



**CONTENT**

**Aspect**

A Super UGC

**News**

1. Now, nursery admission not before four in Delhi
2. 54 university with Arjun nod unfit
3. Govt. to move bill on foreign university entry
4. IIT's plan to offer medical courses rejected
5. No end to row over quota in JNU
6. States to have lesser say in appointing VCs
7. CBSE sounds warning on arbitrary use of CCE
8. Eligibility Exam on Ph.D? College teachers confused
9. Only MBA, MCA valid through distance mode- AICTE
10. Sheila Dikshit to meet Sibal discuss Private school fee issue
11. Appointment norms for engineering colleges to be relaxed
12. Sibal for easing norms to let small school stay
13. State meets on university monitor
14. Tata Steel in Orissa integrating tribal in Mainstream Through Education
15. Tamil Nadu to experiment with engineering courses in Tamil
16. It's 'destination India' for top global school
17. New norms on approval for engineering colleges stayed
18. Show cause notices to 44 Deemed universities, Centre tells SC
19. Affiliation a must for universities stripped of deemed status
20. IITs, IIMs face crunch in shift
21. UGC nod focus Government Veto

**Analysis/Opinion/Innovative Practice**

1. Common Maths, Science Courses for all school from 2011
2. Poverty, lack of education inextricably linked
3. Sibal for unified entrance test of Medicine, Engineering
4. Common college entry test for all stream by 2013: Sibal
5. Experience with the privatization of education in India
6. Need for PPP in healthcare delivery and education
7. Public Opinion of Higher Education continues Downward slide
8. Education steps in Right Direction
9. India shining? Not with Govt. is stingy with Education Funds
10. Medicine and Engineering are Complementary
11. NCHER not to infringe on state autonomy: Minister
12. Kapil Sibal seeks to balance Central and State Education Acts
13. Keep testing the kids
14. Private schools free to fire their own fee, says Sibal
15. A Project to Secure autonomy and excellence
16. Karat thinks indoctrination not enough
17. Tread carefully Mr. Sibal
18. India firmly on growth track: TK arun
19. Sibal for more Pvt. Sector involvement to build rural schools

**Resource**

1. Resource: Press Information Bureau, Govt. of India

**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 2010. [Click here](#) to download the prescribed format along with the terms and conditions.

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

For more, visit: [www.apeejay.edu/aibcr](http://www.apeejay.edu/aibcr)

**Partnership**

Dear Partners,

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

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

Editor

**Dr. Mithilesh Kumar Singh**

Associate Editor

**Pradipta Kumar Sethi**

**Apeejay Stya Education Research Foundation**

Apeejay Stya House

14 Commercial Complex, Masjid Moth, Greater Kailash, Part – II, New Delhi - 110048

Tel. No. (91 – 11) 29228296 / 97 / 98. Fax o. (91 – 11) 29223326

E-mail: [aserf@apeejay.edu](mailto:aserf@apeejay.edu) Website: [www.aserf.org.in](http://www.aserf.org.in)



**Svrn Group**

**ASPECT****A Super UGC**

The Draft National Commission for Higher Education and Research Bill (NCHER) is quite simply the most outrageous proposal to centralise power in higher education that could be imagined. Instead of rationalising regulation, it creates a structure that makes the UGC Act look positively more benign. In its current incarnation, the bill conforms more to the dreams of a super UGC that Arjun Singh had floated than it does to the regulatory reform that the Knowledge Commission, Yashpal Committee and Kapil Sibal himself had promised.

The bill is deficient on so many grounds that it would take several pages to expound its infirmities. But to begin with, it displays minimal grasp of either the first principles of regulation or the context in which the debate for a new regulatory body had started. The problem with the current structure was three-fold.

1. The UGC had acquired overweening powers. In its original and much better crafted 1958 Act, it was entrusted with "coordination" of higher education. Slowly, this was transformed into a mandate of "standardisation" and "homogenisation".
2. The UGC merged many functions: it became regulator, accreditation authority, funding agency, all rolled into one.
3. The whole institution seemed to diminish in authority, in part because of the politicisation of the appointments process. Instead of acting as a buffer between government and universities, it started doing the government's bidding. It started acting on the autonomy of public universities with impunity. And it had no transparent mechanism for authorising new institutions, resulting in the current deemed universities mess.

The new bill, except for making the appointments of some of the members of the new NCHER more elevated, does nothing else to alleviate any of the deficiencies of the UGC. It makes the problem worse. It retains the expansive ambit of the UGC, and adds considerably to its powers. The most egregious example of this is the proposal that appointments for vice-chancellors in all universities in India be de facto centralised. They will now have to be appointed from a national registry prepared by a single collegium which will forward five names for a position. This is probably as much an infringement on federalism as it is a diminution of a university board's ability to take charge of its own appointments.

Second, the commission is entrusted with promoting university autonomy, and it drops the word on occasion (kind of oxymoronic when a central agency is required to promote autonomy). But the very section that speaks of autonomy gives the commission an indiscriminate mandate to regulate everything from syllabi, course structures, administrative protocols. These powers would

greatly erode all slivers of autonomy that universities currently possess. The drafters seem to have very little conception of what a "university" means, and what powers that status must confer on an institution that carries that name.

