



Announcements

ASERF has instituted **Dr Stya Paul Young Educationist Award** for honouring Young Educationists who have demonstrated their potential by making an impact on Indian education.

Applications from the eligible scholars are invited for the Award of the year 2009. [Click here](#) to download the prescribed format along with the terms and conditions.

Apeejay Education Society launches courses in Biosciences & Clinical Research: Apeejay Education Society (AES), has now established an institute for Biosciences and Clinical Research to meet the growing demand for technical personnel in the Biosciences sector. The institute, **Apeejay Svrn Institute for Biosciences and Clinical Research, Gurgaon, (AIBCR)** has been established in collaboration with leading companies in the industry, viz Martin & Harris, ASG Biochemicals and Walter & Bushnell Health Care.

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

Partnership

Dear Partners,

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

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

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ASPECT**A long way to go**

The failure to pass legislation at the Central level for free and compulsory schooling was a major impediment to the extension of education.

The rhetoric of successive Central governments in India with respect to education has always been unimpeachable. This is evident in the Constitution, which enshrined free compulsory school education as a directive principle of state policy and committed the Government of India to ensure it within a decade. It is even more marked in successive education policies, which have stressed the need for urgent action to provide good-quality education at different levels to all segments of society, to expand the system to cater to the needs of both the economy and society and to ensure inclusiveness through various kinds of interventions.

Yet this democratic rhetoric has generally not been matched by commensurate action that would actually achieve the stated goals. What is more surprising is that even this under-achievement has been accompanied by almost continuous self-knowledge, as the Central government has serially appointed commissions to analyse the situation and suggest policies for its improvement.

The landmark in this regard is the Report of the Education Commission (1964-66), otherwise known as the Kothari Commission Report, which still serves as the benchmark for all official policy goals and action. This report clearly linked education to the task of nation building and the development project: "The destiny of India is now being shaped in her classrooms. This we believe is no mere rhetoric. In a world based on science and technology it is education that determines the level of prosperity, welfare and security of people. On the quality and number of persons coming out of our schools and colleges will depend our success in the great enterprise of national construction whose principal objective is to raise the standard of living of our people."

In consequence of that report, the National Education Policy of 1968 was announced with very lofty objectives: "The Government of India is convinced that a radical reconstruction of education on the broad lines recommended by the education commission is essential for economic and cultural development of the country, for national integration and for realising the ideal of a socialistic pattern of society. This will involve a transformation of the system to relate it more closely to the life of the people; a continuous effort to expand educational opportunity; a sustained and intensive effort to raise the quality of education at all stages; an emphasis on the development of science and technology; and the cultivation of moral and social values. The educational system must produce young men and women of character and ability committed to national service and development."

This was to be achieved by adhering to the following principles:

- Free and compulsory education, by enacting and enforcing the required legislation;
- A focus on the status, emoluments and education of teachers, who were seen as constituting the most important factor determining the quality of education;
- The energetic development of Indian languages and a three-language formula for schooling;
- Equalisation of educational opportunity, by correcting regional and urban-rural imbalances, putting in place a Common Schooling System, and having special focus on girls and students from backward classes and tribal communities, and providing special facilities for handicapped and other disadvantaged students;
- Identification of talent at an early stage and subsequent nurture;
- Bringing together school and community through work experience and national service;
- Priority to science education and research, as well as to technical training;
- Special emphasis on the development of education for agriculture and industry;
- Improving the reliability and validity of examinations, and making evaluation a continuous process aimed at improving achievement rather than at 'certifying' the quality of performance at any given time; and
- Liquidation of mass illiteracy, and spread of adult education.

Nearly two decades after this policy was announced, in the year that *Frontline* began publication, it was painfully obvious that these laudable goals were nowhere near being met and that neither fiscal allocation nor actual policy intentions were close to adequate to meet this challenge.

One reason was inadequate fixing of Central responsibility. Until 1976 (when the Constitution was amended to move education from the State List to the Concurrent List, thereby allowing more direct intervention by the Central government), State governments were largely held responsible, for providing school education in particular. This led to widely different outcomes across States, reflecting not only historical legacy but also the ability and willingness of State governments to spend on school education. This tended to reinforce existing spatial inequalities. In any case, governments in the poorer and more backward States tended to have fewer fiscal resources to enable the required expansion, much less to ensure quality.

But even after 1976, there was little real progress because the urgency of ensuring universal quality schooling and expansion of the overall education system was simply not

made a policy priority. Even illiteracy rates remained shockingly high. Higher education received a disproportionate share of Central funds for education, but even here the growth stalled. The Nehruvian period generated some institutions of higher learning (new universities and professional institutes like the Indian Institutes of Technology and the Indian Institutes of Management) that have now come to symbolise the future potential of the country, but after the initial spurt, there was no push to ensure the required rates of gradual but consistent expansion.

So the 25 years since then should ideally have been marked by a complete transformation in terms of state policy, and a drastic increase in both public funding for education as well as different interventions to ensure better quality and more inclusive education at all levels. To what extent has this happened?

Number of educational institutions						
Year	Primary	Upper primary	Secondary	College	Professional	Universities
1950-51	209.7	13.6	7.4	0.4	0.2	0.03
1960-61	330.4	49.7	17.3	1	0.9	0.05
1970-71	408.4	90.6	37.1	2.3	1	0.08
1980-81	494.5	118.6	51.6	3.4		0.11
1990-91	560.9	151.5	79.8	4.9	0.9	0.18
2000-01	638.7	206.3	126.0	7.9	2.2	0.25
2005-06	771.1	288.2	154.0	11.5	5	0.35

Source: Website of MHRD

There has been some improvement in certain indicators, but the progress thus far is still uncertain, unbalanced and far from satisfactory. The table shows that the period after 1980-81 witnessed a significant expansion in all levels of educational institutions, even though the numbers are still far from what is required.

The failure to pass, much less implement, legislation for free and compulsory schooling at the Central level and the lack of any assumption of financial responsibility for this by the Centre certainly constituted a major impediment to the extension of education. It is shocking to note that despite more than six decades of official pronouncements, it was only in 2009 that the right to education finally became law. However, one important change was brought about by the greater involvement of the Centre in providing financing for expansion of school education;

- first in the 1990s through the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) in some districts,
- then through the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), under which the Centre provided 75 per cent of the funds with the goal of universalising primary education.

This has led to a greater expansion of the school system, especially in States that previously could not or would not provide more resources for such growth. The Annual Survey of Education Report (ASER) 2008 finds that the share of children not in school has fallen considerably:

-the proportion of seven-10- year-olds not in school was 2.7 per cent,

-the proportion of 11-14-year-olds not in school was 6.3 per cent.

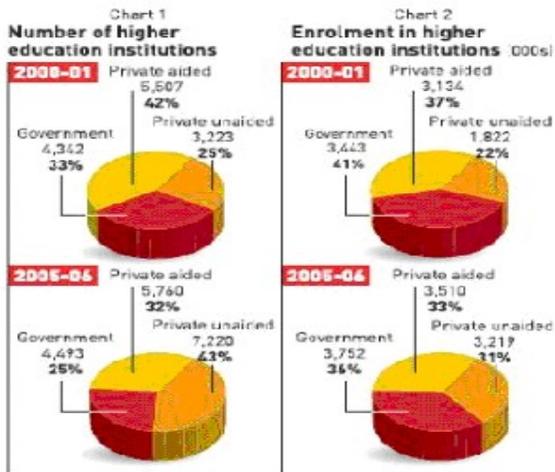
However, the pressure to increase enrolment has been associated with the dilution of quality norms, in that "schools" or rather "educational centres" have been permitted to come up, based on single (often untrained or minimally trained) and underpaid local teachers handling multigrade classes with poor facilities and occasionally no buildings or other basic infrastructure. Quality not only is influenced by spending but certainly does play an essential role, and, therefore, it is crucial for public intervention not to try and deliver this human right "on the cheap".

Partly because of public miserliness, and also other problems with the government school system such as teacher absenteeism in certain places, there has been a growing reliance on private education even for schooling. This is no longer a phenomenon common among the rich and the middle classes: ASER 2008 finds that there was a 37 per cent increase in private school enrolment just between 2005 and 2008. Among all six-14-year-olds, the proportion of children attending private schools increased from 16.4 per cent in 2005 to 22.5 per cent in 2008, and the increase is particularly striking in Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.

The same shift towards more private provision is reflected also in secondary and higher education – and if anything, the move has been even sharper and mostly concentrated in the past decade. Charts 1 and 2 provide evidence of the extent to which private suppliers have grown in terms of both the number of institutions and the share of enrolment.

These are, if anything, underestimates of the current situation, since there is much evidence pointing to a significant increase in the number of private deemed universities and institutions recognised by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) in the past three years. Not only have private institutions grown rapidly in number, but the bulk of such institutions are unaided. While commercial activity in higher education (that is, for profit) is still illegal in India, many of these are actually profit-making institutions by another name.

Enrollment in the public higher education system is now likely to be less than one-third of total such enrollment. This is to a significant degree a reflection of the failure of the public higher education system to expand adequately to meet the growing demand. India's higher education enrollment rates, estimated to be anywhere between 9 and 15 per cent depending on data source, are still well below international norms, and there is still a great need for expansion.



Private institutions that charge relatively higher fees are likely to constrain access, especially among the less well-off sections of the population, and perpetuate economic and social distinctions. The growth of private provision at all levels of education also makes it much harder to implement the lofty ideals enunciated (and as yet not implemented) by the Kothari Commission Report.

One important issue that gets increasingly ignored is the continuing problem of adult illiteracy. The National Literacy Mission (NLM) played a major role in providing a quantum leap in increasing functional literacy among the adult population in the late 1980s and early 1990s. However, follow-up has been poor, and many of the gains are now eroded, with some beneficiaries even falling back into illiteracy.

More importantly, a significant part of the age cohort 15-30 years – around one-third – did not benefit from the NLM and were too old to benefit from the expansion of primary education. So they remain functionally illiterate.

There are many other issues and problems with the education system that are increasingly being recognised:

- the problem of uneven and often poor quality;
- the inadequate training of and motivation for teachers;
- the irrelevance of much curricula;
- the rigidities that characterise examination systems as well as pedagogy in general;
- the lack of autonomy provided to institutions at all levels and various kinds of outside interference;
- the mismatch between degrees and the skills required by the economy;
- the lack of opportunities for continuous learning;
- the problems of inadequate inclusiveness reflecting not only traditional forms of discrimination and exclusion but also the insensitivity of much education policy.

The country is now entering another phase of potentially rapid expansion of the education system, which is clearly essential. But if it is indeed to provide a basis for an inclusive and democratic society and a sustainable development process, there is much about the current forms of education provision that will have to change drastically. The goals of the Kothari Commission are now more relevant than ever.

Source: flonnet.com/2-15 January 2010

NEWS

AICTE to introduce sweeping reforms in 2010

The year 2010 is set to usher into the educational institutes a new era of accountability and transparency with the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) introducing sweeping reforms in the higher education sector where the recognised colleges would have to declare online every institute's fee details, faculty components and admission related details.

Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister Kapil Sibal would soon announce these reforms where all the AICTE-recognised private colleges will have to declare their entire fees, its components, refundable portions on withdrawal of admission, number of seats per course, eligibility conditions, admission and selection process, details of teaching faculty, including their pay and qualifications, the institute's physical and academic infrastructure and syllabus outline.

The AICTE Executive Committee's plan includes putting online the entire approval/accreditation process for institutes so that the online the status of their application could be known, pertaining to approval for new courses, increasing intake of existing programmes or accreditation of their programmes.

It will also stop affiliating professional courses (B.Tech/M Tech) offered in distance mode and encourage institutes to subscribe to an internet grouping and to high-speed broad band connectivity, develop a comprehensive scheme for horizontal and vertical mobility of vocational and ITI students for the benefit of those from the working class and lower economic strata and for co-option of foreign experts on All India Boards, and consider allowing starting of dual-degree programmes of M Tech, leading to PhD.

Source: New Delhi indiaedunews.net/ 1 January 2010

Biometric attendance system for staff in state-run schools

To keep a check on teachers not taking classes, the state education department has decided to install biometric machines in schools to record their attendance and of other staff. To start with, the system will be introduced as a pilot project in 100 government schools across the state, mainly upper primary and secondary schools. There are 18,290 schools in the state of which 5,000 fall under these two categories.

Talking to The Indian Express, Education Minister Dr Upinderjit Kaur said, "The system will ensure teachers are in school and perform their duty. After the proper implementation of the pilot project, it will be replicated in other schools of the state. Already, tenders in this regard have been floated and the last date is January 15."

Sources said the biometric system would record the time of arrival and departure of the entire school staff. The attendance data will be transferred to a central server in the evening, which will be monitored by a nodal officer.

"Schools have been selected in districts where the attendance of teachers was low. Teams were formed in all districts, some time back, which conducted surprise checks and caught many teachers coming late or absent. Some just went and marked their attendance and went back home. As a result, students too did not attend the schools," said an officer.

In the state government, at present, biometric attendance system is installed at the Punjab Planning Office in Chandigarh and the Chief Minister's Office.

Source: [/indianexpress/](http://indianexpress.com)4 January 2010

Delhi Govt. outs new industrial policy, plans special hubs

The Delhi Cabinet on Monday approved the new industrial policy — the first in 27 years.

The policy promises to revolutionise Delhi's industrial scene as it identifies education, fashion designing, financial services and IT as industries. Separate hi-tech hubs for these service industries are being planned and the government's role will include allotting land and providing infrastructure.

Chief Secretary Rakesh Mehta said: "The aim is to encourage clean, knowledge-based industries. When we last framed the policy, 80 per cent of Delhi's industries dealt in manufacturing and only 20 per cent in services. It's the other way round now."

An official from the Industries department said Delhi's existing manufacturing-based industrial set-up encourages migration of labour, while skilled workers look for work in service industries in Noida and Gurgaon. "We would ideally want it to be the other way round. The new policy would discourage migration and retain skilled workers," the official said.

What the industrial policy entails:

Fashion hub: The manufacturing units of all Delhi designers, spread across the city at present, will soon have a dedicated space with specific infrastructure required by them. Delhi will also have its own fashion, technology and design park. The garment, furniture and handloom industry will also be brought together in one cluster.

Till now, only Puducherry (with a fashion city) and Mohali (with a fashion technology park) have ventured into this territory. Once the hub is in place, high-end fashion outlets

such as MG-1 and MG-2, shut during the sealing drive, can be located in these freshly identified 'authorised' areas.

Education hub: This will have universities, research institutes, research and development units in engineering, pharmaceuticals and electronics institutes, technical institutes (including engineering colleges), professional institutes (like airhostess training institute), and Indian and foreign institutes. The policy says the hub will be designed on the lines of Singapore's education industry.

The policy, however, refers to education as an industry only in terms of professional and technical institutes — it leaves out schools and mainstream universities, like the Delhi University.

IT hub: The policy envisages a hi-tech IT park in Dwarka, to be developed through public-private partnership. Animation industry, biotechnology, pharmaceutical industry and such will come under this.

Gems & Jewellery SEZ: A separate gems and jewellery special economic zone is being planned as Delhi has infrastructure, training institutes and sources of raw materials for this sector. There is also the integrated air freight complex being built in Dwarka near the IGI Airport, which is important for an export-oriented sector.

The industry will have links to the fashion, technology and design park.

Legal services, accounting, auditing, architecture, engineering, advertising and educational services like technical diploma institutes, engineering universities or institutes, and management institutes and universities will also be classified as industries.

Source: New Delhi [/expressindia/](http://expressindia.com)5 January 2010

DU likely to go ahead with NAAC proposal

"The Delhi University Academic Council, in a bid to avoid privatization and commercialization of education, after an eighteen-hour meeting, has rejected the proposal of National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) to rate the DU affiliated colleges," was the last update from the varsity which now may not hold true.

Not minding a strong opposition from the teachers' community, DU is now looking forward into the option of getting NAAC accreditation for more than 75 colleges under its umbrella.

NAAC, an autonomous institute of the University Grants Commission (UGC) was introduced to evaluate higher education institutes in India based on their academic and non-academic features after which they are certified along with certain grades.

Although the DUAC and the Executive Committee (EC) recently, but the Vice Chancellor of the university rejected the proposal, Deepak Pental brought NACC back into the agenda of the last EC meeting.

According to sources from DU, "The VC is interested to introduce the NAAC accreditation in the colleges even though it was rejected 15 years ago."

