parliament gave their views regarding the Act. Most members, while appreciative of this landmark initiative, were of the view that the actual implementation of the Act will face challenges, especially in terms of monitoring and accountability, retention of poor students, teacher quality and absenteeism, ability of states to finance the implementation of the Act and adequate infrastructure. Shri D. Raja called for the strengthening of the government school system and that attempts must be made to build a common school system. Shri Mohammed Shafi suggested that states be categorized as per their requirements for RTE. While Shri Sucharu Ranjan Haldar and Shri Kabindra Purkayastha wanted to know how it will be ensured that children go to school, Smt. Vasanthi Stanley wanted clarity on the provisions for specially abled children. Shri Jagdanand Singh and Smt. Rama Devi wanted the parents/ guardians to be given the right to judge the teachers. Shri Prem Das Rai was for the RTE and UID schemes to be put together. Shri Baija yanta "Jai" Panda wanted to know the timelines for the framing of rules and for the notification of

the Act. Shri Lalji Tandon stated that masses will need to be involved for successful implementation of the Act. Dr. Chinta Mohan expressed the concern that states would not have the finances of the scale required for the implementation of this Act. He also suggested that Gram Panchayats must have a say. Dr. (Smt) Kapila Vatsyayan said that the schooling must not result in deculturisation or in parochialism and a balance needs to be created so that the children are locally rooted and globally relevant. Shri Jose K. Mani stressed upon the need for counseling in schools.

Shri Kapil Sibal assured the members that the people are very keen to get their children to school and there will be pressure from the public on the appropriate governments to get the Right to Free and Compulsory Education for their children. He stated that with 93 percent of the schools in the country being government schools, the main purpose of the Act is to improve the quality of the government school system. The Minister underlined that the provision in the Act of School Management Committees with 50% women would ensure the schools' monitoring and they would be accountable, besides monitoring being done through the proposed association with the UID. The Minister also explained that there were laid down norms for infrastructure, teacher qualification and student-teacher ratio in the Act, which would ensure certain standards. As regards specially abled children, he said that the government's policy is to encourage inclusive education. He said that to ensure children going to school, while there is a provision in the Act for the authorities to ensure and monitor admission of children in school, the civil society and stakeholders will have to come forward in a big way to help make this 'National Mission' a success. He said that the Act would be notified after the government decides the sharing pattern of the finances, between the centre and the states.

Smt. D. Purandeswari, Minister of State for HRD was also present in the meeting .Members of Parliament who attended the meeting included Dr. Chinta Mohan, Shri Jose K. Mani, Shri Jagdanand Singh, Dr. Nirmal Khatri, Shri Ghanshyam Anuragi, Shri Ganeshrao Nagorao Dudhgaonkar, Shri Prem Das Rai, Shri Baijayanta "Jai" Panda, Shri Kabindra Purkayastha, Smt. Rama Devi, Shri Lalji Tandon,, Shri Sucharu Ranjan Haldar, Shri Ishwar Singh, Smt. Vasanthi Stanley, Shri Mohammed Shafi, Dr. (Smt)Kapila Vatsyayan and Shri D. Raja.

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

Mid-Day Meal Scheme

The overall responsibility to provide wholesome and nutritious food to children in schools under the Mid Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) lies with the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. Isolated and sporadic instances of food poisoning or uneatable material being found in the food do come to the notice of the Government.

Some cases of misuse of food grains and funds provided for the MDMS have come to the notice of the Government through various sources, like newspaper reports, reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, Monitoring Institutions etc.

As and when any report regarding misuse of resources provided for the MDMS comes to the notice of the Central Government, the concerned State Government/UT Administration is asked to conduct a suitable enquiry into the complaint and to take appropriate action against the responsible person(s) and also to initiate corrective measures to avoid recurrence of such incidents in future. In order to curb possibility of corruption in implementing the scheme elaborate monitoring mechanism has been prescribed for all levels. In the Scheme Guidelines, emphasis has been laid on transparency such as suo-moto display of information on weekly/monthly basis on (i) quantity of food grains received, date of receipt; (ii) quantity of food grains utilized; (iii) other ingredients purchases, utilized; (iv) number of children given mid day meal; (v) daily menu; and (vi) roster of Community Members involved in the programme, participation of Gram Panchayat/Gram Sabha, members of Village Education Committee, Parent-Teacher Association and Local women's/Mothers' Self Help Group. Besides, in District Level Committee public representatives (MPs, MLAs) and elected members of Zila Parishad have also been included to monitor and supervise the implementation of the programme. Officers of States/U T Government are required to inspect on an average 25% of the schools every quarter and all schools at least once every year. In addition, States and Union Territories are required to develop a dedicated mechanism for Public Grievances Redressal, which should be widely publicized and made easily accessible.