The authors of this draft seemed not to have understood any of the reasoning in various committee reports suggesting regulatory reform. For instance, it makes sense to distinguish a funding agency from a regulator. An agency mandated with funding public universities, like the UGC, should not be the regulator. This draft retains the fusion of both functions, in addition to giving tribunal-like powers as well. It will also be required to do a job of a research funding agency, which should be done separately. Second, the administrative mechanisms envisaged in this act are, to put it mildly, impractical. The core collegium entrusted with a national registry, appointments, and extensive advisory functions shall consist of Indian Nobel Laureates or Field Medallists, Jnanpith award winners, national research professors or members of international academies. They will also co-opt members from each state on the recommendation of the state. Of this Nobel Laureates and Field Medallists is a tiny set that living abroad is unlikely to get its hands dirty with our system; why being a Jnanpith awardee gives you any special insights into running education institutions is not clear. This will leave a small group of national research professors, usually close to retirement or members of international academies mostly in the sciences. In addition there will be severe politics at the state level to secure nominations as a co-opted fellow, since the stakes are so high.

Apart from producing both centralisation and politicisation, this architecture ignores one crucial issue: appointments should have significant role for the highest body of an institution that has all the fiduciary responsibilities of that institution. Imagine what would happen if all of India's companies were required to appoint CEOs through a single collegium and registry. This draft does not even distinguish between public and private institutions.

This draft fails on all three measures that should be used to judge regulatory reform in higher education. It will do nothing

to improve public universities, because it is premised on a misdiagnosis why they are in bad shape. It pedals the illusion that centralising appointments of VCs is all there is to this game. Each public university has to be reclaimed one by one, and so far there is no strategy in sight of how to do so. It does not represent an improvement over the existing mechanisms for granting entry, except consolidation of regulators. And it fails to bring about a paradigm shift in how we think of regulation. Instead of empowering students and parents to make right decisions, it still pedals the illusion that a small six-member commission can produce greater accountability by acquiring more and more power over institutions. It does not understand that regulators like SEBI and TRAI work because they have very specific mandates, not indiscriminately open-ended ones. It is not even clear

whether the powers the Central government has retained in the bill will allow for a fully independent regulator.

If this bill goes through, we will get centralisation instead of decentralisation, control instead of autonomy, homogenisation instead of diversity, bureaucratisation instead of suppleness, institutional rigidity instead of innovation, and a winner takes all approach to regulation. While we have a new minister trying to shake things up, this bill seems to reek of the mindset of the old education and bureaucratic establishment; the very same people who made the current system so dysfunctional seem to have conjured up a new command and control system. Indeed, one of the lessons may be that we are looking too much to laws and regulations to fix every problem. If Sibal does not empower the right people who have a genuinely liberal imagination in the widest sense of the term, what he will get is a travesty wearing the mantle of reform.

**Source:** New Delhi [in.news.yahoo.com/](http://in.news.yahoo.com/)23 February 2010

## NEWS

### Now, nursery admission not before four in Delhi

In an attempt to standardize non-formal education and bring reprieve for tens of thousands of children and their parents, the human resource development (HRD) ministry and school principals Monday decided to raise the nursery admission minimum age to four years from the present three-plus in Delhi.

After a meeting with school principals and parents, HRD Minister Kapil Sibal said that "a consensus has emerged that nursery admission will not take place before a child reached the age of four."

This will reduce "unnecessary stress on children and their parents," the minister said.

Sibal said that parents and principals came to him saying that "the present system of education in Delhi is traumatic for children".

"If a three-year-old child faces psychological pressure, then it is injustice. I believe, it's not fair to give children stress. So pre-school should not start before four," the minister said after his interaction with school principals and parents.

However, the measure can only be implemented after Delhi government accepts it, as education is a state subject.

"I cannot implement it immediately, but I am writing to Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit recommending this," Sibal added.

"I have already spoken to Sheilaji and she told me to write to her about the consensus. I will write a formal letter," he said stressing that there is need to standardize pre-school education.

Sibal said once the Delhi government accepts the measure, nursery admission will be fixed at four and admission to kindergarten (KG) will be at the age of five.

Finally, a child will start his Class 1 formal education at the age of six.

When asked whether he will recommend this age slab as an all India procedure, Sibal said: "Education is a state subject and it's not in my hand. But this should be an all India procedure."

"In the next CABE (Central Advisory Board of Education) meeting I will put it as an agenda. I will also write to states," he said, adding that in Scandinavian nations, formal education starts at six years of age.

Elaborating on the nursery school admission, the minister said that he has suggested that nursery and kindergarten education (non-formal education) should be imparted outside the campus of the school imparting formal education.

"Children should not feel that they are under the rules of a formal school. They should enjoy their learning. The focus should be on children not on schools," he explained.

**Source:** New Delhi [prokerala/](http://prokerala/)15 February 2010

### 54 Universities with Arjun nod unfit

Fifty-four of the 61 deemed universities that were approved during Arjun Singh's tenure as human resource development minister between 2004 and 2009 are unfit for the tag, an HRD ministry review has found.

The findings of the confidential review report, accessed by The Telegraph, are an indictment of India's education policy makers, and expose the extent of the rot in higher education standards they allowed over the past five years.

The report also confirms that barring seven exceptions, India's best deemed universities earned the tag in the years before higher education offered lucrative business opportunities that could be milked through corruption.