The UGC recently announced it compulsory for all the institutions to be rated under NAAC. Once this system is unanimously implemented then the university colleges would be funded based on their performance and infrastructure.

After receiving strong criticism from the teachers, the proposal was dropped from the list of the VC's agenda during the last EC meeting held in December.

Rajeev Kumar, a DU faculty member said that, "It does not make any sense to bring back the subject into agenda. It has been already rejected by the key communities of DU teachers."

The next EC meeting is scheduled to be held today where, "the VC would most likely bring back the issue on the table," he added.

The teachers, however, had the same concerns on the commercialization of education if the NAAC accreditation is to be followed.

Abha D Habib, the AC member said that, "It is a move to dismantle the functioning of the existing system of the University. The proposal of NAAC does not provide a linear structure for all the affiliated colleges. If the move is accepted then there would be a rising disparity among the colleges in the matter of funds. Higher funding will follow only those colleges with an official 'A' grade based on their infrastructure, research, library facilities and results. In addition, students will be passing from colleges with an officially declared 'B' or 'C' grade. In a bid to improve their ratings, many colleges will have to unwillingly tie-up with private sectors to start the add-on courses leading to privatization and commercialization of education."

There are four steps an educational institute is expected to climb up to get the final go from the NAAC.

In the first step of assessment and accreditation, "Institutional Eligibility for Quality Assessment" is required. After the institute is given a nod, it is taken to the second level of accreditation where the institute prepares a self-study report followed by visit of a peer team.

Source: New Delhi [/indiaedunews/7](http://indiaedunews/7) January 2010

Education trend 2010: What lies ahead?

Last year saw some significant reforms in the education sector, ranging from scrapping of CBSE's class X board exam to enacting of a law to make education a fundamental right of every child. This year however, say experts, the sector might see even more happenings that are significant. Business Standard lists some:

Decision on Foreign Universities Bill

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) is keen to introduce the Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations, Maintenance of Quality and Prevention of Commercialisation) Bill, during

the budget session of Parliament, scheduled to begin in February.

MHRD officials say the bill was to be examined by the cabinet and recommendations were to be proposed during the winter session of Parliament in December 2009. However, the cabinet is likely to examine the bill and propose recommendations in January.

The bill proposes to allow for 100 per cent foreign direct investment (FDI) in higher education. This, it is hoped, will help provide cheaper and better education, beside saving India billions of dollars in foreign exchange outgo. It also proposes to bring foreign education providers under the administrative umbrella of the University Grants Commission (UGC), which means the admission process and fee structure of these institutes, will be regulated by the UGC. Educationists, however, say this should be allowed only if the institutes offer the same quality of education here as they do in their home countries. It is assumed that foreign universities would come in only if they are allowed to levy international fees and pay international salaries.

14 Innovation Universities

The Ministry of Human Resources Development plans to set up around 14 Innovation Universities. According to MHRD sources, Ivy League universities — Yale, Harvard, Princeton and MIT have volunteered to collaborate. The idea of Innovation Universities is developing a "brain gain" policy to attract talent from all over the world.

HRD Minister Kapil Sibal had, announced in August 2009, setting up of 14 Innovation Universities in the country under the Eleventh five-year plan.

The MHRD plans to draft a separate legislation to notify the formation of these universities, MHRD sources said. Sibal, during his visit to the US this October, had met with officials of Harvard, Yale and Massachusetts Institute of Technology and had discussed the prospects of setting up Innovation Universities in India along with partnership and collaboration with Indian institutions to push research and development. India and Singapore will also cooperate with each other in setting up the universities, Sibal had said earlier. Sam Pitroda who headed the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) is said to be drafting the details for establishing innovation universities. Pitroda will soon meet Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and discuss the matter. An announcement on the details of the universities could come up during the Republic Day ceremonies.

Private investment in the sector

Around 350 private equity funds are waiting to invest in the education sector in the country. Analysts say the PE funds are flush with cash but India lacks big investment opportunities due to lack of big universities or academic institutions. Thus, PE money is finding its way into the ancillary services in education like coaching classes and test preparation, pre-school education, vocational training and books. For example, in 2009 Mumbai-based Matrix Partners India invested Rs 100 crore in FIIT-JEE, an institution that trains students for IIT and All India

engineering admission tests. Likewise, Career Launcher and Mahesh Tutorials have raised \$10 to \$12 million each a few months ago.

Source: New Delhi [/business-standard/](#)4 January 2010

In 2009, more Muslim kids joined school

Government's various initiatives for minorities seem to be paying dividend, with Muslim enrolment in schools -- for long a source of deep concern -- beginning to grow slowly but steadily.

The latest figures, part of National University of Educational Planning and Education's statistics, to be released shortly, shows that both in primary and upper primary level, Muslim enrolment has improved. Though it is early, a definite improvement can be seen in north Indian states.

Data collected from 1.29 million recognised elementary schools in 633 districts revealed a total enrolment of 14.83 million Muslim children in primary classes in 2008-09, which is 11.03% of the total 134.38 million enrolment in primary (I to V) classes. During the previous year, the same was 10.49% and in 2006-07, it was 9.39%. Of the total Muslim enrolment in primary classes, the percentage of Muslim girls was 48.93%, similar to the share of girls in overall primary enrolment (48.38%).

Bihar continued to be among the performing states while Karnataka showed slow decline in Muslim enrolment, both at primary and upper primary level. Kerala remained the undisputed leader as it showed big improvement in enrolment both at primary and upper primary level.

Remarkably, the percentage of Muslim girls to total Muslim enrolment in upper primary classes is 50.03%, which is above the national average of 47.58%.

The highest percentage of Muslim enrolment was observed in Lakshadweep (99.73%) mainly due to the fact that the percentage of Muslim population to total population in the Union Territory in 2001 was as high as 95.47%. In Bihar, Muslim enrolment at primary level improved from 11.27% in 2007-08 to 12.96% in 2008-09. Even Assam showed a big improvement: from 31.94% in 2007-08 to 35.08% in 2008-09. Decline was most evident in Karnataka: from 15.06% to 14.67%. In Kerala, enrolment went up to 26.22% from 21.49% in 2007-08.

Enrolment in upper primary classes also improved to 9.13% in 2008-09 from 8.54% in 2007-08 and 7.52% in 2006-07. Of the total 53.35 million enrolment in upper primary classes in the country in 2008-09, Muslim enrolment was 4.87 million. In Bihar, upper primary enrolment of Muslims improved from 8.22% in 2007-08 to 10.35% in 2008-09. Decline in Karnataka was more perceptible: from 16.73% to 13.81%.

The data also revealed a share of 10.49% Muslim enrolment in elementary classes (I to VIII) of which 49.20% were Muslim girls (to total Muslim enrolment).

Preliminary enrolment data for the year 2008-09 also revealed that there were certain pockets in the country

with high percentage of Muslim enrolment. There were about 87,690 schools with more than 25% Muslim enrolment (to total enrolment in elementary classes) which was 6.84% of the total schools that imparted elementary education in the country. Similarly, 62,534 (4.88%) schools had above 50% Muslim enrolment as compared to 48,946 schools (3.82%) having 75% and above and 41,300 schools (3.22%) even having a share of 90% and above Muslim enrolment to total enrolment.

Because of the high share of Muslim population to total population in J&K, 12 districts of the state had above 90% Muslim enrolment in 2008-09 in primary classes which was also true for enrolment in upper primary classes. On the other hand, 25 districts in the country had more than 50% Muslim enrolment in primary classes in 2008-09 compared to 20 such districts in case of upper primary enrolment. Fifteen districts of J&K, one each in Bihar, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Lakshadweep and Kerala and five districts of Assam had more than 50% Muslim enrolment in primary classes.

Source: New Delhi [/timesofindia/](#)9 January 2010

India facing acute faculty shortage in higher education

India is facing serious shortage of faculty members in higher education due to rapid increase in number of institutions, union Minister of State for Science & Technology Prithviraj Chavan said here Sunday.

'We need creative solutions for addressing this challenge. One of them could be the re-entry programmes for our women scientists and return of Indian diaspora,' Chavan said at the inaugural session of the 97th Indian Science Congress (ISC2010) here.

The minister also advocated global partnerships to meet the faculty shortage.

Cautioning the scientific community against complacency, Chavan said there were enormous challenges due to the changing dynamics of science and technology the world over and market forces influencing science.

'Technology is now mostly market driven. Gross expenditure on research and development has emerged as one of the important parameters for assessing the technology and innovation status of countries,' Chavan told about 6,500 delegates participating in the five-day premier science event in the Indian sub-continent.

Though global investments into research and development (R&D) surged to trillion dollars in the 20th century, share of technology-led growth in GDP (gross domestic product) increased to 25-50 percent in many countries.

Noting the key role played by science, technology and innovation in providing improved quality of life and opportunities to citizens, Chavan urged scientists to step up achievements in different pursuits of science.

'The objective of providing improved quality of life and opportunities for every child will entail addressing the

challenges of energy security, food security and affordable healthcare for all land,' he said.

Calling upon the scientific community to take advantage of the diminishing spending on R&D expenditure in the aftermath of the global economic crisis, the minister said India had significant advantage of high return per dollar invested in R&D.

'The opportunity can be leveraged by the Indian science and technology sector to increase the share of its pie in the global R&D spending,' Chavan pointed out.

Source: [/feeds.bignewsnetwork/3](http://feeds.bignewsnetwork/3) January 2010

Initiative to refresh importance of agriculture

The eighth refresher course on agricultural sciences was inaugurated at the UGC Academic Staff College, Banaras Hindu University (BHU), on Tuesday.

In his inaugural address, managing director of KRIBHCO VP Kaushik said although the contribution of agriculture to country's GDP declined over time, importance of agriculture had not reduced as a majority of population still depended on it. The three pillars of Green Revolution were the availability of high yielding varieties, fertilisers and irrigation facilities. He said agri education should have a dual approach focussing both on laboratory research and field support.

Speaking on the occasion, director of the Institute of Agricultural Sciences Prof SR Singh said Indian agriculture was facing many threats and there was a need to focus more on conservation of land, water, forestry and biodiversity. He said the mismatch between production and post-harvest technology should be reduced. Acting director of Academic Staff College SK Tiwari highlighted the achievements of the college and said it had been recognised as a 'National Teaching Aid'. Dean RP also addressed the function

Source: Varanasi [/timesofindia/6](http://timesofindia/6) January 2010

Kendriya Vidyalayas set weight limits on schoolbags

Finally, students can hope to have some load taken off their backs. In a move could well set a trend, the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) has come up with a graded formula that prescribes weight limits on schoolbags of its students.

As per the new 'loadshedding' policy laid down for the 981 Kendriya Vidyalayas across India, schoolbags for classes I & II should not weigh more than 2kg. For classes III and IV, the bag weight should be less than 3kg, and those studying in classes V to VIII shouldn't carry bags that are more than 4kg. The upper limit for senior classes — IX to XII — has been set at 6kg. More than a million children study in Kendriya Vidyalayas.

The formula was stated in a circular from the KVS headquarters to the principals. It called for a phased

implementation of the guidelines, starting with the primary classes.

KVS officials said the weight limits were an interim measure — the goal was to eventually move to a system where no child carried a bag load of more than 1kg. "It is a pure violation of a child's right to place a burden on his back disproportionate to his age and health. The school system can be charged with cruelty to the child," the circular stated.

The circular also called for 'strict compliance' of the guidelines by principals. "As per physiological prescription, a child should not carry more than a fifth of his body weight on his back to keep the spine and skeletal structure strong and upright," the circular explained.

U N Singh, ex-joint commissioner (academic), KVS, who retired early this month, piloted the project. Singh told TOI, "KVs would be the first schools in the country to reduce the burden of schoolbags. We are not stopping at that. The reform process includes a wide gamut of environmental awareness and promotion of ICT (information and communication technologies) in education."

Singh said KVS is working on one-textbook, one-notebook concept for its students. He said kids have heavy bags as they carry, apart from textbooks on each subjects, an equal number of notebooks. "In higher classes, students are made to carry reference books as well which increases the load to unbearable proportions. What we plan to do is to have all chapters of all subjects to be taught in a particular academic session put in a single textbook and has students carry just one notebook. Zonal offices of KVS would work on the books. There will be an environmental benefit of the move as well, as more books mean increased felling of trees for paper. Secondly, with increasing computerization in the KVs, most books would be available in electronic form. And the reference books are to be kept in the class library so that students need not even go to the main library."

Other initiatives of KVS include not giving homework for more than two-three subjects on a particular day, discouraging teaching through textbooks and having lockers assigned to students for keeping their books in every class.

Source: New Delhi [/timesofindia/15](http://timesofindia/15) January 2010

Management for engineers

Over the years, B-Schools have witnessed an increase in terms of enrolment by engineers. However, while engineers are getting absorbed in managerial jobs, the core-engineering sector is facing a manpower deficit. In order to address this problem the Delhi Technical University (DTU) has started a programme to hone the managerial skills of engineers while keeping their technical expertise intact.

The programme offered by DTU's Delhi School of Management (DSM) offers three specialisations — information and knowledge management, information technology management and supply chain management.

Elaborating further, SK Garg, head, DSM said, "The attrition rate in service industries like IT and software is high. Moreover, there is a lack of documentation in terms of decisions taken at the managerial level and knowledge produced. Only someone with a technical background can understand, preserve and retrieve such knowledge. With this in mind, we are offering a specialisation in knowledge and technology management."

Supply chain management is a crucial aspect of any company. "General MBA, too, offers this subject. However, through a specialisation students learn to develop, evaluate and implement strategies, concepts and management approaches in logistics and supply management," explained Garg. Referring to specialisations in IT, he said that IT companies were hiring a lot of engineers as programmers. "But companies today require system analysts," he added.

Students are introduced to core management subjects in the first semester and to specialisations in the second semester. By the third semester, the student is able to decide on his/her specialisation. The final semester gives an option to select a specialisation with one of the core management subjects like finance, marketing and human resource, among others. The last date for submitting applications is February 8.

Source: [/timesofindia/](http://timesofindia/) 11 January 2010

MIT offers courses for professionals

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has begun offering short executive education programme for senior professionals. The three-day residential programme, for professionals from the airline industry, was launched in partnership with Lavasa Corporation at Lavasa, near Pune.

The course is guided by MIT professors Richard de Neufville, professor of engineering systems and Peter P Belobaba, principal research scientist, at the International Centre for Air Transportation in the department of aeronautics and astronautics, MIT.

"This is the first professional course MIT has offered in India. We hope to bring courses in other areas of transportation and other science and technology areas, too," said Bhaskar Pant, executive director at MIT's Office of Professional Education. "This is a pilot programme. The success of this course will determine what we do in the future. We are confident that we will continue to offer more courses in India," he added.

Talking about choosing aviation and airline industry as the subject to launch MIT's executive education programme Pant said, "It is only because of the kind of growth occurring in the aviation sector in India and the demand that is placed on adopting global best practices. With that kind of an emphasis, it is only appropriate that MIT brings its expertise to that end."

Pant clarified that MIT's professional education programme is not an exclusive arrangement with Lavasa.

"We have decided to begin the programme with Lavasa," he said. There are 35 professionals from the aviation and airline industry attending the debut course in India costing around Rs 1 lakh per person.

According to Neufville, the program will delve into the issues associated with the planning, design and development of airport infrastructure and airline services in the face of uncertainties and change. The course also aims to cover the various aspects of air traffic control, airport capacity, the fundamentals of airline economics, planning and operations. It will also focus on the design of terminals, forecasting of traffic as well as emerging trends in airport development and airline industry performance.

According to him many planners and engineers get their forecast completely wrong. "It is a dynamic industry. There is a constant change because of new technology, new airlines, new government regulations," said Neufville who also advises the GMR Group, which manages the Delhi and Hyderabad airports under a public private partnership.

Belobaba thinks that in the airline business it is a mistake to extrapolate any trend by more than one or two years. "The challenge in this industry, especially in the airport planning and building, is how on earth you invest in something and build something that will last for 10 or 20 or 30 years when you are dealing with an industry that can't actually predict what shape it is going to be in two or three years from now," he said. Union minister for Civil Aviation, Praful Patel, launched the course on Monday (11 Jan.).

Source: [/mydigitalfc/](http://mydigitalfc/) 11 January 2010

National judicial service soon

The Union ministry of law and justice is working on a plan to introduce a National Judicial Service (NJS) on the lines of the civil services like the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and the Indian Police Service (IPS).