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/16 December 2009

Minority Minister Lunches Fellowship for Students

Shri Salman Khurshid launches Maulana Abul Kalam Azad National Fellowship for Students from Minority Communities and the Scheme for Computerisation of Records of State Wakf Boards

Shri Salman Khurshid, Minister of Minority Affairs, here today formally launched two new schemes for the welfare of minority communities: Maulana Abul Kalam Azad National Fellowship for Students from Minority Communities; and the Scheme for Computerization of Records of State Wakf Boards.

The objective of the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad National Fellowship for Students from Minority Communities is to provide *integrated five-year fellowships* in the form of financial assistance to students from minority communities, as notified by the Central Government to pursue higher studies such as M. Phil and Ph.D. The scheme will cover all

Universities/Institutions recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC) under section 2(f) and section 3 of the UGC Act and will be implemented by the Ministry of Minority Affairs (MoMA) *through UGC* for students belonging to the minority communities. The fellowship under National Fellowship will be on the pattern of UGC Fellowships awarded to research students pursuing regular and full time M. Phil and Ph.D courses. The fellowship holders under this scheme will be known as MoMA scholars.The total number of fellowships each year will be 756. In case of non-availability of adequate number of candidates, the number of fellowships not availed during a year will be carried forward to the next academic session. 30% of the fellowship shall be earmarked for women students; remaining 70% will be general. In case there are shortage of women candidates, the fellowship can be passed on to male students of the same minority community. The reservation for differently-abled students shall be made as per the UGC norms. UGC will notify the scheme by inserting suitable advertisement in the Press and other media.

The rate of fellowship for JRF and SRF will be at par with the UGC Fellowship as amended from time to time. Presently these rates are as follows:

Fellowship	@ Rs.12,000/- p.m. for initial two years (JRF) @ Rs.14,000/- p.m. for remaining tenure (SRF)
Contingency for Arts & Commerce	@ Rs.10, 000/- p.a. for initial two years @ Rs.20, 500/- p.a. for remaining three years.
Contingency for Sciences & *Engineering*	@ Rs.12, 000/- p.a. for initial two years @ Rs.25, 000/- p.a. for remaining three years.
Departmental assistance	@ Rs.3,000/- p.a. per student to the host institution for providing infrastructure
Escorts/Reader Assistance	@ Rs.2,000/- p.m. in cases of physically and visually challenged candidates

The broad objectives of the Scheme for Computerization of Records of State Wakf Boards are:

- Ensuring proper survey and cross checking of Wakf data from various computer data bases maintained at the state level, such as by Revenue Departments etc.
- Improving office efficiency and preparation of timely reports on various administrative matters.

- Creation of a centralized and web-enabled data base for use by various stake holders.
- Properties Registration Management of Wakf Boards.
- Muttawalli Returns Management system.
- Leasing of Properties Management system.
- Litigations Tracking Management system.
- Documents Archiving & Retrieval Management system.

The scheme of computerization is uniformly to be applicable across all the 29 State Waqf Boards and any other Wakf Board like J&K, making a special request for funding subject to availability of funds. The Scheme is to be implemented during the Plan period 2009-10 to 2011-12 at a total cost of Rs. 22.84 crore. The computerization would introduce implementation of a web based centralized application module for Wakf Management. The scheme will be implemented by National Informatics Centre (NIC) on turnkey basis. Funds will be released to NIC or their nominee and to the State Wakf Boards directly for effective implementation. Utilisation Certificates will be routed through State Governments by the Wakf Boards concerned after due expenditure.

The need for such a scheme has arisen because although Wakf properties are spread out all over the country but even the basic survey of waqf properties has not been done in most States. There is hardly any development of waqf properties and a very substantial income that the waqf properties could have generated for the welfare schemes of the community are lost because of non-development and large scale encroachment of waqf properties.Therefore, to streamline record keeping, introduce transparency, and to computerize the various functions/processes of the Wakf Boards and to develop a single web based centralized application, Joint Parliamentary Committee on Waqf, in its Ninth Report, recommended computerization of the records of the State Waqf Boards and Central financial assistance to the these Boards.

Source: New Delhi /pib.nic.in/22 December 2009

Scholarship Schemes for SC and ST Students

The details of various schemes of scholarships at high school and college level for SC and ST students, including limit of income of parents/guardians are given below:

1. *Scheme of Post Matric Scholarships to the Students belonging to Scheduled Castes for Studies in India:*

    The objective of the scheme is to provide financial assistance to the Scheduled castes students studying at post matriculation or post-secondary stage to enable them to complete their education. The financial assistance includes maintenance allowance, reimbursement of non-refundable compulsory fee charged by educational institutions, Book Bank facility and other allowances.