The probe, ordered by HRD minister Kapil Sibal within days of taking over from Arjun last year, divided 126 deemed universities into three categories based on its findings. The remaining four of India's 130 deemed varsities did not participate in the review.

The institutions were assessed by the probe panel on nine parameters — ranging from their vision for the varsity and compliance with University Grants Commission norms to research output and levels of innovation employed.

In an affidavit submitted before the Supreme Court last month, the ministry had disclosed a list of 44 that the review found were incapable of ever meeting standards required of deemed universities.

But the review report and the deemed universities in the other two categories — 44 unfit for the tag but deserving a three-year lifeline and 38 "good" institutes fit for the tag — have been kept a closely-guarded secret.

Understandably, perhaps Government institutions dominate the list of 38 deemed universities found fit by the review panel — 21 of the names on this list are public universities, while 17 are private.

The list of “good” deemed universities predictably includes some of the country’s finest institutions — both public and private.

The Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research in Mumbai and other top research institutions and the Birla Institute of Science and Technology in Pilani and Mesra (Jharkhand) are on this list.

But a study of when these institutions received the deemed tag — and with that the power to award degrees — reveals that only a minuscule minority of quality varsities joined this league under Arjun.

India had 69 deemed varsities before he took over as HRD minister and today has 130 — no new institutions have received the tag after the UPA came back to power a second time. But the near doubling in number of deemed varsities added only seven institutions to the “good” league, according to the report.

The seven include two government institutions — the North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology in Itanagar and the Kerala Kalamandalam in Thrissur.

The other 5 are private — Gandhi Institute of Technology and Management (Visakhapatnam), International Institute of Information Technology (Bangalore), IIS University (Jaipur), Chennai Mathematical Institute, and Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Educational and Research Institute (Howrah).

The Ramakrishna Mission institute is Bengal’s sole deemed university.

The remaining 54 of the 61 deemed universities approved by Arjun’s ministry are unfit for the tag, the review has said.

Of these, 17 are on the list of 44 institutions deemed unfit but given the three-year lifeline to meet required standards.

The rest 37 do not even deserve the lifeline, the review has found.

**Source:** New Delhi [/Telegraph India/](#)17 February 2010

### **Govt. to move bill on foreign universities entry**

The government will introduce a bill to allow the entry of foreign universities during the parliament session that begins on Monday, an official said, a long-awaited reform that would revamp the country’s education system.

Goldman Sachs counts the lack of quality education as one of the 10 factors holding India back from rapid economic growth. The demand for graduates over the next five years is likely to be 13.8 million, analysts have estimated.

“We are taking steps to finalise it (the bill) and send it to the cabinet and parliament,” Vibha Puri Das, secretary for higher education, told Reuters by telephone late on Tuesday.

When asked if it would be introduced in parliament in the budget session starting Feb. 22, she said: “That is what we are working towards.”

Das declined to comment on a report the bill would be discussed by the federal cabinet during its Thursday meeting.

The cabinet must approve the bill before it can be introduced in parliament.

**Source:** New Delhi [/reuters/](#)17 February 2010

### **IITs' plan to offer medical courses rejected**

Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) will have to put their plan to start medical education on hold as the health ministry has decided against allowing these elite engineering schools to start courses in medicine.

In a high level meeting of experts chaired by health secretary K Sujatha Rao — the first to discuss this controversial issue — the health ministry decided to write to the HRD ministry suggesting that “IITs should start courses on health information technology, biomedical engineering and e-health rather than running a hospital or starting MBBS courses”.

The health ministry will ask IITs to partner with renowned medical colleges like AIIMS and PGI (Chandigarh) in jointly running these new courses.

Medical Council of India, which had come out in support of IITs’ proposal to start medical degrees while talking to TOI on Monday, did a volte-face in the meeting and staunchly opposed the plan.

“IITs wanted to start MBBS courses in a couple of years and wanted to be exempted from MCI’s control. The MCI then joined health ministry officials to staunchly go against the proposal to let IITs even start an MBBS programme,” sources who attended the meeting told TOI.

Strangely, MCI chairman Dr Ketan Desai on Monday had told TOI, “We welcome the move. We know that if IITs start medical schools, they will have the same standard as their other courses. They will ensure they have the best faculty as their reputation will be at stake.”

Experts who attended the meeting said IITs should focus on what they do best — engineering education — and that “imparting medical education wasn’t IITs’ core domain”.

Experts also said that except IIT Kharagpur, which was planning to start its own hospital and medical college within its premises, all other IITs were planning to tie up with existing private hospitals to provide students with complicated cases.

“Can private hospitals have as many footfalls as a government hospital? Can a private hospital deliver the variety of difficult cases required for under-graduate medical education? This was another important reservation of experts,” a health ministry source said.

Those who attended the meeting included directors of AIIMS, PGI (Chandigarh), Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate

Institute (Lucknow), JIPMER, NIMHANS, National Institute of Communicable Diseases, National Institute of Paramedical Sciences and principal of CMC Vellore.

Some IITs, like Kharagpur and Hyderabad, had already started working on starting a medical school in about three years. IIT Kharagpur has supposedly signed an MoU with University of California, San Diego, to set up a hospital which will offer graduate, post-graduate and research programmes in medicine and bio-medical engineering.