The move is primarily aimed at bringing about a quality enhancement at the district-level judiciary and having a sound system for the direct recruitment of judges, Union law minister M Veerappa Moily said here on Sunday.

Moily was speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the annual law day function of the Symbiosis International University's Law School (SLS). "The finer details relating to how to implement the NJS plan are being finalised," he said, adding, "The effort is to have the proposed system in place by 2011-12."

Moily said, "The need for the NJS is being talked about for almost four to five decades now. What has given a push to the idea is the highly favourable approach of the states at a recent conference of chief ministers (CMs) and chief justices (CJs) of the high courts."

He said, "By and large there is consensus among the CMs and CJs, although issues relating to percentage of allotment of judicial posts to different states and the problem of languages needs to be taken care of. We are sure these issues will be resolved."

Moily, who headed the Union government's second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC), which has submitted a voluminous report on the 13-point terms of references for reforms in the Indian administration, said the age-old pattern of civil services recruitment, based on provisions introduced by the erstwhile British regime, was all set to go.

He said, "The new pattern will be high on effecting recruitments at a stage as early as after STD XII and elaborate long-term training programme for the new recruits."

Earlier, addressing the SLS function, Moily spoke about an impending national consultation exercise by end of February or early March on the issue of standards and accountability for judges.

He also referred to the government's effort at taking justice to the doorsteps of the poor through measures like gram nyayalayas and speedier trials for crime against women, children and senior citizens. The government has already set in motion the plan to establish 850 gram nyayalayas, which provides for a mobile court visiting rural places for settling legal disputes.

The Symbiosis Centre for International Education's European Union Study Centre was formally inaugurated on the occasion in the presence of Moily and other dignitaries. A certificate course in legal studies was also launched to mark the event. Ulrich Podewils, India team leader of the EU Study Centre, gave an overview of the activities to be carried out by the centre.

Source: Pune [/timesofindia/](http://timesofindia/) 11 January 2010

New age leaders

The School of Inspired Leadership (SOIL) is all set to build strong partnerships with the industry and offer a transformational learning experience enabled by quality faculty from across the world.

SOIL is a business school, which is a co-creation of a consortium of 30 companies — including Aditya Birla Group, Dabur, Hindustan Unilever, Infosys, Mahindra & Mahindra and TATA Steel — that share a common vision of creating future business leaders.

Forging meaningful partnerships with the industry, SOIL has actively engaged these companies in all aspects of the Institute's overall functioning — imparting direction to the curriculum design, participating in the admission process, mentoring students, facilitating the learning process and leading the placement process.

The first challenge for the visionaries behind SOIL was to create a curriculum that was fit for cultivating the art of leadership amongst students. It took the combined resources and inputs of over 50 senior practitioners, consultants and faculty members to arrive at the curriculum structure that follows a three-pronged approach — rigorous focus on fundamentals, ample and diverse practical experience and the freedom to explore.

With a focus on attracting the right student base, SOIL adopted a selection tool (Caliper Profile) widely used for selection and promotions by global corporations. Caliper Profile is one of the most accurate assessment instruments that measures an individual's characteristics, motivations and potential (particularly focussed on leadership competencies). Additionally, an eminent industry panel that determines the appropriateness of the candidature keeping in mind the industry requirement interviews every shortlisted applicant to SOIL. Around 70 panellists including the likes of R Sreeram, VP manufacturing, Dabur; Ravi Nindwani, director, marketing, Kohler; Somnath Baishya, corporate HR head, Infosys Technologies and Radhakrishnan Nair, chief HR officer, TATA Steel participated in the SOIL selection process.

At SOIL, every student builds an Individual Learning Plan to identify specific ways to grow, and this forms the bedrock of their developmental opportunities. The faculty and mentors to help students build on their strengths and make desired behavioural changes provide practical developmental suggestions. Leaders from also individually mentor every student across the industry. The list includes Sanjay Gupta, India leader, American Express; Puneet Bahl, head consumer banking, ABN Amro; Rajit Mehta, COO, Max New York Life Insurance and Arvind Gupta, managing partner, Accenture, amongst others.

Faculty from reputed universities (INSEAD, Stanford, IIM Bangalore, Carlson School of Business and others), leading global consultants and practitioners help students build a real time global perspective and explore new paradigms in learning and innovation. Gary Jusela, PhD, Yale University, says, "I enjoyed the interaction with students at SOIL. They asked insightful questions. I liked the classroom that I used for the course and the seating arrangement with the round tables was conducive to creating natural small groups and facilitating an interactive and engaging learning process."

The institute offers full-time postgraduate management programmes across three disciplines — business leadership, HR leadership and marketing leadership — and has recently announced admissions for the batch commencing July 2010.

SOIL is organising an information session. Make the most of the opportunity by interacting with industry partners, faculty, current students and the management team of SOIL. The session is scheduled for January 16, Saturday, 11-4 pm at the campus (Plot no. 76, Sector 44, Gurgaon). To register or for more information, email your queries to info@soilindia.net or call up at +91 98713 39158.

Source: [/timesofindia/](http://timesofindia/) 11 January 2010

PU launches courses for needy girls

In a novel and innovative venture, Vice-Chancellor Professor R C Sobti in the Department-cum-Centre for Women's Studies and Development inaugurated basic computer and English speaking courses for the girl child of Class IV employees of Panjab University on Wednesday.

Professor Rajesh Gill, chairperson of the department, said these courses were a part of the Outreach Programmes of the Women's Studies course as mandated by the UGC. To reach out and empower girls, especially from the underprivileged sections, the department had recently set up a computer laboratory. A notable feature of this venture is that it does not involve any financial liability on the university or department.

The non-teaching staff, research scholars and students of the department have volunteered to conduct the courses on honorary basis.

The school and college-going daughters of Class IV employees of Panjab University will be trained under these courses, helping them in skill acquisition free of cost.

Each course would be of two months' duration and will be run for batches of 10-12 girls, to ensure personal attention and hands-on practice on systems.

Speaking on the occasion, Professor R C Sobti congratulated the department for its innovative idea and reaching out to society through its extension activities.

He also ensured the department of all support from the university including financial aid to strengthen its functioning and infrastructure.

Speaking to some of the students who had enrolled for the courses, Professor Sobti emphasised upon the significance of both courses for their future placements. The V-C also released the special issue of the department newsletter titled Drishti. Members of the departmental committees and Board of Control, students and research scholars of the department were present on the occasion.

Source: [/indianexpress/](http://indianexpress.com)7 January 2010

Reliance plans world-class university

The Reliance Group is setting up a 'world-class' university as it seeks to promote education and research in sectors ranging from liberal arts to technology.

Reliance Foundation, which will spearhead the project, is expected to start the university either in Mumbai or Delhi. Nita Ambani, the wife of RIL chairman Mukesh Ambani, will head the new project.

India's largest business conglomerate has started the process of identifying land for the proposed university, according to persons familiar with the development.

The university, modelled on the lines of American universities such as The University of Pennsylvania, will tie up with foreign universities. "It will be international in scale and in best practices, but with an Indian soul," said Mukesh Ambani, chairman, Reliance Group.

Nita Ambani told ET that the proposed university would be located either outside Mumbai or outside Delhi. "We are looking for sufficient land to set up a world-class university," she said.

Mr. Ambani made this announcement while making the acceptance speech at Mumbai's Tident Hotel after

receiving the Dean's medal from the University of Pennsylvania's engineering school. His father Dhirubhai Ambani was earlier conferred Dean's medal from Wharton School of Management.

The university will initially offer undergraduate courses. It will later offer postgraduate and doctoral courses, Ms Ambani said. India's big business houses are strengthening their focus on education as it is poised to become a \$80-billion opportunity by 2012. Indian spend \$50 billion on private education annually, according to a research report by IDFC. It is expected to grow at a CAGR of 16%, said a CLSA Pacific study.

The Aditya Birla Group, which has already played its hand at commercial education with the Sarala Birla Academy in Bangalore. It has plans to open schools to offer modern education to students in the country's hinterland. Ditto Jaiprakash Industries, which is already running engineering institutes, while London-listed mining giant Vedanta Group has announced a large university near Puri in Orissa.

Source: Mumbai [/economictimes/](http://economictimes.com)9 January 2010

Sibal meets Delegation of Columbia Business School

Shri Kapil Sibal, Union Minister for Human Resource Development today met with 22 students of the Columbia University Business School. On being asked about his priorities for the education sector, he stated that the top priority is to get a critical mass of students to go into University, which means that the GER in 2020 will need to be raised to 30 percent from the current 12.4 per cent. This would enable the country to develop wealth in a manner we would want it, he added. The second priority is having quality faculty at all levels of institutions in the country. The third priority, he said, was to include the disadvantaged, such as STs/SCs and minorities within the education field.

Shri Kapil Sibal explained, in reference to other queries by the students, that public sector is the primary vehicle for school education in the country with 93 per cent of children in India attending government schools. He added the private sector would also have to be roped in to supplement government efforts, considering financial constraints of the government. The model of how the private sector can participate is being worked upon. As regards the higher education sector, the Minister said we will expand opportunity to have the private sector play a much bigger role in order to reduce the demand and supply gap. With regard to vocational training, while laying emphasis on alignment of process of education with industry demand, the private sector would have to play very big role, he added.

The Minister expressed confidence that India would in the next 30 years be the natural hub of education in the world.

Source: New Delhi [/pib.nic.in/](http://pib.nic.in)6 January 2010

Single law to create varsities

All future public and private universities may be recognised by a single legislation that will for the first time separate the creation of varsities from their right to award degrees.

India plans to end its decades-old policy requiring fresh legislations to recognise new universities each time they are set up under its latest proposed higher education reform, top government sources have told The Telegraph.

The human resource development ministry is drafting a new law that will create a mechanism allowing the government to add new universities to a schedule attached to the legislation, the sources said. The law will lay down basic norms that all universities will have to follow.

The move — recommended by a panel of experts fine-tuning the architecture of the proposed National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) — will facilitate setting up new universities in the future. It will also demolish a key rationale today cited for the controversial concept of deemed universities — institutions that can award degrees without being created under a legislation.

The new bill will work in conjunction with another proposed law to set up the NCHER, according to the road map proposed by the expert panel.

At present, each time the government or a private firm wants to set up a university, a new law is needed recognising the proposed institution, automatically granting it rights to award degrees even without adequate infrastructure.

But the new reform bill — without a title at present — that the HRD ministry is now drafting will for the first time separate the creation of new universities and their legitimacy to award degrees. Under this new proposed law, the government or a private agency interested in starting a new university will have to approach the NCHER — proposed as the new overarching higher education regulator.

The NCHER will study the applicant's proposal and if satisfied, ask the government to allow university status.

The new institution will then simply be added to a schedule attached to the reform law.

Parliament will still need to approve revisions to the schedule. But this normally takes much lesser time than taken by drafting and seeking sanction for new laws or amendments to the body of a law.

While addition to the schedule after parliamentary approval will legitimise the creation of the new university, it will not automatically empower it to award degrees — unlike at present.

The university will need to apply to the NCHER separately for the power to award degrees in specific courses.

Once the NCHER is satisfied that a university possesses the quality standards required to award a particular degree, this power will be granted.

Deemed universities — under a cloud following allegations that many of these institutions indulge in unethical

practices — were encouraged for the past few years citing the time taken for legal sanction to new universities.

Several reports, including recommendations of the National Knowledge Commission, have indicated that India needs many more higher education institutions than it has.

Deemed universities —, which can award degrees after recognition, by the University Grants Commission — can help meet the demand-supply gap, proponents of these institutions have argued.

Source: New Delhi [/telegraphindia/](http://telegraphindia.com) 12 January 2010

UGC panel mulls banning dissections

Cockroaches, frogs, earthworms are the most common animals found, not in their habitat places, but in the science laboratories for dissection. They are the most common dissected species found on the dissection tray of science students, which soon may not be a done thing.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) recently set up an expert committee to ban the dissection of animals for zoology experiments in colleges and universities.

The first meeting of the five-member committee will be held on January 6, 2010 where the possibility of the decision would be meted out.

The committee, constituted at the initiative of the Human Resource Development (HRD) minister, Kapil Sibal, is expected to suggest eco-friendly ways for dissection by switching over from the real to the virtual world.

All the dissections would now be done on computers rather than on animals.

The committee is chaired by H.A. Ranganath, Vice Chancellor of Bangalore University, and comprises S. Balasubramaniam, Director of DRDO Centre for Life Sciences at Bharathiar University in Coimbatore; Sunil Chhumber of AIIMS; Roop Lal, Department of Zoology of Delhi University; and a nominee of director general of Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).

Source: New Delhi [/indiaedunews.net/](http://indiaedunews.net/) 1 January 2010

Universities, institutes to celebrate Jan 12 as Heritage Day

Universities and other institutions of higher education across the country will celebrate January 12 as Heritage Day for the first time from this year.

Students in universities and educational institutions will take an oath to protect the heritage and monuments of the country on that day.

The Human Resource Development Ministry has taken this decision as a step to sensitise the students for protection of cultural and archaeological monuments in the country.

As per the decision of the ministry, the UGC has asked all universities and higher educational institutions under its purview to observe January 12 as Heritage Day from this year.

The students will jointly undertake efforts to protect monuments in the proximity of their town or city, a UGC circular said. January 12, the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekanand, is also being observed as the National Youth Day since 1984.

Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal instructed his ministry that a campaign should be initiated in educational institutions for protection of such heritages.

The ministry has also asked the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) to evolve a scheme for including a oath on heritage conservation in the curriculum.

The ministry has issued a letter to the UGC in this regard which said the Directive Principles of State Policy as contained in the Article 49 of the Constitution make it obligatory on the state and every citizen to protect the monuments and court heritage for future generation.

"The Human Resource Development Minister has desired that an action plan be prepared to instill these values enshrined in the Constitution among students in the higher educational institutions," the letter said.

The ministry has asked the CBSE that a proper scheme should be developed to ensure that children take oath on heritage preservation.

The oaths are; "I will not scribble on, deface or encroach upon any monument. I will respect all monuments, which are a part of my country's heritage. I will render all possible help to conserve and preserve our heritage."

There are about 6,700 ASI-protected monuments in the country and many a time people engrave messages and deface them. There are also a few thousand monuments, which are unprotected by any agency.

Source: New Delhi [/deccanherald/](#)4 January 2010

Web portal for registration of technical institutions

Union Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal on Thursday launched a new portal for online registration of technical institutions.

Launching the portal for the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) here, Mr. Sibal said the initiative was part of AICTE's efforts to bring about transparency, accountability, efficiency and swiftness in the decision-making process. "The portal will facilitate a citizen-friendly, interactive mode with a responsive public grievance redressal mechanism."

The AICTE will also issue a unique identification number (ID) to institutes and faculty members of AICTE-approved institutions, a mechanism that will help check the trend of certain faculties working in multiple institutions.

The AICTE will also put in place a mechanism to help students lodge grievances against the institutes.

To be functional on January 10, existing institutions have been given a month to feed their details into the system.

"Self-disclosure regime"

"The portal will act as a single window system for processing applications of institutions for approval. We are putting in place a new system under which, the inspection-raj regime of the AICTE will be over. We are moving to a regime of self-disclosure, in which institutions will disclose their facilities, faculty and courses. Each student can directly interact with us through the portal if he has any problem about the institute," Mr. Sibal told journalists.

New institutes will have to submit their applications and provide documents online, following which they will be given an ID number.

The Minister also announced relaxation in land requirement norms for setting up of new institutes. The present norms stipulate three and five acres of land as requirements for setting up a new institute in a mega and a metro city respectively. This will be relaxed to 2.5 and four acres respectively.

The National Board of Accreditation (NBA), which gives accreditation to technical education courses, will be made an independent body. This is being done as the NBA wants to be a member of the Washington Accord, a grouping of 12 countries for recognition of each other's engineering education.

The AICTE has also decided to increase the initial slab on the intake for engineering and management institutions. Now, new engineering institutions can give admission to a maximum of 300 students, while management institutes can take 120 students against the earlier limit of 240 and 60 respectively.

Source: [/beta.thehindu/](#)7 January 2010

ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

Apply -your minds

As the rush to fill admission forms gains momentum parents need to carefully judge the aptitude-both of their wards and the institute opted for

In the preview of education, the scientist & academicians are considered as intellectually superior over the common businessman. Previously the knowledge was pursued for the sake of knowledge. Knowledge was taken to satisfy the inherent quest for the truth. In the present era it is considered as a hackneyed concept. In general, a common businessman identifies his sense of self almost completely by the value of his total material assets. Whereas an academician identifies his sense of self in terms of designation, research work, patents, awards, and membership of national and international professional bodies.