    Income ceiling:- The scholarship is to be paid to the students whose parent's/guardian's income from all sources does not exceed Rs. 1.00 lakh per annum.

2. *Scheme of Pre Matric Scholarships to the children of those engaged in unclean occupation:*

The objective of the scheme is to provide financial assistance to the children of scavengers, sweepers having traditionally link with scavenging, flayers and tanners, irrespective of their religion, to pursue education upto matriculation level. The target group covers SC students also. The State Governments and Union Territory Administrations implement the Scheme. The financial assistance includes monthly scholarship and annual adhoc grant. The Scheme covers day scholars from Class I to X.

Income ceiling: - There is no income ceiling prescribed under the scheme.

3. *Central Sector Scholarship scheme of Top Class Education for SC students:*

The objective of the scheme is to promote quality professional education amongst SC students, by providing them scholarship for pursuing studies in 183 identified institutes of excellence. The scholarship includes tuition fee and other non-refundable fees, living expenses, books and stationery allowance and computer.

Income ceiling: - The scholarship is meant to be paid to the students whose parent's/guardian's income from all sources does not exceed Rs. 2.00 lakh per annum.

4. *Scheme of Post Matric Scholarships to the Students belonging to Scheduled Tribes:*

The objective of the scheme is to provide financial assistance to the Scheduled Tribes students studying at post matriculation or post-secondary stage to enable them to complete their education. The financial assistance includes maintenance allowance, reimbursement of non-refundable compulsory fee charged by educational institutions, Book Bank facility and other allowances.

Income ceiling: - The scholarship is meant to be paid to the students whose parent's/guardian's income from all sources does not exceed Rs. 1.08 lakh per annum.

5. *Central Sector Scholarship scheme of Top Class Education for ST students:*

The objective of the scheme is to encourage meritorious ST students for pursuing studies at degree and post degree level in any of the 125 identified institutes of excellence spread all over the country. The financial assistance includes full tuition fee and non-refundable charges, living expenses, books and stationery charges and cost of computer.

Income ceiling: - The scholarship is to be paid to the students whose parent's/guardian's income from all sources does not exceed Rs. 2.00 lakh per annum.

Besides, SC/ST students are also provided National Overseas Scholarships for pursuing higher studies abroad. The income ceiling under the scheme is Rs. 25,000 per month.

This information was given by Shri. D. Napoleon, the Minister of State for Social Justice & Empowerment, in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha today.

Source: New Delhi /pib.nic.in/17 December 2009

Seats in Higher Education for diaspora children

As per the information furnished by University Grants Commission (UGC), the commission has issued directions to the Universities for creation of 15% supernumerary seats for foreign students in subject courses of all the Universities, whether technical/professional or otherwise, provided that adequate infrastructure facilities are made available in the Department concerned. Out of this 15% quota fixed for foreign students, 5% seats shall be earmarked for the children of Indian Workers in the Gulf and South East Asia.

The Regulation issued by All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) on 21st January, 2004, provides, inter-alia, that fifteen percent seats in all the Institutions/University Departments, approved by AICTE, offering technical courses leading to Diploma, Degree and Post-Graduate Degree in Engineering & Technology, Architecture & Town Planning, Pharmacy, Applied Arts, MBA & MCA, Hotel Management & Catering Technology, shall be allowed on supernumerary basis from amongst Foreign Nationals/Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs)/Children of Indian Workers in the Gulf Countries, over and above the approved intake, provided that 1/3rd of the 15% shall be reserved across different disciplines in the educational institutions, for the Children of Indian workers in the Gulf Countries. However, any vacant seats out of 1/3rd category shall be reverted to the quota of 2/3rd meant for PIO/Foreign Nationals.

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/16 December 2009

Technical Education imbalance among states

In order to overcome the imbalance of the number of engineering colleges amongst states, the AICTE has taken up the following initiatives:

(i) AICTE has now allowed second shift of engineering college (s) in existing engineering colleges(s) only in those States where the number of seats available in engineering colleges per lakh of population is less than all India average.

(ii) For a balanced growth of various streams of education in Engineering & Technology, the Council adopted a policy to allow establishment of new Engineering Institutions with at least three conventional branches as a mandatory requirement in the States where the number of seats available in engineering colleges per lakh of population in more than all India average,

whereas in the States where the number of seats available in engineering colleges per lakh of population is less than the all India average, no such restriction is applicable.

(iii) The Council has permitted the possession of total land area in three adjacent pieces specifically in North Eastern States and hilly areas for setting up new technical institutions.

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/16 December 2009

Contribute

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

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

Please email your contributions to aserf@apeejay.edu

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

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