Source: [/Times of India/](#)17 February 2010

### No end to row over quota in JNU

The imbroglia over reservation in faculty in JNU continues. Now Executive Council members are seeing red on the minutes of the last EC meeting of January 12 and have accused the administration of "misrepresenting" that there was a "unanimity" on referring the reservation issue to Academic Council.

The university administration has also sent a circular saying the reservation in higher faculty -- except the entry point of assistant professor -- be first discussed by all schools/centres before the AC meets.

EC member P Sainath has written to JNU vice-chancellor BB Bhattacharya pointing out that in the EC meeting more than one member questioned the purpose of referring the matter to AC. "I also dismissed the idea of EC rescinding its earlier resolutions. It is outrageous to find the minutes saying the EC `unanimously desired...."

He also objected to the circular and said "implementation of government policy on reservation was an executive and administrative matter, not academic". Sainath demanded another EC meeting to discuss withholding of information from EC. He said EC was not told about JNU being a party to the case in Supreme Court filed by Citizens for Equality challenging UGC guidelines on reservation.

In an earlier letter to the VC, Sainath had said opposition to reservation in higher faculty is a "peculiar marriage of class arrogance and caste animosity, no matter how eminent its authors. The disadvantaged can only be served if the well-to-do remain. Is this an academic trickle-down theory," he asked.

Meanwhile on February 14, Aditya Mukherjee, Professor in history, circulated a letter arguing that reservation should not be given at the level of higher faculty like Associate Professor and Professor. To bolster his point of view, he said UGC guidelines are not mandatory for JNU. Mukherjee also quoted former JNU VCs and Emeritus Professors saying that reservation of faculty positions at highest levels will render disadvantaged groups into chief victims.

With hundreds of teachers already supporting reservation at all faculty levels, another letter has been issued as a response to Mukherjee's. It points out that Mukherjee's letter is "full of lies and distortions". Teachers have asked that if there was widespread support against reservation why was the matter raised under the head of `any other

matter' by EC. They said, "Twice born castes in academia is under serious threat of losing its monopoly? Why raise the fallacious argument of merit, quality and efficiency."

Source: New Delhi [/Times of India/](#)17 February 2010

### States to have lesser say in appointing VCs

The main feature of the draft National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) Bill is that the NCHER will keep a National Registry of eminent academicians eligible to be considered for the post of vice-chancellors of universities.

The Task Force, constituted by the Union Ministry of Human Resources Development, for conducting consultation on the draft NCHER was in the city on Tuesday to discuss the draft Bill with the stakeholders from the State. The NCHER will replace the University Grants Commission, All-India Council for Technical Education and other bodies controlling higher and professional education at present.

As per the proposals in the Bill, if a university requires a vice-chancellor, it has to write to the NCHER.

The NCHER, in turn, will refer it to the collegium to be formed under it. The collegium will suggest a list of five persons to the university. The university has the freedom to select one from the list. The collegium will consist of fellows, core fellows and co-opted fellows.

The National Registry will have the names recommended by Central and State Governments, universities and other institutions of higher education.

As per the Bill, the NCHER will have a chairperson and six members. The Bill also says to bring all matters concerned with higher education, including granting of approval for institutions, deemed universities and research, under the purview of the NCHER.

The Commission will consist of a chairperson and six other members. The chairperson and three other members will act as full-time members and will be paid salaries.

The chairperson and members will be appointed by the President on the recommendation of a selection committee consisting of the Prime Minister who will be the chairperson of the committee, the Speaker of Lok Sabha, Opposition Leader of Lok Sabha and Union Ministers in charge of Higher Education and Medical Education.

The term of office of the chairperson and members will be five years from the date of joining. However, whole-time members will cease to be members on attaining the age of 70.

The salaries, allowances and other terms and conditions of service of the chairperson of the commission will be equal to that of the Chief Election Commissioner. The salaries, allowances, and conditions of service of whole-time members will be the same as that of the Election Commissioner.

The Task Force, headed by IIT Kanpur chairman and Anna University former Vice-Chancellor M. Anandakrishnan, held

consultations with the stakeholders in the State on Tuesday, including Government representatives, vice-chancellors and educationists. The task force will move to Chennai on Wednesday. Before visiting the State, the task force held its first consultation with stakeholders from Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka on Monday at the National Law School of India University.

The task force, during the consultations, heard the views of State Governments and State universities regarding the structure of the proposed commission.

### **Apprehensions**

The State Government representatives came down heavily on the NCHER accusing it of being a vehicle to destroy the State's autonomy in education. Education Minister M.A. Baby, while speaking at the meeting with the task force, said that the NCHER Bill was against the federal system. Planning Board vice-chairman Prabhath Patnaik, Kerala State Higher Education Council vice-chairman K.N.Panicker, NUALS vice-chancellor N.K.Jayakumar and Sree Sankara University of Sanskrit vice-chancellor J.Prasad supported his opinion.

Many academicians who spoke at the meeting also questioned the logic behind excluding medical and agriculture education from the purview of the NCHER.