Looking at the present educational scenario some institutes are extremely competitive and are falling under the category of premier institutes. These institutes meet the need of fewer percentages of aspirants. Some institute have an open admission policy to admit students with their self defined policies or even on first come first serve basis.

Remaining institutes are following certain norms somewhere in between.

It has been found that the parents are very keen to provide quality education to their ward in spite of the cost incurred in acquiring the degree. However, parents need to have a close look at certain important factors in the present changing educational scenario. Few important norms, which need to be verified, include affiliation to the statutory body such as university, permission from the national/state-level apex bodies, national level accreditation, reputation of the institute in terms of faculty and lab facilities, placement efforts and industrial acceptance.

But above all this, aptitude is another important factor that parents need to consider while selecting an educational course for their ward. Many times parents prefer the popular discipline, which has a higher demand in the industries, whereas their wards have different aptitude and wish to pursue education in the area of his interest. This confrontation leads to stress, depression, failure and the ward's performance does not reflect his or her potential. It is difficult to succeed without aptitude, hence the parent should discuss with their wards in detail about the course, requirement of the course, probable challenges & hurdles and capabilities of the ward, if required parent should seek advice from professional counselors.

Also while applying abroad there are certain precautions that one needs to exercise. Some online operations for students offer fake diploma/degree in Europe, USA and upcoming in India may attract them. A survey published by John Bear in 2003 specified that some fake schools in Europe have made education a business worth of Rs. 25-crores annually by awarding 15000 fake degrees in a year.

The Chhattisgarh Private Sector Universities Act, 2002 permitted the establishment of more than hundred private universities for higher education. A large number of students were admitted to these universities by open admission policy. These private universities failed to conform to minimum infrastructure and quality norms conforming UGC/AICTE standards. Considering the role of the University Grants Commission in recognizing universities, the Chhattisgarh University Establishment Act had negated the UGC's role and hence Supreme Court declared these universities to be struck down as "null and void" in the year 2005. Think how many students and their families might have suffered due to improper selection of Institute and/or University to pursue higher education. With the recent decision of Supreme Court about ICFAI Distance learning institutions, which were grown indiscriminately, now puts a question mark on the future of thousands of students.

In the present competitive global environment parents need to be judicious whilst choosing the stream for their ward, even as institutes need to follow certain requisite norms to derive full advantage from the ongoing boom and the globalization of the knowledge sector.

Source: [/expressindia/](http://expressindia/) 12 January 2010

Big on business

With an over-riding emphasis on teamwork, the corporate sector has had a continuing need for people with effective communication skills. "However, today apart from basic communication skills, candidates must be conversant with the nuances of business communication," says Anoup Munshi, course director, Indian School of Integrated Learning, (ISIL).

"Business communication skills or business proficiency skills are the skills which specifically aid individuals to enhance their corporate careers. They include presentation skills, business development skills, business writing skills, networking skills, among others. These skills at one level induce tactical ability and self confidence that are indispensable attributes for success in the corporate framework," explains Munshi.

Explaining the importance of business proficiency skills, Munshi says, "In today's globalised corporate order it becomes imperative for organisations to formulate business strategies and communication that can cut across cultural diversities.

Moreover, today discreet business communication is being widely acknowledged by many organisations across the world as a differentiating strategy, as far as competition is concerned. This coupled with the fact that customers are a discerning and sophisticated lot as far as product and service expectations are concerned places a pivotal premium on business communication skills." Munshi adds that given their generic propensities these skills are not sector specific.

"It is important to understand that these skills are at the ethos of service functions. Although traditionally the needs for these skills were addressed in the hospitality and aviation sectors today there is a profound need for these skills across industries," he continues.

On how educational institutions can help to groom students, Munshi says, "While imparting domain knowledge it is important for educational institutions to reiterate the importance of a professional attitude and approach towards work. This can augur the much needed foundation on which business proficiency skills can be cultivated and developed. In fact, universities who expose students to cultural diversity, interactive skills, business etiquettes and many such skills manage to secure better placements."

Though the academia is gradually taking cognisance of the need to inculcate soft skills in students a lot remains to be achieved. "Universities need to incorporate practical oriented skills as part of their mainstream curriculum," opines Munshi. There is a broad consensus among academicians and soft-skill specialists that the industry needs to work in close consonance with the academia in terms of developing the framework for soft skill courses.

Within organisations, HR departments can extend an important role in terms of developing these skills. "At the outset HR departments have to identify the exact training

requirements in relation to the existing workforce. In other words they have to be adept at employee profiling that in turn can reveal a precise index of individual employee strengths, potentials and requirements. A collective analysis of the broad trends in terms of employee needs can help in formulating effective strategies in terms of developing business proficiency skills," says Munshi.

Soft skills can also help in building leadership capabilities. Leadership, at a people level, is all about building & sustaining amiable & productive relationships at the workplace. This requires persuasion ability, convincing & effective communication, people orientation, empathy & networking ability all of that essentially are soft skills, sums up Cheryl Holland, senior consultant, Speak First, UK.

Source: TNN [/timesofindia/28](http://timesofindia/28) December 2009

Consider earth, moon and mars as a single economic entity, says Dr. Kalam

Scientists should start considering earth, moon and mars as an economic complex for future habitat expansion of human beings, said Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Former President of India in his public lecture on the topic 'It can be done', at the ongoing 97th Indian Science Congress.

He began the lecture with the suggestion that Indian scientists should look forward to celebrating the socio-economic development of India in 2020. He then proposed his vision of transition of Indian Science from 2020 to 2050 saying that the vision for 2050 is one of dynamic growth.

A global knowledge society backed by value system and spirit of compassion would be the backbone of the vision. Proper water management, sustainable agriculture development using organic farming practices, energy consumption and sustainability, customized healthcare for promoting enhanced longevity, balancing the greenhouse gas budget and emergence of new global leaders focussing on multi-disciplinary action are some of the key elements of the vision, he said.

Dr. Kalam emphasized the need to develop and promote connectivity and collaboration among universities and organizations like ISRO, DAE, CSIR as well as industries. Improving science infrastructure in schools and colleges, bringing a fundamental change in Indian universities and institutions based on both academic and research performance and focusing on challenges of human needs are other issues that require urgent attention he added. He wanted Indian scientists to help science evolve globally with a comprehensive approach by 2050. He stressed the need to ignite the creativity of children from pre-school level & to inculcate interest in research from school to university level.

Source: New Delhi [/pib.nic.in/6](http://pib.nic.in/6) January 2010

Education industry was the lone bright star in 2009

Enough of landslide in stock markets, rising prices of essentials, eroding margins, credit crunches, cost of finance, real estate crashes, evaporation of investment banks and loss of salaries. Pallavee Dhaundiyal Panthry opens the New Year on a positive note outlining the growth of the education industry in otherwise bloodbath-2009

V K Menon, Senior Director - Careers, Admissions and Financial Aid, ISB, Hyderabad

Higher education is at an embryonic stage and will have exponential growth in years to come. We live in an age of specialisation. The right fit to the right job needs specific skill sets. Such matching skill sets are in high demand. Their availability is low.

Let us look at an example. Let us take a hospital chain, which wants to grow pan India. People with the classical management skills, like strategic planning, positioning, finance, marketing, technology etc are required. Ideally, they should also be doctors. Now, there are not many doctors who have done their post graduation in management.

Thus, there is a demand built up for this category. If we look at the current batch at the ISB, there are 10 doctors in the programme. They will be in high demand, not only in the healthcare sector, but also in sectors like pharmaceuticals, medical devices etc. This is how the demand for a particular talent set grows. The same is true for many other sectors.

Over the next few years we can expect the supply side to catch up. There will be many more players in higher education. The less efficient providers of higher education will find the going tough and like in any other competitive market, quality will be the determinant of success in this field. Many higher education institutions are waiting for the new policy to be announced to finalise their plans of entry into this market.

Overall, the year 2009 saw reasonable growth in this sector, though it was a difficult year for many. Job losses were common. Some of them took the opportunity to re-skill themselves and get into work areas of their choice. MBA offers one way of changing your career track. In an uncertain job market, many were reluctant to leave their jobs for an MBA program. Internationally, this impacted admissions quite severely but not much in India. I anticipate substantial growth in demand for good post graduate programs in 2010 and some years to come.

Om Pathak, Chairman, DPS Ghaziabad

2009 was an aftermath of 2008, when hiring was down and many of these graduates could not find suitable openings. The enrolments in 2009 were comparatively poor and did not reflect the YOY growth that higher education had in the past. But 2010 seems promising. Indian economy, despite the global meltdown grew at a fairly decent rate if not the much hyped 9 %. The recruiters are already back to work and companies have already started to hire.

We expect a robust growth in numbers in the coming academic year 2010. There is an awakening to the need of

building quality in higher education. The government is getting serious and the institutions like the UGC and AICTE would have to ensure that the institutions of higher education provide quality learning and prepare students for careers. 2010 would see a paradigm shift in this regard.

Though conventional courses in engineering, say mechanical, electrical, chemical or electronics still remain preferred options, but there is now growing demand for civil and environment disciplines in engineering. MBA will no longer be confined to finance, marketing or HR, there is growing demand for specific domains like health and hospitals, energy and petroleum, transport, retail, insurance etc. Finding quality teachers in higher education will be our biggest challenge and we may have to attempt major policy reform in this area.

Ninad Karpe, MD and CEO, APTECH

With the spread of basic education beyond urban and semi urban areas, growing competitiveness and a significantly large number in K-10, K-12 studies, the higher education, notably, degree, post graduate degree had to spread. A significant number is also driven towards vocational courses, which would guarantee an employment etc. Also, with the rapid rise of education loan facilities, access to higher education is on the rise.

Talking about IT industry, it is out of the woods and companies have started to hire again. Many new job opportunities are being created for professionals with special skills such as mastery in newer technologies. An example is cloud computing-where industry observers mention that around 3 million jobs will be created over next five years.

Beyond IT, I believe Indian corporate are waking up to the reality of globally adaptable smart soft skill trained professional and thus a whole new breed of courses have sprung up training the young and new manager in international readiness of the corporate culture. The service industry - hospitality, aviation management, travel and tourism will flourish.

Atul Chauhan, Chancellor, Amity University

More people turned towards higher education in 2009, but not because of recession as India was the least affected by the downturn. Now, people know the importance of upgrading themselves with new skill sets. The year 2010 should see more aspirants of higher education as higher education talks about practical aspects of learning, which is must for growing relevant heights in life. I believe the subjects of 2010 year will be banking, telecom and nanotechnology.

Santosh Choubey, Chancellor, Dr. C. V Raman University

The year 2009 saw varying demands across various segments of higher education. While there was a definite slack in engineering and technology education, a higher percentage of students opted for graduate and post graduate programmes like BCA, B Com and M Sc information technology. Demands for specialised diploma

programmes like animation, rural marketing and retail management were on the increase. Considering the industry scenario and needs, I think there is bound to be an increased demand in the insurance and financial management sectors as well as in core engineering programmes like civil, electrical and mechanical.

Another emerging industry, which requires special skills, is the entertainment industry and this too shall see a growth in the year ahead. When it comes to management education, institutes (apart from the top BSchools) offering generalised MBA programmes remained largely vacant in 2009. However, those offering specialised MBA programs like hospitality, retail, insurance and risk management, media and rural among other streams sustained their growth. In medicine, there is a large gap between the demand and number of seats available. 2009, as any other year, saw medicine and dentistry in demand. Until the procedures for setting up medical colleges are simplified, this gap will continue. I think 2010 will be a year of specialised courses see more focus on choices.

Vineet Gupta, Director, Jamboree

There was a slight decline of aspirants for courses like MBA, which require high investment for students, were hesitant to make investments in an uncertain job market. There were also less students wishing to study a master's degree abroad. Number of students for bachelor's degrees continued to remain high. This year, demand for master's courses will increase as companies are again hiring. Job market is looking robust for 2010. The specialised areas in demand will be biotechnology, construction management, internet marketing and entrepreneurship.

S R Dugal, Chairman, Institute of Clinical Research India

Definitely I see more students stirring towards higher education in the coming year. With an increasing demand for specialised knowledge accompanied by the rapid annual economic growth rate there has been considerable improvement in higher education scenario of India in 2009, both in quantitative and qualitative terms. More students are aiming towards a better education, especially in fields such as clinical research and healthcare management, which were initially less explored a decade ago.

The need for highly qualified personnel in tune with a good understanding of global standards calls for a demanding and challenging curricula. Talking about the demand of the industry in 2010, it seems that healthcare would be the new buzzword now. If you're tapping into the healthcare job market as you navigate on your career path, you've chosen one of the fastest growing industries in the labour market.

As for 2010 we have many things in mind. We would be introducing various new courses, which will help the students to understand and implement new things in this sector. Also we plan to recruit around 6000 students for various courses offered compared to the 4000 we did in 2009. We want to provide a larger platform for students to achieve their goals.

Source: [/economicstimes.com](http://economicstimes.com)/3 January 2010

Focus on basic science education

A good memory is regarded as a sign of intelligence and everyone's trying to improve their memory. This is specially true about young parents who are keen that their wards should not be less than Einstein. Prof Mriganka Sur, one of the top five experts on brain and cognitive science in the world, has a simple remedy: keep using those grey cells, either by solving puzzles or by doing quizzes. Prof Sur is the Sherman Fairchild Professor of Neuroscience and Head of the Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He is also adviser at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Pune.

Prof Sur did his electrical engineering from IIT, Kanpur in 1974, following it up with an MS and PhD in Electrical Engineering in 1975 and 1978, respectively, from the Vanderbilt University, Nashville. He was appointed faculty at Yale University School of Medicine in 1983 and joined the department of brain and cognitive sciences at MIT in 1986.

So how did this electrical engineering student come to neurosciences?

His studies in biology were not a part of his formal education but on his own, since he believes that one needs a multi-disciplinary approach to understand any subject and the compartmentalised knowledge under different subject heads is less useful. "Brain and cognitive science is a comparatively new field of science. Even in the United States, undergraduate and graduate education in this field is being offered only from last two decades," he said.

Prof Sur built up the Brain and Cognitive Sciences department of MIT from scratch. "Today our department has 40 faculties. We raised a fund of \$ 500 million for building two centres," Prof Sur, who still holds his Indian passport, said. Incidentally, the renowned Indian architect Charles Correa has designed the centre at MIT, which resembles an Indian haveli.

Explaining the complexities of the brain in a simple and lucid manner, Prof Sur said that information in the brain is coded, stored and transmitted as electrical signals. An important feature of the human brain is its plasticity, which means its capacity to adapt to changes in the stimuli. That is why he calls the fastest computers on the Earth as mere high speed idiots. "In order to make computers intelligent, we will have to understand how the brain works," he said.

The Sur Laboratory at MIT is studying the plasticity of the brain and how it develops the wired network. One of the aims of this study is to understand some brain disorders. "After heart disease and cancer, brain disorders like Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, autism, schizophrenia etc are the third-largest health problem of the US," he said.

Brain disorders don't seem critical or sensitive till Prof Sur spelled it out. "Brain disorders have a very high social and economic cost because many societies hide them. They

tend to blame the individual for the disease. But we have proved that they have a physical basis. In some cases, genetic factors set up the risk while in others the environment has physical consequences."

How far have they gone down this road?

His team has successfully studied one sub-set of autism called the Rett syndrome, which one out of every 100 children in the western countries is suffering. "We are likely to begin the clinical trials next year of the drug that we have found to reduce the impact of Rett syndrome on the brain on 60 girls," said Prof Sur.

India has its own peculiar brain-related health problems. Due to high propensity of Indians to high blood pressure and heart disease, India has one of the highest incidences of strokes. The boost to indigenous neuroscience study will help India find solutions to such indigenous problems.

What is the outlook for neuro-science research in India?

Typically, Prof Sur went to the root. He stressed the need for India to first focus on basic science education. One has to have deep understanding of biology and other disciplines to study subjects like neuroscience. That is why he feels that institutes like the IISER, which believe in seamless education are the first step in that direction. "My advice to Indian policy makers has always been to focus on basic education. We have to bring together undergraduate education and research for the development of science like at the IISER and the western countries," he said.

Source: economictimes.com/4 January 2010

Basic science education should be promoted – CM

Basic science education is being neglected in the country and a lot of importance is given on studying Information Technology (IT), Kerala Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan said on Sunday.

Delivering his address at the 97th Indian Science Congress (ISC 2010) here, Achuthanandan said steps should be taken and adequate support provided to ensure that basic science education is not neglected.

"Neglecting basic science education is taking place. The government should play an important role in promoting science teaching. The universities, research institutions and national funding agencies should work in tandem for this," he said adding that stress is being laid on studying IT today.

Achuthanandan said his Kerala government has been taking several steps to promote basic science education.

"We have announced a scholarship of Rs.5,000 each for 10,000 students in the high school category. We have formed a higher education council too. Steps have already been taken to revamp the undergraduate education system," he said.

Also, "the neglect of research in agriculture is a serious cause for concern. There should be specific programmes in agricultural research", Achuthanandan added.

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh earlier on Sunday inaugurated ISC 2010 science congress, which will conclude on Thursday.

Source: Thiruvananthapuram [/indiaedunews.net/](http://indiaedunews.net/)4 January 2010

India Proves to be Prestigious Study Center

India, which is known by multi cultural and tourist destinations; attracts million of tourists every year. Apart from tourist destination is also an emerging prominent education destination. Students from all over the world come here to pursue different types of degree courses. As we put some attention on previous records and data India proves to be quality education destination for medical, engineering and management theme. In India there are hundred of colleges and education institutions in India that offers quality education to A grade students.

In India you will find 400 universities, 17,000 colleges and 13 educational institutes, the combination of these boosts the India education structure. Besides this, higher education in India proves to be best in all over the world. Where students will get chance to study in IIM for management, IIT for technology, JNU, Delhi University, Indian Institutes of Science, National Law Schools and many more. Each one has its own entrance exams and entrance exam dates are vary from university to university. Where students will get chance to make their career where they can demand high scale jobs after completing their degree courses.

If you compare India with other countries, you will find that India is much cheaper than other countries like UK, US, Australia, Singapore, New Zealand, Canada etc. Here students are able to get cheap accommodation during their studies, eating out places are also enough at each point where international students will get varieties of dishes of their choices. Apart from this educational loans and scholarships are also available for domestic and international students. Education Consultants of India is a government approved organization that offers consultation service to the interested students. From here one can easily get visa information, cost of education, accommodation facilities and lots more about India education system.

Source: [/cheapmommy.com/](http://cheapmommy.com/)4 January 2010

Lessons from higher education

The year 2010 may witness radical changes in the process of establishing higher and professional education institutions. For the past six decades, educational institutions in India were set up only by societies and trusts. These legal entities were focusing on many things — managing temples, religion-related institutions, social activities and even NGOs. Thus, education that lays the foundation for social and economic growth was submerged as a triviality by a mass of other social and religious activities.

The phenomenal growth of education at all levels — primary, secondary and higher — has put enormous pressure on the government treasury. The demand for education is bound to grow. The younger generation is clear that they want to be a part of the ongoing economic revolution. They also know that access to useful and quality education will serve as an advantage in fulfilling their aspirations.

This phenomenon is not merely confined to big cities and metros, it is also witnessed pan India. The public educational system has grown with no planning. It is held hostage by “educational barons”, who have a political base and camouflaged governmental patronage. Today, well-meaning people or corporate houses find it difficult to set up educational institutions. They neither have a political identity nor the desire to be part of a corrupt permission-granting system. The net result, our educational system is caught between two non-movable boulders, the rigid legal framework and selective patronisation by the government machinery.

We need to come out of this peculiar but harmful situation if India is to become one of the strong economies of the world. We need skilled, talented and well-equipped human power — and in large numbers — at a faster rate. We need educational institutions whose operations and accounts books are transparent. A recent report by Ernst and Young suggests that the resource gap in higher and professional education stands at Rs 220,000 million.

The government’s initiative of public-private-partnership has met limited success, the reason being that we are still trying to insert a square peg into a round hole. Mistrust and rigid rules have hampered progress. Philanthropy once played an important role in education and continues to support educational institutions. However, the flow is now a trickle. We need a massive flow of money from outside the governmental system.

It now seems that the government is serious about bringing private sector into education. It would soon issue an ordinance permitting corporate houses to set up higher and professional education institutions — colleges and multi-disciplinary universities - by floating not-for-profit entities under Section 25 of the Companies Act of 1956. These companies can either be public or private, with limited liability. This path offers a few advantages to private investors. They can drop the word limited or private limited from their names. Hence, these companies can continue to enjoy their status as a limited company without disclosing to the public whether the liability of their members is limited by share or guarantee. The fact that there should be a minimum of three trust members/promoters of a Section 25 company ensures you don’t need a big setup to form such an organisation.

Such companies should invest their profits, if any, or other income only on promoting their objectives and must prohibit payment of dividend to members. At the same time, all trust members of a Section 25 company will be its employees. They can hold various posts and there is no need for

sharing any dividend to its members, thus fulfilling the conditions of Section 25 of the Companies Act, but still make money out of the business as well enjoy other benefits such as tax sops. Interestingly, in the primary and secondary education space, the Central Board of Secondary Education last year allowed companies registered under Section 25 Act to start private unaided schools.

This strategy may soon bring in some private money in the education sector. Nevertheless, the real hard nut to crack is allowing the for-profit private sector to set up educational institutions. Such a step would bring in the capital market, which would plug in the funding gap in the sector. Public money would also flow in the form of shares and books of accounts and performance would be open to shareholders and the public in general. All these elements look attractive.

However, a few aspects need to be addressed carefully. A private company can close down but one cannot afford to close down educational institutions set up under private company provisos. The future of students is at stake. The other is cost of education. There is need for clarity in the process of working out the cost of education. This is not difficult. Indeed, this would be more straightforward and work more honestly than the way the system is defied by deemed universities at present.

Lastly, there is need for appropriate provisos to meet social obligations. All these aspects are surmountable and it appears this may happen soon. Union HRD minister Kapil Sibal has asked Max India chairman Aniljit Singh to prepare a feasibility report on allowing the private sector to set up educational institutions. Other persons who would contribute to this activity are Sunil Alagh, chairperson of SKA Advisors, Hari Bhatia, co-chairman and MD of Jubilant Organosys, and Rajendra Pawar, chairperson of NIIT. These experts need to talk to all stakeholders in education and industry and involve academicians in this process. We need to act fast and with care and caution. We have been debating private sector participation for long. The time for action is now or never.

Source: [/mydigitalfc.com](http://mydigitalfc.com)/4 January 2010

Paradigm shift in education policies in 2010; Sibal

Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal Monday announced that there would be a vast change in education policy making of the government in 2010.

'You will see a paradigm shift in education policies. It will be an epochal year,' he said.

Describing the year 2010 as very important for his ministry, Sibal said that researchers and faculty would be given a stake in the system to boost higher education and research, which are vital for a nation's development.

Releasing the book 'Engineering Education in India' authored by Prof. Rangan Banerjee and Vinayak P. Muley of IIT-Bombay at Observer Research Foundation, a public policy think tank headquartered in Delhi, the minister noted

that while India and China were almost at the same level nearly 15 years back, China has now surged much ahead of India.

'China could do it because of its national effort. But we have not done that. And the result is we are much behind China now,' the minister said.

Underlining the important role of private players in the development of education in the US as in the case of Stanford University and Harvard University, Sibal said the government would create 'an appropriate environment' to attract public private partnership (PPP) and private players to education sector.

The minister agreed with author Banerjee that the only way to boost higher education and research is through joint efforts by the academic-industry-government tie-ups.

Sibal said India needs to raise its strength of PhD scholars from a mere 1,000 per year to at least 23,000 to catch up with China and other countries. 'We have a very long way to go,' he said.

Source: [/sify.com](http://sify.com)/11 January 2010

Policy challenges for the year 2010

Since general elections are four years away, Centre should act now to meet fiscal challenges

The dawn of the new decade raises many hopes and expectations. Surely, the decade can belong to India and Indians if only the government can get its act together and create an environment for the "animal spirits" of the entrepreneurs to dominate. It is generally felt that growth acceleration since 2001 was mainly due to the spirit of the Indian entrepreneur and with a proactive policy and institutional environment, the growth prospects would be even better. Surely, the government will have to revisit serious policy and institutional reforms.

Although Indian economy has come out relatively unscathed from the global economic crisis, there are several policy challenges warranting attention in order to launch the economy into a sustained period of higher growth. Despite facing severe liquidity crunch and shrinkage in exports, India recorded impressive growth during the period. For the current year, the better-than-expected last quarter growth of 7.9 per cent has prompted observers to revise growth forecasts upwards and most believe that the economy will record at least 7 per cent growth. This shows the resilience of Indian economy.

Going forward, it is necessary to take the economy to high growth path for a sustained period of time and ensure that the excluded sections participate actively in the market economy to make the growth inclusive. This would require creation of favourable policy and institutional environment and policy-makers face several challenges in creating this. In this column we underline six such challenges which would confront the policy-makers in the current year.

The first major concern is that even as the green shoots appear, food inflation has shown an alarming increase.

Although this is predominantly a supply side phenomenon, it can fuel inflationary expectations, forcing the exit from accommodating monetary policy stance earlier than desired. The immediate task of the government is to augment the supply of essential commodities. Premature exit could dampen the growth prospects and delay economic revival. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will have to follow a cautious policy watch and for the next quarter monetary policy, it could perhaps tweak the CRR to give signals rather than increase interest rates.

Second, the government cannot persist with large fiscal deficits and will have to initiate fiscal consolidation in the next budget itself. Notably, the consolidated fiscal deficit, including off-Budget liabilities in 2008-09, was 10.4 per cent and it is 10.3 per cent in the current year. Much of this was due to additional outlay on subsidies, pay revision, farm loan waiver and increased coverage of employment guarantee. These were not intended as fiscal stimuli per se, but did have significant counter-cyclical impact. Unlike in China, where large fiscal deficit was directed to augment infrastructure spending, the impact of fiscal deficit in India was to increase aggregate consumption. Persistence of high fiscal deficits could crowd out private investment and, therefore, it is necessary to return to fiscal austerity from the next Budget itself. According to the medium-term fiscal policy (MTFP) statement presented along with the Budget, the Central government is supposed to compress the fiscal deficit to 5.5 per cent of GDP in 2010-11. In fact, with careful planning, it is possible to reduce the fiscal deficit to 5 per cent of GDP in 2010-11 (See my November 3 column), and that would provide greater flexibility in the calibration of monetary policy.

Third, acceleration growth requires significant augmentation of infrastructure. Although considerable increase in infrastructure investment will have to come from the private sector, the government will have to substantially augment its own spending. At a time when containing fiscal deficit is a priority, additional spending on infrastructure can come about only by containing subsidies, and undertaking disinvestment. Capital expenditure of the Central government in 2009-10 is budgeted at only 2.1 per cent of GDP and even in 2007-08, when the ratio of government revenues to GDP was the highest and revenue deficit was the lowest, it was just 2.5 per cent. Augmenting infrastructure spending in the wake of the need to contain the fiscal deficit is a difficult challenge the policy-makers will have to grapple with.

Fourth, as mentioned earlier, inflow of both FDI and FII has shown a steady increase in recent months and these could bring to the fore policy trade-off between maintaining a stable exchange rate and calibrating independent monetary policy. Unlike Brazil, which chose to levy the Tobin tax to restrain the flow, in India, as yet, this has not assumed serious proportions. Flooding of foreign institutional investment beyond the capacity of RBI to sterilise could warrant imposition of a more stringent measure like the Tobin tax.

The fifth major policy challenge is to make the growth inclusive. Sustained inclusiveness cannot be ensured through subsidies and transfers, but by making the excluded participate in economic activity. This calls for massive overhaul of policies in education and health care. The government does not have the resources to expand education and skill development. While it is important that it should continue to ensure access to disadvantaged groups to quality education and health care by enhancing both quantity and quality of spending, there is no reason to restrict the entry of private sector investment in higher education and health care to improve both quality and access. Freeing up education and health sectors from bureaucratic clutches is a major challenge, which has to be met not only to reap the demographic dividend but also to ensure inclusiveness.

Another major challenge that needs to be highlighted to achieve inclusive growth is the liberalisation of both land and labour markets. Many laws and regulations intended to protect the vulnerable and disadvantaged sections have prevented organised markets and have actually harmed them instead of helping. Even as total employment during 1999 to 2004 increased at an annual average of 2.9 per cent, the organised sector employed rate actually declined at 1 per cent. The reasons are not far to seek, and in order to incentivise labour-intensive growth, it is necessary to correct the anti-labour bias in our regulations.

Indeed, these challenges are formidable, but as the government does not have to contend with a general election for another four years, it is possible to initiate action on them. We live in exciting times and, hopefully, 2010 will usher in rejuvenation in reforms.

Source: New Delhi [/business-standard/](#)5 January 2010

Quality higher education, scientific research will set India as a global power: Ansari

Vice President Hamid Ansari on Monday said that the potential of India as a global power, its vision of inclusive growth and optimal utilization of the human potential of all its citizens, cannot be realized without encouraging greater participation in quality higher education and scientific research.

Addressing at the presentation function of "Infosys Prize 2009" in the national capital, Ansari said that it needs to be done by harnessing the resources and efforts of all stakeholders namely the government, universities, national laboratories and institutes of excellence, public and private sector companies, and even venture capitalists.

"We do need new investments and incentives from the private sector so that our young people will be encouraged increasingly to pursue and thereafter seek a career in science," Ansari said.

The Vice President further said that scientific research and technological innovation is the key to a nation's prosperity.

“Equally essential is scientific study of the past and present of our society, and of its pursuit of material wellbeing. For this reason, inculcating a scientific temper among citizens has been a national goal since the time of our freedom movement. It was deemed essential for political and economic emancipation of our people. This is reflected in Article 51 A of our Constitution and the duty it imposes on every citizen to “develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform,” Ansari said.

“Our achievements in the knowledge industries, especially in Information Technology, bio-technology and pharmaceutical industries, have come about due to considerable public investment in tertiary science and technology education. Our nuclear energy, space and defence-related industry, and the Science and Technology establishment, have created the demand for and incubated these science and technology graduates, who thereafter either became entrepreneurs or moved to the private sector,” he added.

Source: New Delhi [/thaindian.com](http://thaindian.com)/4 January 2010

Right to education yet to be law

The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act was billed to be a giant leap towards universalization of education in India. However, it has acquired the dubious distinction of being the only fundamental right that exists just on paper.

More than seven years after the Constitution was amended in 2002 to make free and compulsory education to children in the age group of 6-14 a fundamental right and over four months after the historic Right to Education Bill was passed in Parliament, both the legislations are yet to be notified.

Without notification -- a mandatory step in that gives the exact date from when the law comes into force -- the right to free and compulsory education remains just a goal.

All along, the reason given for not notifying the constitutional amendment was that a law to enforce the fundamental right was not in place. Two years of NDA regime and five years of UPA 1 were spent quibbling over the cost of implementing such a legislation. The bill was finally passed by Parliament last August. Strangely, there is yet no movement towards notification.

HRD minister Kapil Sibal has been saying that the face of education will change completely with RTE Act. He is right. However, the trouble is that the objective will remain a distant dream so long as the great ideas of the legislation lack any legal teeth.

The ostensible reason for the delay in notifying the Act is that its cost is still being worked out. But those associated with its implementation point out that even as the cost is being debated there are other significant things that could have been done by notifying the RTE Act. HRD ministry has pegged the cost of RTE at Rs 1.71 lakh crore for five

years. "Many reforms in the RTE Act do not cost money. Now if it is notified in the end of March to be applicable from April 1, state governments will be caught unawares. They will be unprepared without budget allocations. That could be a setback. Early notification would have helped put a system in place," a source said.

What happens if the Act is not notified? For one, not all systemic reforms laid out in the RTE Act can be put in place without notification. These include maintaining a teacher-student ratio of 1:30. "If the Act was in place, steps could have been taken for redeployment of teachers to attain the stipulated ratio. This could have helped bridge the urban-rural imbalance in teacher-student ratio," a source said.

Similarly, provisions in section 29 of the Act that deal with curriculum and examination reforms could have been put in place. This section aims to free the child from the trauma of examinations and introduce comprehensive and continuous evaluation. It also talks of new learning methods. Even implementing the provision on setting up school management committees with adequate representation of parents would have acted as a watchdog, said sources.