**Source:** Thrivendram [/Express Buzz/](#) 17 February 2010

### **CBSE sounds warning on arbitrary use of CCE**

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has said the abolition of the Class X Boards should not give schools the idea that they can introduce the new CCE scheme according to their whims and fancy. Even as CBSE is thinking of introducing CCE in classes XI and XII, it is also going to introduce a 'mentoring and monitoring' mechanism from March this year to maintain uniformity in CCE practices across schools and to check any violations.

Parents have already been complaining about the added burden on their children, saying schools have been giving extra weekly or daily tests, quizzes and project work on the pretext of implementation of CCE, and now CBSE officials too are confirming that they have been getting reports of schools handing out daily tests, experiments and project work ever since the introduction of the new system. CBSE chairman Vineet Joshi said: "Everyday tests and quizzes are against the philosophy of CCE itself. CCE's purpose is to destress education for children and yet ensure the holistic growth of every child."

Saying that CCE activities should be confined to the core curriculum and that most activities should be conducted within school hours, Joshi added: "All projects, experiments and activities should happen strictly during school hours, they should not be passed on as homework. CCE is a way of evaluation and that should happen in front of the teacher, in school."

The chairman said CBSE would write to all schools to curtail any practices not prescribed by CCE. "CCE is not implemented by conducting tests every day," said Joshi.

Meanwhile, the Board is planning to train principals, retired principals and educationists on CCE-monitoring tools and is going to introduce the monitoring mechanism across the country from March 2010. According to the mentoring and monitoring mechanism, schools would be clubbed in clusters of 10 and two to three current and former principals or educationists would be made responsible for the monitoring of each cluster and making random checks.

"This is not 'inspector raj' but the trained inspectors will conduct random surveys, interact with students and parents and will be responsible for ensuring that no biases creep into the system. CCE has been developed to help children and if the reverse happens, that means the system has failed. Moreover this mechanism will help ensure uniformity in CCE practices," said Joshi.

**Source:** New Delhi [/Times of India/](#) 18 February 2010

### **Eligibility exams or PhD? College teachers confused**

*Government resolution says they should clear either NET or SET by December 2011, mentions nothing about new UGC guidelines*

Around 1,500 teachers of various colleges affiliated to the University of Pune (UoP) who have not yet cleared the National or State Eligibility Test (NET/SET) will lose their jobs if they don't clear one of them before December 31, 2011. In other words, these teachers will have to clear either of these examinations within four bids to save their jobs.

The university had, last week, sent a letter to the principals of 600 affiliated colleges, asking them to remind the teachers working in their respective colleges to comply with the NET/SET eligibility norm. The letter has been sent against the backdrop of a government resolution (GR) on January 30.

The GR says that it is mandatory for college teachers to clear NET/SET in four attempts in two years, ending December 31, 2011. It refers to the letter written by the University Grants Commission (UGC) in July 2009 to all vice-chancellors regarding compliance of NET/SET by college teachers who are serving on an ad hoc basis. It also mentions that the move forms part of efforts to increase the quality of higher education.

The college teachers, on the other hand, are confused as the GR does not mention anything about pursuing PhD as per the UGC's new guidelines, which will exempt them from the NET/SET clause.

"As the UGC had clarified that completing PhD would exempt college teachers from the NET/SET clause, many teachers have registered for PhD. Now, with this new GR issued, we don't know whether pursuing PhD would save us from clearing the NET/SET," said a college teacher who appeared for the university's first-ever entrance exam for PhD registration.

In fact, the number of PhD aspirants increased manifold this year; almost 40 per cent more than the average following the notion that pursuing PhD would lead to an exemption from the NET/SET clause.

A high-level officer in the university said the GR was pretty clear and it meant the serving college teachers could escape from the NET/SET clause. "Even if some of them have registered for PhD, they will have to pursue NET/SET."

The latest GR is considered a slap on the face of Maharashtra Federation of University and College Teachers' Organisation (MFUCTO) that had gone on strike for two months last year, demanding exemption for serving college teachers from NET/SET. The office-bearers continued to claim that the government had agreed to their demands. However, the GR reflects exactly the opposite.

**Source:** [/Indian Express/](#)18 February 2010

### **Only MBA, MCA valid through distance mode - AICTE**

Alerting students pursuing various degrees through the distance mode, the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has clarified that only the Council considers M.B.A. and M.C.A. through the distance mode for recognition.

In a public notice issued recently, the AICTE said, "The technical education programmes, which fall under the purview of AICTE, are in the fields of engineering, technology including MCA, Architecture, Town Planning, Pharmacy, Hotel Management & Catering Technology, Applied Arts and Craft and Post Graduate diploma in Management (PGDM)".

"It has been the policy of the AICTE, not to recognize the qualifications acquired through distance mode at diploma, bachelor's and master's level in these fields however. It now has the policy to consider only MBA and MCA through distance mode".

The Council also alerted all existing / prospective students pursuing or aspiring to pursue any educational programme in the fields to check the approval by the Joint Committee of Distance Education Council (DEC) of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), University Grants Commission (UGC) and AICTE on AICTE's website.

In the absence of the Council's approval, the MBA and MCA degrees acquired through the distance mode may not be considered for employment under Central Government.

**Source:** New Delhi [/India Edu News/](#)19 February 2010

### **Sheila Dikshit to meet Sibal, discuss private school fee issue**

With HRD Minister Kapil Sibal suggesting that government cannot regulate fees or teachers' salaries in private schools, Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit on Saturday said she will meet him to discuss the issue and arrive at clear-cut guidelines.