"These provisions would have cost no money and yet are huge steps forward for systemic reforms," a source pointed out.

In the absence of notification, the HRD ministry for the past four months has been working on framing model rules for RTE and has set up a committee that will recommend how to harmonize the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan with RTE.

Source: New Delhi [/timesofindia](http://timesofindia)/6 January 2010

Road map for PPP in secondary education not yet finalised

A road map for public-private partnership in secondary education is yet to be finalised despite the government's keen interest. A roundtable on school education constituted by minister for human resource development Kapil Sibal has been considering a proposal for PPP prepared by Planning Commission adviser Gajendra Haldea.

The proposal is an expensive proposition and seeks to go beyond the mandate of PPP in secondary education. In several of its suggestions, the proposal is at odds with the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, and the National Curriculum Framework. While supported by the private sector, the proposal finds few takers among government and education experts.

In a bid to break the logjam, Mr Sibal has called a meeting of the round table on Monday. The minister would like to finalise the road map for PPP in secondary schools at the Monday meeting. However, this may not be possible, as a second proposal, prepared by the CII, has now been submitted.

Both proposals make it clear that private sector participation to set up 2,500 model schools at the secondary level may not be possible without a "reasonable return on investment". This is likely to raise important questions as successive education policies and Supreme

Court judgments stress that education is not a commercial proposition.

Both proposals make it clear that the private sector would like to be involved in setting up schools, which serve the complete education, which is from kindergarten to class XII. Mr. Sibal has, clarified in previous meetings of the roundtable that the Cabinet approval for the PPP scheme as well as the Budget announcement limits involvement to the secondary segment.

Despite the clarification, a revised version of the Haldea proposal suggests that government sponsored students would be admitted from class VI onwards, as well as calls for 50 per cent support for “select” students between class I and V. Not only is this beyond the scope of the scheme, it also runs counter to the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act. The CII proposal has suggested relaxation of norms, especially with regard to teacher qualifications.

There are several other “problem” areas. It is not clear whether these PPP schools will be treated at par with government-aided schools. The proposal has called for accessing finances under relevant schemes of the centre and state governments, over and above the support that has been sought from the central government. Both the CII and the Haldea proposal suggest setting up of a nodal agency for the PPP schools. This is unlikely to find favour with the government.

In a contentious move, there is a suggestion of converting the PPP schools into “voucher” schools after the 10-year arrangement with the government runs its course. The proposal states that from the eleventh year onwards, “support for the select students will be either to schools directly or to students who will be free to use their scholarship either in the same school or any other CBSE affiliated school.” Experts see the danger of the government-sponsored students being pushed out of these schools, defeating the purpose behind the venture.

The Haldea proposal continues to be financially viable. There appears to have been no move to rework the costing despite a suggestion from Mr. Sibal. The most recent draft of the proposal scales up the capital cost—Rs 5 to 7 crore, up from the previous estimate of Rs 3 to 5 crore. This cost is to be borne by the private player.

According to this proposal, the government is expected to provide student support at Rs 1600 a month, infrastructure support at Rs 400 a month and enhanced support (a percentage of the student support) for the first three years. The amount, fixed as per Kendriya Vidyalaya norms, will “indexed to inflation and will be revised annually with reference to the WPI as on January 1, 2009”. Even without the annual escalation, the cost of supporting one model school for the ten year period works out to Rs 2, 20,124,000. There are several other outlays suggested in the proposal, which have not been monetised, such as midday meals for students, uniforms and graduated support for schools depending on location.

The proposal also suggests that select students will be required to pay a tuition fee “to inculcate a sense of commitment”. While SC, OBC, ST and girl students will pay Rs 25 per month, children of non-income tax payers will pay Rs 50 per month. This is over and above the Rs 1600 for each of these students. This is likely to bring in additional income of Rs 360,000 to Rs 412,500 per year. The government has committed to setting up 2,500 model schools under the PPP.

The CII proposal puts capital costs at Rs 8.72 crore. Operational cost is at Rs 12,000 per child and the annual operational cost is at Rs 1.36 crore. These estimates are likely to be scaled up as estimates are based on 2005-06 rates. The CII proposal however does suggest using existing underutilised school buildings.

A senior ministry official said that the government is not likely to agree to the costing, and that Kendriya Vidyalaya rates will not be the basis of calculation. Neither is the ministry likely to agree to the enhanced capital cost.

Source: New Delhi [/economictimes/](http://economictimes.com)11 January 2010

Sibal expresses concern at burden on students

Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal on Thursday expressed concern at the increasing pressure on schoolchildren, resulting in their committing suicide.

“There is a huge burden on students. We are concerned about it. But it would not be appropriate to make any comment on any individual case,” he told reporters here.

Reforms needed

Admitting that the examination system needed to be reformed to ensure that students were not over-stressed, he said this could be done only through consensus. “It is true that there is a lot of burden on students and parents because of the nature of the examination. We are trying to reform the system, but it has to be done with consensus.”

Three students in Mumbai and one in Delhi committed suicide in the past week owing to either the examination pressure or related problems, according to police.

Source: New Delhi [/hindu/](http://hindu.com)8 January 2010

Sibal hints at change in question pattern to test intelligence

Taking forward the process of reforms in education, the government wants to change the question pattern in examinations at school level to give more focus on testing the intelligence of children, HRD Minister Kapil Sibal said today.

The present examination format in the school system helps the students perform better by memorising the subjects, than using intelligence and their analytical abilities, he said.

The government is preparing an action plan to change the examination format to test the real talent of the students than encouraging them to memorise the subject contents and reproduce them in exam.

"Children will be asked questions to test their inherent intelligence. We are working on an action plan on how to have such examination system," he told reporters on the sidelines of a seminar on 'New Education Policy'.

He cited the example of his days in Harvard University when he had to answer such questions, which did not have any fixed answer in the textbooks.

"Our professors used to tell us that we can take textbooks to the examination centre. But these books will not be of much help because the questions will test the real intelligence of the students," he said.

Sibal said the curriculum at the school level will also be changed.

Sibal cited the statement of Nobel Laureate Venkataraman Ramakrishnan, who yesterday said he had failed to clear entrance tests for both the IITs and reputed medical college decades ago.

"The examination system needs to be changed. Even a Nobel Laureate could not clear JEE those days," he said.

Sibal said the government is working out on how to arrange funds for implementing the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, which was passed by Parliament in July last year. The government has estimated that Rs 1.71 lakh crore would be spent for implementing the Act in the next five years.

"Once we work out the funding arrangements, we will notify the Act," he said.

The government wants that a number of vocational courses, including courses on animation, paramedics and para-legal, should be introduced at higher secondary level.

He said film director Subash Ghai had met him recently and requested for introduction of a course on animation. The government is in touch with Ghai in evolving such a course.

He also said the government will set up a National Higher Education Funding Corporation soon to help poor and meritorious students take loan for studies.

Asked about the government's views on continued attacks on Indian students in Australia, Sibal said the matter is being investigated and the government will make a statement after it gets the report.

Source: New Delhi [/dnaindia/](#)6 January 2010

Sibal moots degrees at the click of a mouse

No need to run around in universities and school boards for getting educational certificates - from 2011, millions of students can get print-outs of their documents at the click of a mouse.

Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister Kapil Sibal Tuesday announced that all school boards, technical colleges and universities will deposit their educational degrees in a centralised online "depository".

"From the depository, students can get their certificates online by paying a nominal fee. They can get a print-out of

their degrees from home. This will help students a lot, who otherwise run around for it. It will become user friendly," Sibal said.

"Holding of academic qualification in an electronic depository provides immense benefits to educational institutions, students, alumni and employers by enabling online access of academic qualifications," he explained.

The minister said the two depositories - National Security Depository Limited (NSDL) and Central Depository Services (India) Limited (CDSL) - are registered with the Securities and Exchange Board of India.

"We will finalise the depository (with whom to tie up). It will be deposited like your share certificates. You can access it from home, office and there will be no tension of losing or displacing the certificates," the minister added.

Sibal said this will also eliminate the need for people to approach educational institutions for verification of such degrees by employers. It will also reduce the need for institutions to preserve records related to academic performance of students over a long time.

The system will also reduce the scourge of fake certificates. The system would ensure authenticity, fidelity and enabling online verification," Sibal added.

The minister said he has already set up a task force comprising IIT-Kanpur director Sanjay Dhande, IIT-Kozhikode director Debashis Chatterjee, All-India Council for Technical Education chairman S.S. Mantha, UGC vice-chairman Ved Prakash, Central Board of Secondary Education chairman Veneet Joshi, a joint secretary of department of financial services, and some senior officials from the HRD ministry.

The task force will submit a road map by March 31 this year. "We will bring a legislation to implement it compulsorily," Sibal added.

Source: New Delhi [/littleabout/](#)12 January 2010

The ills of Indian science

Inaugurating the 97th edition of the Indian Science Congress, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh did some plain speaking; the organisation of Indian science is fossilised and bureaucratic. It smothered innovation, lacks relevance to India's development needs, has poor links to industry and the blame for all this lies with those at the helm of affairs in our university departments and research institutions.

Of course, the PM used far more language that is diplomatic. He went on to stress the global opportunities that Indian science has, in areas such as climate change mitigation and adaptation. He also hoped to attract talented Indians working in laboratories abroad to Indian research outfits, at least for short stints. All this is appropriate.

But the point is, how will things change, and change for the better? Mere exhortation will not do. The change required is far reaching - a great many things hamper science in this country, ranging from the general culture, the school syllabus and the division of teaching and research between

universities and specialised research organisations to overall lack of democratic values in society.

Indian culture traditionally assumed knowledge to be finite (the original Sankaracharya was even vested with the title sarvagya, or one who knows everything), and a student is expected to master received wisdom rather than constantly test and challenge concepts. Curiosity is discouraged in the name of respect for authority. This kills innovation and new thinking. Schools imbibed the philosophy of Macaulay's minute on education and continue with the mission of producing clerks.

Universities are training grounds, rather than incubators of intellectual curiosity. Research is supposed to take place in specialised, mostly state-funded, research outfits, but these are run on bureaucratic lines that stifle dissent, intellectual or otherwise. What offers hope is that some in India still manage to do good science, beating all these odds.

The powerlessness of Ruchika Girhotra and her family against those who wield state power replicates itself in most settings, including the organisation of science in India. Ultimately, this has to change for Indian science to unleash creativity on the scale of its full potential.

Source: [/economictimes/5](#) January 2010

Universities should be given maximum freedom: PM

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said that the new Central University in the State could be developed as a centre of international repute which would serve as an intellectual bridge with the countries of the Middle East.

Inaugurating the Scholarship Fund instituted by the State Higher Education Council here on Sunday, he said that universities could not reach world class standards unless there was a change in which they were being managed.

“The universities should create an atmosphere where intellectual inquiry, originality and ingenuity are encouraged rather than persist with academic rot.

They have to be given the maximum academic freedom and flexibility.

They should be able to recruit the best teachers including many Indians working in top universities abroad,” he said.

The Prime Minister said that one of the initiatives of the Central Government would be to establish the 'Nalanda University' which will revive India's ancient academic and intellectual links with East Asia.

The Union Government was working to revolutionise the higher education system. The Government's aim was to make the country one of the premier centres of education in the world, he said.

The scholarship fund of the Higher Education Council could be path-breaking initiative in public-private participation, he said. Chief Minister V. S.

Achuthanandan in his welcome address announced an additional contribution of Rs 12 crore in addition to the initial contribution of Rs 3 crore. Besides, that the State

Government would provide 50 per cent of the funds contributed by the public to the Fund as matching grant, he said.

Education Minister M. A. Baby said that various social and religious organisations like Christian missionaries, NSS, SNDP, Sadhujana Paripalana Sanghom, Muslim Educational Society and other social organisations would contribute to the scholarship fund. Earlier, the Prime Minister distributed scholarships from the fund to six students.

Minister for State for External Affairs Shashi Tharoor, Law Minister M. Vijayakumar, Food Minister C. Divakaran, Opposition Leader Oommen Chandy and Kerala State Higher Education Council vice-chairman K.N. Panicker were among those who attended the function.

Source: Thiruvananthapuram [/expressbuzz/4](#) January 2010

What ails Indian science?

The science and technology sector always compares its achievements with those on the international scene. The first nine years of the millennium have given momentum to the science and technology programme in this country, and India's achievements are charted and compared with those of China and Brazil.

If one were to look at the reply given by the government in the Lok Sabha, the expenditure on Research and Development (R&D) as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is lower than that of developed countries and a few developing countries like Brazil and China. But it has been increasing the S&T outlay of scientific departments/agencies: from Rs 12,022 crore in the 9th Plan to Rs 25,243 crore in the 10th Plan. And there are plans to increase it further in the 11th Plan.

Yet India lags behind Brazil and China in innovation capacity even while it fares better in the quality of its scientific research institutions, according to the Global Competitiveness Report 2009-10, released by the World Economic Forum recently.

Germany, Japan and Switzerland are at the top of the list. Ironically, we are ranked at 25, ahead of China (35) and Brazil (41). Innovation capacity and quality of research institutions are two key science indicators in a total of 12 that ranked countries according to the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI). This is a clear indication that the scientific community needs to refocus its priorities and work towards a target and deadline. We need to overcome the shortcomings in higher education even though we have some of the best universities in the world. Our technological readiness remains a major challenge, as most research work happening in the country seems to be done without a fixed target and deadline.

Many senior scientists have expressed their frustration at not having all projects related to science and technology under one ministry.

Having based our policy on the structure left behind by the British, S&T comes under the Prime Minister under whom a

chief scientific adviser and science advisory council function. The Prime Minister controls the ministry through the National Council on S&T. Then there is the Ministry of Earth Sciences, and Departments for S&T, Bio Technology etc. This apart, there are ministries and departments like Scientific and Industrial Research, Agriculture, Chemicals and Fertilizers, Non-conventional energy sources, Health etc which fund projects in various universities and laboratories. The one big question is about nanotechnology, which is going to play an important role in every field where materials or molecules are involved. As the Indian Science Congress began at Thiruvananthapuram on Sunday, it is time the community discussed with the who's who of S&T what ails Indian science.

Source: Kochi [/expressbuzz/](#)4 January 2010

World class universities in India: Need of the hour

We should have our own world-class universities in India. The private players should play an integral part by starting such projects but should not make it a profit-making business. One such initiative is Vedanta University Project.

Recently all the newspapers and websites are flooded with news on racial attacks on Indian students in Australia. Only a few of us know that as per their law, if an overseas student dies in Australia, the education provider is not required to give a cause of death when it reports to the department of education, employment and workplace relations.

Attack on around 2000 Indians in Australia itself is a matter of real concern and mere discussions won't help. Now, everybody is trying to give their theory so as to how to restrict such attacks on the Indian community. But my point is 'prevention is better than cure'. Why thousands of Indian students are going to Australia for education? Can't we have international standard universities in India? Why can't we retain the homegrown talents & rather why can't we attract foreign students? The government should think over it, as now their biggest tension named 'election' is over.

We should have our own world class universities in India. The private players should play an integral part by starting such projects but should not make it a profit-making business. One such initiative is Vedanta University Project funded by Anil Agarwal, chairman, Vedanta Resources Plc. This is a not-for-profit initiative that will provide world-class education to 1, 00, 000 students in 95 academic disciplines, when completed. This university is coming up in the state of Orissa but due to some vested interest groups, the project is not moving as fast as it should be because of the laid back attitude of the government of Orissa and also the Central government who should rather help and take necessary actions so that this university starts functioning soon. Once this is built, other private players will follow the lead & definitely, more such universities will come up in India.

It is worth mentioning here that Sri Sri Ravi Shankar University and ICFAI University are also coming up in Orissa. Though, not as big as the proposed Vedanta University, but will still play a tangible role in the higher education sector. This is what that is required right now – to become self-reliant. Today, a country is not counted that much for its wealth or military power. It is known for its intellectual capabilities, the knowledge capital. India is already in the reckoning because of its high-quality talent pool. And in this regard, Vedanta University, Sri Sri University and ICFAI University will definitely be a feather on the cap contributing immensely to the state's and country's progress by providing world class education to the aspiring students.

Orissa government has recently passed the Sri Sri Bill and Vedanta University Bill but passing the bill solely doesn't help. Facilitating the establishment is what that is required. Once such universities come into functioning stage, the Indian students won't have to flee away for higher education spending a lot of forex. Rather, they can get world-class education at an affordable cost at their doorstep.