"I have sought an appointment with him (Sibal). Let us see what guidelines are going to come," she told reporters on the sidelines of a function here when asked about the Delhi government's view on the matter.

Mr. Sibal had reportedly said that the fees of private schools cannot be regulated and that each school had the right to fix the salaries of its teachers.

Asked whether her government agrees with the comments, Ms. Dikshit said, "No, no we will discuss the issue. I have only read about it in a newspaper report. We will talk it out and see what comes out of it."

Mr. Sibal's reported suggestion stands against provisions in the Delhi School Education Act, 1973, which says that salaries of teachers in private schools cannot be less than that of those in government schools. Delhi also witnessed strong protests over private school fee hike last year.

**Source:** New Delhi [/Beta. The Hindu/](#)20 February 2010

### **Appointment norms for engineering colleges to be relaxed**

Union Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal has assured the self-financing engineering colleges that the revised norms stipulating all engineering colleges to appoint only M.Tech qualified persons as Assistant Professors and Ph.D. holders as Associate Professors would not be insisted for three years.

The assurance was given on Thursday to a delegation of the Federation of Managements of Unaided Professional Institutions in India (FAMPEI) led by its president V. Malakonda Reddy who had submitted a memorandum seeking relaxation of the condition.

Founder and Chancellor of the Sathyabama University Jeppiaar told *The Hindu* from Chennai that the Minister assured the delegation that the condition would not be insisted for three years in view of the difficulties experienced by the self-financing colleges in getting post graduate engineering graduates for appointment as Assistant Professors and Ph.D. holders for Associate Professors.

In its memorandum, the FAMPEI wanted the Minister to modify some of the norms, which were not practicable and not implementable under present circumstances, viz "in the new norms for the Assistant Professor M.Tech. is made compulsory in addition to B.E./B.Tech. Degree and for the Associate Professor, Ph.D. is made compulsory in addition to M.Tech. degree and five years experience as Assistant Professor."

It said, "it is impossible to implement this norm as there is severe shortage of competent teaching staff with M.Tech. and Ph.D. qualifications. In view of this non-availability of competent teaching staff as per the High Power Committee report accepted by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), we request the Minister to kindly adopt the existing norms for qualifications, which do not insist on

M.Tech. and Ph.D. for the post of Assistant Professor and Associate Professor respectively.

“Further as the AICTE norms are uniform throughout the Country, there should be uniform minimum fee structure. The Central Fee Fixation Committee under the Chairmanship of Justice Ranganath Mishra, appointed by the AICTE three years ago for arriving at a minimum reasonable fee structure for all the engineering colleges in the country should be requested to submit the report immediately and that fee structure should be made mandatory minimum in all the States and should be implemented at once.”

**Source:** New Delhi [/Beta. The Hindu/](#)21 February 2010

### **Sibal for easing norms to let small schools stay**

HRD minister Kapil Sibal has said that he was against profiteering by schools in the form of overcharging of fees or demanding capitation charges and made it clear that he was also keen to ensure that small schools do not face problems over recognition.

Briefing journalists on Saturday, Sibal said once the Right to Education Act comes into force from April 1, many small schools will have to get recognized by state governments within three years. Recognition will mean that they have to give state government salary to the teachers.

"If they give government salary many of these schools which impart quality education will close down. What will happen to poor children?" he asked. He said HRD ministry is likely to hold consultations with state governments to evolve a policy on how to give relaxation to marginalized schools to deal with conditions for registration.

Sibal said he would meet Delhi chief minister Shiela Dikshit on Monday to request her for reviewing the Delhi School Education Act, 1973, so that unrecognized schools do not have to raise salary as per government scale after getting recognition. The RTE Act is silent on fee and says that salary should be as per state government norms. As is the provision, in case a central law is silent on an issue, the state law prevails. In case there is a conflict between the central and state law, the central law prevails. Therefore, fee and salary are to be decided by state governments.

Arguing that even marginal schools will provide 25% reservation to poor children as prescribed by the RTE Act, Sibal said, "If they close down on account of teacher salary it will go against disadvantaged section. Why marginalize the marginal schools?"

Sibal also said 25% reservation might not be possible this year as admission in many states is already underway.

Apart from salary of teachers, Sibal said there are other issues on which HRD ministry will hold consultation with states. Even the requirement of playground, he said, is not easy to fulfill in urban areas.

**Source:** New Delhi [/Times of India/](#)21 February 2010

### **State meets on university monitor**

The state higher education council is likely to oppose the Centre's move to abolish the University Grants Commission (UGC) and create the National Commission for Higher Education and Research, an overarching regulator for higher education.

The state government will host a consultation on the bill, drafted to form the commission, in Salt Lake on March 3, where the council members are likely to express reservations about the proposal. Representatives of Orissa and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands would also attend the meeting.

“There are shortcomings in the functioning of the UGC. However, the policies implemented by the body since its formation in 1957 have contributed to the development of higher education. Many academicians in Bengal are not in favour of the abolition of the UGC,” said an official in the West Bengal Council of Higher Education.

Apart from the UGC, the proposed commission could replace the All India Council for Technical Education and curb the powers of the National Council of Assessment and Accreditation, the National Council of Teacher Education and other bodies.