And when we will have more than 20 to 50 such universities like the proposed Vedanta University, the students from world-wide along with students from Australia will come to India to study. And this is when, we will not teach them a lesson but will make them feel and understand the meaning of 'atithi devo bhava' as we Indian really consider guests as a form of god.

Let all of us pledge that we can make a difference. We the students of India have the caliber and the skill, let us be provided with world-class universities in our nation. If not now, then never.

Source: [/merinews.com/](#)12 January 2010

RESOURCE

Landmark initiatives in education sector in 2009

Year-End-Review

The year 2009 saw landmark initiatives, both in the School Education and Literacy and the Higher Education Departments. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, has been enacted by Parliament to provide for free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years. Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), to enhance access to secondary education and improve its quality was launched in March 2009. The National Literacy Mission was recast with a focus on women's literacy and renamed 'Saakshar Bharat'. Substantive quality enhancing changes were made to the mid-day meal scheme. The Class X Board was made optional for students of CBSE Schools. The Central Universities Ordinance, 2009 was promulgated by the President on 15.1.2009 for the conversion of three State Universities in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand into Central Universities and establishment of

a new Central University each in twelve such States which did not have a Central University. The Ordinance was subsequently replaced by the Central Universities Act, 2009. The Union Cabinet approved the proposal to introduce a Bill to amend the Copyright Act, 1957. A new scheme of interest subsidy on educational loans taken for professional courses by the Economically Weaker Students was also launched.

Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009

The Constitution (Eighty-sixth) Amendment Act inserted Article 21A in the Constitution which makes education a Fundamental Right for Children in the age group of 6-14 years by providing that “*the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine*”.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, which represents the consequential legislation to Article 21A, has been enacted by 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 Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 was published in the Gazette of India on 27th August, 2009.

The Union Cabinet has, in December, 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 following amendments are proposed:

- (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.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme

In 2009-10, a central budget outlay of Rs.13100 crore was provided for this programme, against which an amount of Rs.10434 crore has been released to States/UTs so far. The success of this programme can be gauged from an independent study done in 2009, which shows that the percentage of out of school children has declined to 4.22% children in the 6-14 age group.

The Cumulative Achievements of SSA till 2009-10 (30.9.2009) and interventions sanctioned in 2009-10 are as under:

S. No	Items	Targets 2009-10	Cumulative Targets since	Cumulative Achievement (up to
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			inception including 2009-10	30.09.2009)
1	Opening New School	21419	3,32,333	28815 (86.7%) schools opened
2	Construction of school buildings	14579	2,63,015	240888 (91.58%) Completed & In Progress
3	Construction of Additional classrooms	126556	11,05,125	1026831 (92.92%) Completed & In Progress
4	Drinking water facilities	8425	1,98,154	184652 (93.19%) Completed & In Progress
5	Construction of Toilets	71017	3,34,916	286862 (85.65%)
6	Teacher Appointment	55411	12.82 lakh	10.11 lakh (78.87%) Completed
7	Annual In-Service Teacher training	40.59	40.59 Lakh (Annual 2009-10)	21.79 lakh (54%) Completed
8	Supply of Free Textbooks (Annual)	9.78 crore	9.05 crore	9.05 crore (92%) Completed
9	KGBV Schools	398	2573	2511 (97.59%) Operational ized

Saakshar Bharat

In pursuance of the announcement of the Hon'ble President made in the joint session of Parliament to recast the National Literacy Mission and to make every woman literate in the next five years, the National Literacy Mission, as a programme instrument, has been recast with prime focus on female literacy and a new variant of NLM, ‘Saakshar Bharat’ has been launched by the Prime Minister on International Literacy Day (8th September, 2009). Orientation meetings with State Government, State Resources Centres etc. have been organized. During the current financial year, 167 districts from 9 States are being covered.

Mid-Day Meal in Schools:

Substantive quality enhancing changes were made to the mid-day meal scheme, this year. The government approved revision of the food norm for Upper Primary children by increasing the quantity of pulses from 25 to 30 grams,

vegetables from 65 to 75 grams and by decreasing the quantity of oil and fat from 10 grams to 7.5 grams.

The enhancement of the cooking cost (excluding the labour and administrative charges) for the government has also undertaken primary to Rs. 2.50 and for upper primary to Rs. 3.75. Now, the cooking cost would include the cost of pulses, vegetables, oil & fats, salt & condiments and fuel. The cooking cost will be shared between the Centre and the NE States on 90:10 basis and with other States / Uts on 75:25 basis. A separate provision for payment of honorarium to cook-cum-helper @ Rs.1000 per month has been made.

The admissibility of transportation assistance for 11 Special Category States, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and Tripura, has been revised to the rate prevalent under the Public Distribution System (PDS) in these States in place of the existing assistance at a flat rate of Rs. 125 per Quintal. The new rates are effective from 1.12.2009.

Rashtriya Madhyamic Shiksha Abhiyan

A new centrally sponsored scheme, Rashtriya Madhyamic Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), to enhance access to secondary education and improve its quality was launched in March 2009. The objective of the scheme is to achieve an enrollment ratio of 75% for classes IX-X within 5 years by providing a secondary school within a reasonable distance of every habitation, to improve quality of education imparted at secondary level through making all secondary schools conform to prescribed norms, to remove gender, socio-economic and disability barriers, universal access to secondary level education by 2017, i.e., by the end of 12th Five Year Plan and universal retention by 2020. The Central Government shall bear 75% of the project expenditure during the 11th Five Year Plan, with 25% of the cost to be borne by State Governments. Funding pattern will be 90:10 for North Eastern States.

Project proposals from 7 states (Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Mizoram, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh) were considered by the Project Approval Board (PAB) on 12.11.2009, and opening of 871 new schools, and in-service training of more than 1.25 lakh teachers inter alia had been approved.

Model Schools

Under the centrally sponsored scheme to establish 6000 high quality model schools at block level as benchmarks of excellence, first phase of which was launched in November 2008, 419 schools in 12 States have been approved by the Grants-in-aid Committee (GIAC) during 2009. 167 schools in 6 states have been sanctioned so far.

Girls Hostels in Educationally Backward Blocks

Under another centrally sponsored scheme to set up Girls' Hostels with 100 seats in about 3,500 educationally backward blocks, which was launched in October, 2008, 647 hostels in 14 States have been approved by the

Grants-in-aid Committee (GIAC) during 2009. 163 hostels in 7 states have been sanctioned so far.

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya(KGBV)

2573 KGBV have been sanctioned so far, out of which 2558 are operational, enrolling 1.96 lakh girls belonging to SC, ST, OBC & Minorities.

Examination Reform

After wide consultation held by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) with various stakeholders including principals, teachers, parents, student and academicians and the public, following decisions were taken;

- There will be no class X board examination w.e.f 2011 in CBSE schools.
- The students of class IX and X will be assessed on the basis of CCE (Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation) to be implemented at the school level. CCE will be applicable to class IX students from the session 2009-10.
- For students who wish to move out of their schools and for students in schools, which have no higher secondary classes, on-demand examination will be offered by CBSE from 2011 onwards. Though it is not required for students continuing in the same school in class XI, they will have the option to appear for on-demand examination to get themselves assessed.
- It has been decided to replace the present system of awarding marks by grades in all subjects in class X Board examination to be conducted by CBSE in 2010. Such grading would be continued for on-demand examination of 2011 and beyond and also for CCE.

AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education):-

In order to overcome imbalances in technical education, the Council has taken up certain new initiatives:-

In order to reduce the imbalance between engineering education and polytechnic education the Council has permitted Second shift of Polytechnic in an existing Polytechnic Institution and also a Second shift of Polytechnic in an existing Engineering Institution.

Keeping in view the regional imbalance in the student intake in various States of the country, the Council has allowed second shift of engineering colleges in existing colleges only in those States where the number of seats available in engineering colleges per lakh of population are less than the all India average.

For a balanced growth of various streams of education in engineering & technology, the Council has taken a policy decision 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 are more than the all India average, whereas in the states where the number of seats available in

engineering colleges per lakh of population are less than the all India average, no such restriction is applicable.

A draft Bill for regulation of the profession of Engineering has been formulated and a Cabinet Note has been circulated to all Ministries for comments.

Scheme of Sub-Mission on Polytechnics under coordinated action for skill development:

During the period 1st January, 2009 upto 31 December 2009, 175 districts have been covered for establishment of New Polytechnics under the Scheme with financial support of Rs. 425.00 crore.

Community Development through Polytechnics: Under this revamped scheme, 703 polytechnics have been included for implementation of this scheme.

Indian Institutes of Technology (IITS):

Academic session 2008-2009 was started by admitting about 120 students each in B.Tech, courses in new IITs at Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh), Patna (Bihar), Jodhpur (Rajasthan), Bhubaneswar (Orissa), Ropar (Punjab) and Gandhinagar (Gujarat). Academic Session in the remaining two IITs at Indore and Mandi has been started by admitting about 120 students in B.Tech. Courses from academic session 2009-10.

Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs):

During the XIth Five Year Plan, one IIM namely Rajiv Gandhi Indian Institute of Management (RGIIM), Shillong has been established in Shillong (Meghalaya) which has commenced its first academic session from 2008-2009 and the remaining IIMs will be set up in Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Uttarakhand and Rajasthan.

Establishment of New Central Universities:

The 11th Plan envisages establishment of 16 new Central Universities.

The Central Universities Ordinance, 2009 was promulgated by the President on 15.1.2009 for the conversion of three State Universities in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand into Central Universities and establishment of a new Central University each in twelve such States, namely Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu, which did not have a Central University. The Central Universities Act, 2009, subsequently replaced the Ordinance.

While the three States Universities stood converted immediately on promulgation of the Ordinance, 11 new Central Universities (except Central University of Himachal Pradesh) came into existing in the first week of March, 2009 with the first Vice-Chancellors assuming their respective offices. The first Vice-Chancellor of the Central University of Himachal Pradesh has since been appointed and this University is likely to start functioning very soon.

For each of the new Central Universities, the concerned State Government is to provide, free of cost, about 500

acres of land, and the exact location of each University will be notified by the Central Government in the Official Gazette.

While permanent locations of many of these Universities have not yet been finalized, most of them have already started their academic activities from temporary premises.

Later on, it was felt that in view of the special circumstances of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, one Central University would not be able to meet the aspirations of the people of two distinct regions – Jammu region and the Kashmir Valley. The Central Universities (Amendment) Ordinance, 2009 was, therefore, promulgated on 20.10.2009 to rename the Central University of Jammu and Kashmir as Central University of Kashmir with territorial jurisdiction limited to Kashmir Division and to establish a new university by the name of Central University of Jammu having territorial jurisdiction extending over Jammu Division.

The entire expenditure, recurring as well as non-recurring, of these Universities is met by the Central Government, through UGC. The UGC has so far released funds amounting to Rs.155 crore to 14 new Central Universities.

National Institute of Technology (NITs):

Government of India decided to set up 10 new NITs during the 11th Five Year Plan in the States/UTs which do not have NITs at present. Accordingly, the Union Cabinet has approved setting up of 10 new NITs in Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh. Goa (also catering to the needs of Daman & Diu, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Lakshadweep), Puducherry (also catering to the needs of A&N Islands), Delhi (also catering to the needs of Chandigarh) and Uttarakhand. In order to closely monitor as well as facilitate the work of establishment of these ten new NITs, it has been decided that the existing NITs will mentor the new NITs for the first 2-3 years or till such time as the new NITs are properly set up.

Amendment to Copyright Act:

The Union Cabinet has 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. This move seeks to bring in amendments related to bring the Act in conformity with WCT and WPPT; amendment to protect the Music and Film Industry and address its concerns; Amendments to address the concerns of the physically challenged; amendments for rights to authors and amendments being made for incidental changes, which are required in the context of digital technology to cover 'storing of copyrights material by electronic means'.

Modernisation of Copyright Offices:

Under the Phase - I of the modernisation of the Copyright Office, a new web-portal of the Copyright office along with

online registration facility, has been launched on 9th September 2009.

Formulation of a "Brain Gain" policy to attract talent from across the world to the existing and new institutions.

A Concept Note was prepared and circulated for comments to prominent academics, researchers, premier research organisations and Ministries/Departments of Government. It has also been placed on the website of the Ministry for eliciting views. A Concept Note on Innovation Universities has also been prepared and circulated.

Launching of a new scheme of interest subsidy on educational loans taken for professional courses by the Economically Weaker Students.

The proposal has received the approval of the competent authority and the Scheme has been notified.

Regional Centre of the Indira Gandhi National Tribal University. (IGNTU) Amarkantak to be started in Manipur.

The State Government has identified land to the extent of 300 acres for the establishment of a Regional Centre of the University in the North-Eastern side of Makhan Village (Kehulubeg area) of Senapati Hill District. The Regional Centre has been inaugurated on 9th September, 2009 by the Chief Minister, Manipur with the launch of M.Phil programme in Political Science by IGNTU.

Source: pib.nic.in/31 December 2009

National Biotechnology Regulatory Authority should be set up

Dr. Ajay Parida, Executive Director, M.S. Swami Nathan Research foundation (MSSRF) called for setting up an autonomous National Biotechnology Regulatory Authority in the country for regulating the research and clearance to genetically modified plants and animal products. He was delivering a lecture on biotechnology in the 97th Indian Science Congress in Thiruvananthapuram. Before releasing a transgenic product to public, environment impact study or clinical trials should be under taken, said Dr. Parida. According to him the proposed authority will be in a position to approve the release of transgenic plants to framers without delay as the present procedure for approval was a prolonged one and time consuming. He said that at least ten varieties of transgenic crops have been developed by various government laboratories, which are not released to framers for want of official approval.

MSSRF has developed salt resistant and drought resistant transgenic rice variety years back and it is under field trial only. He said that transgenic rice variety has an yield of two tons per hectre which will be stable up to six generation. The transgenic paddy can also be cultivated under normal condition. He said that productivity of paddy in the country is stagnant at 2.12 tons over a period of 1996-2007.

But in Taiwan the productivity of paddy is five tons per hectre MSSRF has also developed iron enriched rice by using biotechnology tools. Research is also been carried out to develop a transgenic plant which will absorb heavy

metals like cadmium and nickel from the soil. He said that biotechnology is only a tool to help mankind to address various problems in areas like health and agriculture like any technology it can improve the life of man.

Source: New Delhi pib.nic.in/6 January 2010

Revised Scheme of ICT in Schools during the XI Plan

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs today approved a Revised Scheme of Information and Communication Technology in Schools during the XI Plan.

Implementation strategy and targets

About 1.08 lakh Government and Government aided secondary and higher secondary schools are envisaged to be covered in the XI Plan. The components of the scheme include:

- (i) Imparting of computer literacy and ICT enabled teaching learning. The schools would be provided the required computer hardware, software and e-content for the purpose. Dependable power supply and internet connectivity, preferably broadband, would be provided to the schools.
- (ii) Capacity building of more than 10 lakh teachers in using ICT based tools for teaching through induction and refresher trainings.
- (iii) Development and dissemination of appropriate e-content in the regional languages to enhance the comprehension levels of children in various subjects.
- (iv) A scheme of rewards for teachers and schools for encouraging use of ICT in the teaching learning process will also be instituted.

Expenditure involved

It is estimated that an amount of Rs. 6926.13 crore would be required during the XI Plan. The actual expenditure by the Central Government would be restricted to the Plan allocation of Rs.6000 crore for the scheme. The funding will be provided on a 75:25 sharing basis between the Centre and the States, except for NE States including Sikkim, where the sharing pattern would be 90:10. Recurring cost will be provided for a period of 5 years from the year of sanction.

Major impact

The implementation of the two broad objectives of the scheme (a) ICT enabled teaching and (b) computer education and literacy in about 1.08 lakh Government and Government aided secondary and higher secondary schools would help to bridge the digital divide. Priority would be given to educationally backward blocks and areas with special attention on SC, ST, minority and weaker sections and the disabled. Use of ICT in schools is expected to improve quality of teaching learning, school administration and information management system.

All students of Government and Government aided secondary and higher secondary schools (more than 1.5 crore) would be benefitted from the revised scheme.

Background

The existing centrally sponsored scheme "Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Schools" is being implemented through the State Governments and UTs since 2005-06. Sanction has been given so far to more than 53,000 Government, Government aided secondary and higher secondary schools for establishing, and using enabling infrastructure for ICT based teaching learning processes. A need has been felt to expand the outreach of the scheme. The revised scheme focuses on coverage of more schools, development and sharing of appropriate e-content and capacity building of teachers.