The higher education council has convened a meeting on February 24 to discuss the issue. The outcome of the discussions will determine what the council members say at the March 3 consultation.

“Heads of universities, education department officials and senior academicians would attend our February 24 meeting so that we can agree on a stand,” said Subimal Sen, the council chairman.

The human resource development ministry took steps to set up the commission acting on recommendations of the Yash Pal panel, formed in 2008 to suggest ways to upgrade the higher education system.

One of the objectives behind creating the commission is to give full autonomy to universities, which will design their own courses, including those for medical and engineering, said a council official.

The commission, according to the Yash Pal committee, will oversee the functioning of the universities and act as a facilitator for growth of higher education and research.

“We are not fully opposed to the creation of the commission. What we want to make clear to the ministry is that there should be no loopholes that allow political influence,” said an official in the higher education department.

**Source:** Kolkata [/Telegraph India/](#)22 February 2010

### **Tata Steel in Orissa Integrating Tribals in Mainstream Through Education**

Education encompasses both the teaching and learning of knowledge, proper conduct, and technical competency. Growth of community by Tata Steel is facilitated through

basic education, technical competency, and skill development apart from other initiatives. Tata Steel has been playing lead role in the eastern part of Country with specific focus in Orissa for sustainable growth of tribal communities for integrating them in mainstream economy through education.

The commitment of the Steel Company for providing world class education for the tribal community in Orissa is testified by the MOU signed by the Company with Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS).

Another grass level testimonial for tribal education in the state is reflected by the continuous support provided by the Company to the education institution founded by Padmshree Tulasi Munda known as Adivasi Vikash Samity (AVS) Vidyalaya in Serenda area of Keonjhar district. Recently the company has built an office building for this school. Earlier, it has provided tube well, dug well, class rooms for the high school, safety toilets for gents and ladies, boundary wall of the school, books for the library etc to this school. Tata Steel also sends Mobile Medical Van to the school every Saturday. With three hundred and fifty-two students enrolled, AVS, Serenda imparts education to the tribal children up to Class-IX.

Tata Steel which has given a guarantee to improve the quality of life substantially within five years for the rehabilitated families of Tata Steel Paribar at Kalinganagar, have already achieved this in the field of education within first four years of rehabilitation at Kalinganagar. The Rehabilitation and Resettlement team of Tata Steel ensures and motivates all the children above the age of 3 to attend a school starting from Balwadis operating in the rehabilitation townships and monitors & tracks the performance of each child. This has ensured Zero School dropout amongst the children of rehabilitated families. The Steel Company is also providing 100% Tata Paribar Scholarships for rehabilitated family members pursuing higher professional education like medicine, engineering, diploma courses etc. Till now around 40 boys and girls have been benefited from this.

Further Tata Steel has engaged CAPS Foundation for imparting Employability and Entrepreneurship education skills in Jajpur and Keonjhar districts of Orissa with placement facilities in various service related industries periphery of main industrial set-up of Tata Steel in the locality. The courses imparted are that of Customer Relationship Management, Computers, Welding Technology and various skills in electrical and mechanical streams. These course have facilitated the tribal youths in the interiors of Jajpur and Keonjhar to obtain mainstream employment oriented education courses and subsequent placement. More than 2000 students have been benefitted from this in last couple of years.

It is a well known fact that Tata Steel has set up J N Tata Technical Education Center at Gopalpur at an investment of Rs 28 crores. The institute is run by Nettur Technical Training Foundation and imparting 3 years diploma course in Mechatronics, Electronics and Manufacturing

Technology for boys and girls from Orissa with a guarantee for employment. Boys and girls, those who have successfully completed the course have achieved 100% placement with the best of the Corporate in the country such as Siemens, L&T, Robert Bosch, Maruti Suzuki, Punj Lyod, Al-Shirwai (Dubai), etc. From the year 2009, Tata Steel in collaboration with Orissa Schedule Cast /Schedule Tribe Development Finance Cooperative Corporation, Employment Mission, Government of Orissa is sponsoring two-years Certificate Programme in multiskill (Technical) for Schedule Tribe candidates from the state for training at the J N TATA Technical Education Centre (JNTTEC), Gopalpur for a period of two years.

**Source:** Bhubaneswar /[Orissa Diary](#)/22 February 2010

### **Tamil Nadu to experiment with engineering courses in Tamil**

In a major experiment with technical education, the Tamil Nadu government has decided to introduce Bachelors of Engineering (BE) course in the civil and mechanical disciplines in the Tamil medium also in 15 constituent colleges of the four Anna Universities. The state would create an additional cumulative 1,800 seats in these institutions to accommodate students who prefer to study BE in Tamil medium.

Announcing this on Wednesday, higher education minister K Ponmudy made it clear that students would have the option of joining BE in the Tamil or English medium in these select institutions. "There will be no compulsion for students to join Tamil medium courses. Since mathematics, physics and chemistry are the basis for civil and mechanical engineering courses, it would be easy to introduce them in Tamil on an experimental basis for the first year students alone," he said. A similar initiative would be launched in the polytechnics too.