Source: New Delhi pib.nic.in/9 January 2010

Science and Technology gets momentum in 2009

Year End Review - 2009

Department of Science & Technology established in 1971 has been playing a pivotal role in the promotion of science & technology in the country. It is the main Extra Mural Research Funding agency of India. In the changing context, the department is currently embracing a proactive and participative role in revitalizing the science and technology base of the Nation. Focus of various programmes of the department during 2009 includes attraction of young talent in science, improvement of Science & Technology infrastructure in Universities including women only universities, mounting the national mission on Nano Science & Technology, working towards a draft national innovation act, solar energy research initiative, technology mission on water, two National Missions on Climate change and data sharing policy. A brief description of the above Flagship Programmes of the department is given below:

Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE)

The Department of Science & Technology has mounted a special scholarship scheme titled "Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research" (INSPIRE) to attract talented youth to study and careers with science. The main features of the INSPIRE are: a) Scheme for Early Attraction of Talents for Science (SEATS) providing Science innovation scholarship of Rs 5000 for a total of one million young learners of the age group 10-15 years once in their school career during the next five years for experiencing the joy of innovations. About 1000 young people in each category would be considered under this program. All the above components have been set in motion with full momentum. A total of 2200 Inspire scholars have already been selected.

Fund for Improvement of S&T infrastructure in universities & higher educational institutions (FIST)

In order to meet diverse challenges in S&T, the Department recognized the need of strengthening the existing S&T infrastructure support system in the universities and other related institutions. This led to the inception of a major initiative titled "Fund for Improvement of S&T infrastructure in universities and higher educational

institutions (FIST)" to rebuild the Science & Technology infrastructure.

Since inception of the FIST scheme, during last 9 years more than 1264 Departments spread over to 329 academic institutions have been identified at a total support of about Rs 880 crores. In a proactive measure, the Department has announced a special package for North East Region for strengthening Science & Technology education & research at a total budgetary provision of Rs. 70 crore for 5 years. Special focus is also being planned for J & K State. The Program scope would also be extended for supporting departments in the Colleges at the Under-graduate level.

The program has a two-tier evaluation and monitoring mechanism i.e. Subject Expert Committees & FIST Advisory Board (FISTAB). FISTAB is the apex body consisting of eminent scientists and technologists drawn from various institutions in the country.

Promotion of University Research and Scientific Excellence (PURSE)

The Department, under infrastructure strengthening programmes, has mounted an initiative to provide incentive grant system for universities based on the evidence of scientific publications during the period 1996-2006. The programme provides research incentive grant at levels of Rs.10 crores, Rs. 5 crores, Rs.3 crores and Rs.2 crores per year to 14 universities based on objective criteria namely, H indices based on research publications in the last ten years. The programme bears an outlay of Rs.200 crores for the next three years. The first year release of Rs. 69 crore has already been made to 14 universities.

Consolidation of University Research for Innovation and Excellence (CURIE)

In 2009, the Department of Science and Technology launched a special initiative, namely, Consolidation of University Research for Innovation and Excellence (CURIE) to improve the R & D infrastructure of 'Women Universities'. Two Women Universities have already been supported, namely, Banasthali University, Banasthali and Avinashilingam University for Women, Coimbatore with a grant of Rs. 5.50 crore each for 3 years. This new initiative is expected to make an impact on the quality of research output from these universities.

National Mission on Nano Science & Technology (Nano Mission)

Nano mission was mounted on 3rd May 2007 through a cabinet decision with an allocation of Rs.1000 crores. Under the nano mission several new initiatives have been taken. An Institute of Nano Science and Technology (INST) has been approved at Mohali as part of the Knowledge City and co-located with IISER-Mohali. INST-Mohali would focus on agri and bio-nanotechnologies. Another Institute of Nano Science and Technology, as a center of JNCASR, Bangalore, is in advanced stages of approval and is expected to be established this year.

Innovation Policy

The Department has been engaged towards evolving a National Innovation Policy. A draft National Innovation Act has been prepared and placed on Department's web-site for comments.

The Department has initiated Innovation Clusters scheme during 11th Plan. The scheme envisions to 'strengthen institutions, support systems and their inter-linkages that will enable Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) among select MSME clusters to innovate thus leading to enhanced competitiveness, employment generation and poverty alleviation'.

Solar Energy Research Initiative

Department of Science & Technology under Solar Energy Research Initiative aims at improving efficiency of devices, systems and sub-systems; Innovative R&D demonstration projects for 24x7 oH grid power supply and forging inter-institutional linkages to develop critical mass of manpower for Solar Energy Research.

The Department has initiated a Nationally Coordinated Programme on Solar Energy Research synergizing strengths of leading Indian Technological Institutes. Four rounds of interactions amongst different IITs and DST have resulted in how IITs could synergise their strengths in achieving this national objective.

Technology Mission: "Winning, Augmentation and Renovation for Water" (WAR for Water)

On the directive of the Hon. Supreme Court of India, the Department of Science and Technology has initiated a Technology Mission – 'Winning, Augmenting and Renovation for Water' (WAR for Water) aiming to undertake research-led technological solutions on war footing for different water challenges being faced by the people of India. The Technology Mission 'WAR for Water' is developed on the principle to provide timely, urgent, cost effective, socially viable and sustainable techno-management solutions for solving problems of water scarcity by exploring, scouting and sourcing of technologies available and accessible from the global experience under real life situations.

Coordination of National Missions on Climate Change under National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)

The Department of Science & Technology, Ministry of Science & Technology has been entrusted with the responsibility of coordinating two out of eight national missions on climate change as part of the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) unveiled by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on 30th June, 2008. These are:

1. *National Mission for Sustaining Himalayan Ecosystem (NMSHE)*
2. *National Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change (NMSKCC)*

The board objectives of NMSHE include - understanding of the complex processes affecting the Himalayan Eco system and evolve suitable management and policy

measures for sustaining and safeguarding the Himalayan eco-system,

The NMSKCC has been launched with the broad objectives of mapping of the knowledge and data resources relevant to climate change and positioning of a data sharing policy framework for building strategic knowledge among the various arms of the Government.

As per the mechanism set out by the NAPCC, the missions will be periodically monitored and progress evaluated by the Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change from time to time.

Policy for Data Sharing and Accessibility

There is a large data generated at the cost of public funds by various organizations and institutions in the country. Some of this data, which is non sensitive in nature can be used by public for scientific, economic and developmental purposes. Keeping in view the above, the Department of Science and Technology proposes to develop a national policy for data sharing and accessibility.

Source: New Delhi pib.nic.in/11 January 2010

Sibal Announces New Initiative to Demat Degrees

Shri Kapil Sibal, Union Minister of Human Resource Development announced, here today, the initiation of a process for the establishment of a national database of academic qualifications (degree/certificates from school to graduate/postgraduate level including professional degrees) created and maintained in an electronic format by an identified, registered depository. What is envisaged is a shift from the current practice, through dematerialisation of certificates, to a technology-based solution that would ensure confidentiality, authenticity and fidelity, enabling online verification and easy retrieval of academic qualifications. At present two Depositories, National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) and Central Depository Services (India) Limited (CDSL) are registered with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

Holding of academic qualifications in an electronic depository would provide immense benefit to educational institutions, students, alumni and employers by enabling online access of academic qualifications, eliminating the need for persons to approach educational institutions for obtaining transcripts of such qualifications or for verification as well as reduce the need for institutions to preserve records related to academic performance of students over a long time. The system could also eliminate fraudulent practices such as forging of certificates and mark sheets through facilitating online verification.

For the purpose, the Ministry has constituted a Task Force under Prof. Sanjay Dhande, Director, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur. The other members of the Task Force shall include Prof. Debashis Chatterjee, Director, Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Kozhikode, Prof. S.S.Mantha, Chairman, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Prof. Ved Prakash, Vice-Chairman, University Grants Commission (UGC), Shri. Vineet Joshi, Chairman, Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE),

a nominee of the Department of Financial Services not below the rank of Joint Secretary to the Government of India, the Additional Secretary and Financial Advisor (AS&FA), Ministry of Human Resource Development or his nominee from the Finance wing of the Ministry and a nominee of the Planning Commission. The Joint Secretary (Higher Education) of the Ministry of HRD shall act as the Convener of the Task Force. The Task Force shall have the following terms of reference:

- I. To prepare a road-map for implementation of the concept of electronic depository of academic qualifications in dematerialized form.
- II. To identify a registered depository to whom the work of creation and maintenance of the national database of academic qualifications in an electronic depository can be entrusted.
- III. To detail the terms and conditions on which the work of creation and maintenance of the national database of academic qualifications can be entrusted to the identified electronic depository.
- IV. To draft an appropriate legislation to provide legal mandate to the holding of academic qualifications in an electronic depository.
- V. To make recommendations on such other incidental matters that may be relevant to the implementation of the concept of electronic depository of academic qualifications in dematerialized form.

The Task Force is expected to submit its recommendations by March 31st, 2010.

Source: New Delhi [/pib.nic.in/](http://pib.nic.in/)12 January 2010

Sibal launches E-Governance Model for AICTE

Shri Kapil Sibal, Union Minister of Human Resource Development, today launched web portals of the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and National Board of Accreditation (NBA) at URL://www.aicte-india.org and URL://www.nba-india.org respectively today. This initiative is part of the AICTE's efforts to bring in transparency, accountability, efficiency and swiftness in its decision-making process. The portal will facilitate a citizen-friendly interactive mode with a responsive public grievance redressal mechanism. Some other significant initiatives taken by the AICTE, announced today, are as follows:

- Processing of applications for approvals shall be made on line with effect from 10th January, 2010.
- Permission to new engineering and management institutions to admit upto maximum 300 from 240 and 120 from 60 students respectively.
- Reduction in land requirement in metro and mega cities to enhance facility of technical education.
- Permission to technical educational institutions to offer modular educational courses with the provision of credit transfer in extended teaching hours and also to offer programmes in second shift, so as to maximize utilization of their capacities.

- Opening of new camp offices at Gurgaon and Guwahati for the benefit of educational institutions in Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan and North Eastern Region respectively.
- Establishment of National Board of Accreditation (NBA), as an independent body of AICTE, for making it eligible for full membership of Washington Accord.
- Providing 25% flexibility to management institutions in allocation of seats among different disciplines of Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) to address ever changing requirement of manpower.
- Only MBA and MCA courses, through distance mode, are to be considered for approval.
- Co-option of foreign experts on Academic Boards.
- Conducting of first Graduate Pharmacy Aptitude Test (GPAT) for Pharmacy Graduates on 2 May 2010, through MS University, Baroda.

Source: New Delhi [/pib.nic.in/](http://pib.nic.in/)7 January 2010

Sibal pitches for Majoli to be made World Heritage Site

Shri Kapil Sibal, Union Minister for Human Resource Development has advocated the case for the Majoli Island in the Brahmaputra river to be declared a UNESCO World Heritage site, while meeting with D.G., UNESCO Ms. Irina Bokova, here today. He underlined the unique character of this Island and said that it needs to be preserved.

Shri Sibal offered support to UNESCO in the area of science and technology. He suggested to DG, UNESCO that India could support UNESCO towards preparing an ICT module for dissemination in the developing world. He gave the example of the ICT scheme developed for the nation's schools and approved by the Cabinet recently.

The Minister thanked the DG, for UNESCO's approval in the setting up of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Peace and Sustainable Development in Delhi. He said that he wants the institute to be the showcase and centre of training for peace and sustainable development. He said that the resources had already been allocated for the institute and the process has been initiated for the allocation of land for the institute.

DG, UNESCO complemented India in its efforts in education policy, especially in the passing of the Right to Education Act in Parliament. She welcomed India's proposals to help UNESCO in human resource support in the field of science and technology and for developing a module for ICT in schools. Ms Bokova is on a 5-day visit to India. Besides Delhi she will also be visiting Jaipur, Chennai, Bangalore and Puducherry.

Source: New Delhi [/pib.nic.in/](http://pib.nic.in/)11 January 2010

Vice President presents Infosys Prize-2009

The Vice President of India, Shri M. Hamid Ansari has said that the potential of India as a global power, however, and its vision of inclusive growth and optimal utilization of the human potential of all its citizens, cannot be realized without encouraging greater participation in quality higher education and scientific research. Addressing at the

presentation function of “*Infosys Prize 2009*” here today, he has said that this needs to be done by harnessing the resources and efforts of all stakeholders namely the government, universities, national laboratories and institutes of excellence, public and private sector companies, and even venture capitalists. We do need new investments and incentives from the private sector so that our young people will be encouraged increasingly to pursue and thereafter seek a career in science.

The Vice President has said that the importance of the business paradigm of Infosys is in broad basing the definition of stakeholders in a corporate enterprise. As a global corporation founded and based in India, Infosys is among the few to prioritise its obligations towards the society at the same level as towards its shareholders and others. It has given new meaning to Corporate Social Responsibility and the setting up of the Infosys Science Foundation is another milestone.

Following is the text of the Vice President’s address:

“It gives me great pleasure to participate in today’s function and present the Infosys Prize 2009 to the very distinguished and accomplished awardees in each of the five categories. The initiative taken by Infosys, in adding a new dimension to their pioneering work that has changed the business landscape of the country, is truly commendable.

I congratulate the laureates of the Infosys Prize 2009. Their signal contributions in their areas of specialization have been recognized. They pursued excellence with an intensity that made all obstacles evaporate. Its recognition today would have a demonstration effect and inspire others to do likewise. It would boost the confidence of researchers in physical, biological and social sciences and related branches of knowledge.

Experience the world over shows that scientific research and technological innovation is the key to a nation’s prosperity. Equally essential is scientific study of the past and present of our society, and of its pursuit of material wellbeing. For this reason, inculcating a scientific temper among citizens has been a national goal since the time of our freedom movement. It was deemed essential for political and economic emancipation of our people. This is reflected in Article 51 A of our Constitution and the duty it imposes on every citizen to “develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform”.

Our achievements in the knowledge industries, especially in Information Technology, biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries have come about due to considerable public investment in tertiary science and technology education. Our nuclear energy, space and defence-related industry, and the Science and Technology establishment, have created the demand for and incubated these science and technology graduates, who thereafter either became entrepreneurs or moved to the private sector.

And yet, it has to be admitted that research in pure and applied sciences has not received its due. Our scientific

output today in terms of researchers in basic sciences is insufficient for our requirements. This has a direct impact on our contribution to innovations and patents and compares unfavourably with our peers and competitors.

One reason for this is our society’s value system and a lack of focus on the priority that should be accorded to the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. I am aware that prospects for remunerative employment primarily guide the choice of subjects for study and research. Many students in urban and metropolitan areas are not interested in higher education and prefer to pursue jobs in service industries.

The potential of India as a global power, however, and its vision of inclusive growth and optimal utilization of the human potential of all its citizens, cannot be realized without encouraging greater participation in quality higher education and scientific research. This needs to be done by harnessing the resources and efforts of all stakeholders namely the government, universities, national laboratories and institutes of excellence, public and private sector companies, and even venture capitalists. We do need new investments and incentives from the private sector so that our young people will be encouraged increasingly to pursue and thereafter seek a career in science.

The entire eco-system for scientific research must be addressed as part of this exercise, including engagement with peer research institutions in India and abroad, support for research publications, and guaranteed funding for bright students to undertake research in basic sciences and social sciences where possibilities for commercial spin offs are minimal. We need a national recognition that success in applied sciences and commercially feasible technological innovation flows from a solid foundation of basic science research.

We live in a world in which business corporations are increasingly the principal economic agents at both the national and global levels. As James Wolfensohn put it, ‘the proper governance of companies will become as crucial for the world economy as the proper governing of countries’. The economic turbulence of the last two years demonstrates the adverse global public consequences of private greed and recklessness in some places. The task of protecting the interests of common citizen has fallen on governments who are called upon to regulate to ensure fairness, transparency and accountability.

The importance of the business paradigm of Infosys is in broad basing the definition of stakeholders in a corporate enterprise. As a global corporation founded and based in India, Infosys is among the few to prioritise its obligations towards the society at the same level as towards its shareholders and others. It has given new meaning to Corporate Social Responsibility and the setting up of the Infosys Science Foundation is another milestone.

I once again congratulate the awardees and thank Shri Narayana Murthy for inviting me to participate in today’s function.”

Source: New Delhi [/pib.nic.in/](http://pib.nic.in/)4 January 2010

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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