Quite expectedly, the move, although a pilot project, has taken a section of academia by surprise and left many wondering if adequate brainstorming was done on the implications, particularly on the employability of engineers graduating in Tamil. Just last week, Ponmudy had said there could be no second opinion on introducing Tamil as a medium of instruction in technical and medical education.

On Wednesday, the minister chaired a meeting at which vice-chancellors of a few state universities and office-bearers of the Tamil Nadu State Council for Higher Education were present. At the meeting, which lasted less than 20 minutes, he announced the new policy.

According to him, Tamil textbooks for the two disciplines would be prepared by experts in a couple of months under the supervision of a four-member committee, comprising the vice-chancellors of the Anna Universities in Chennai, Coimbatore, Tiruchi and Tirunelveli.

**Source:** Chennai /[Times of India](#)/25 February 2010

**It's 'destination India' for top global schools**

Come September, US-based Georgia Institute of Technology (commonly called Georgia Tech) will begin work on its research centre in Hyderabad. The institute is in the process of signing memoranda of understanding with several leading Indian and US industry and academic entities.

This top US-based research university's is just the latest in a series of such initiatives by marquee names in the world of education. Early this month, the Punjab government collaborated with Carnegie Mellon University to set up a 'Punjab International University' near Ludhiana in a 35-acre complex. The initial proposal would have five schools in the university

Harvard Business School (HBS) decided to have a classroom of its own in the country for its executive education programmes. Yale University agreed to develop an India-Yale Leadership Program in areas like curriculum development, faculty development and academic planning. The Union ministry of human resource development (MHRD) is said to be firming up a plan before a memorandum of understanding is signed between it and Yale later this year, when the latter's president, Richard C Levin, visits.

As the government readies itself to introduce the Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations, Maintenance of Quality and Prevention of Commercialisation) Bill, which will permit the entry of foreign institutions in the education sector, around 140 Indian institutions and 156 foreign education providers are engaged in academic collaborations for India.

Of these 156 foreign providers, 90 have university status and 20 have college status. Other institutions are training institutions or those for further education. The total number of collaborations was 225 and with each collaboration having over one programme delivery, the total number collaboratively delivered stands at 635.

Georgia Tech's initiative in India is in the start-up phase, where two centres of excellence will be established at Hyderabad, in collaboration with Indian industry and university partners.

"These not-for-profit centres are in the areas of energy and information technology. Faculty and students from Georgia Tech and industry and academic partners from India are expected to work closely on research projects that are of value to India," Vijay Madiseti, Executive Director, Georgia Tech India Initiative, told Business Standard from the US.

In November 2009, it signed MoUs with Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Hyderabad, and with the Pandit Deendayal Petroleum University in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, towards establishing broad-based research and educational collaborating with leading Indian educational institutions. The courses to be run would fully be at par with those on its US campus. Efforts would be made to have degrees awarded by this university to be recognised in the US.

"We expect that a small but high-quality postgraduate educational program (where we can grant US MS/PhD degrees) can be initiated following the successful establishment of these research centres, subject to guidance from appropriate Government of India agencies," added Madiseti.

Carnegie Mellon Chief Executive Officer Gil Taran said, "The cost of education would be a fraction of the cost an international student would pay in USA. Technical courses would be developed in connection with the needs of the local industry."

Carnegie Mellon, which is rated amongst the top 10 universities of the US and is ranked best for its robotics department, has set up such state-of-the-art educational institutions in China, Doha (Qatar) and Kazakhstan, too. Institutes which have entered into such collaboration say around 75 per cent of programmes charge less than Rs 2 lakh.

"If we project that around 40,000 students are studying in transnational programmes and an average of Rs 2 lakh is charged per student, then the scale of financial operation is about Rs 8 billion and roughly is equivalent to 8 per cent of the total public expenditure on higher education in India. Thus, in terms of enrollment the scale of operation may seem minuscule; in terms of finance, the scale of operation is not too small," said a professor who's closely tracking the developments.

Experts say the highest number of collaborations is taking place in the field of management and business administration — 168 of the total of 635, or 26 per cent. The next most offered discipline for collaboration is engineering and technology/computer application/information technology, having 144 or over 22 per cent collaborative programmes, followed by hotel management and house keeping, having 132 or over 20 per cent collaborations. Interestingly, these foreign collaborations are highly concentrated in Maharashtra and Delhi, followed by Tamil Nadu.

"At present higher educational institutions from the UK and US are showing maximum interest in collaborations with Indian institutions. The Indian institutions that are managed by trusts have the maximum number of collaborations, followed by those established under the Societies Act," the professor said.

Of the 225 existing collaborations, 83 are with educational institutions from Britain, followed by 79 from the US.

Industry experts believe 53 institutions from Britain have their presence in India, followed by the US having 46 institutions in India, through various collaborative arrangements like twinning (exchange of expertise and students), franchisee, joint provisions and link programmes.

The highest numbers of collaborations of foreign institutions are with non-affiliated private institutions. Collaborations with public institutes is very low. Only three institutions of a central/state university and four deemed universities out of

140 institutions are said to be collaborating with foreign partners.

US-based education specialist Rahul Choudaha observed that while there had been international academic collaborations happening with medium to low-tier institutions in India, now there is increasing interest from more prestigious universities, too.

**Source:** [/Business-Standard/](#)25 February 2010

### **New norms on approval for Engineering colleges stayed**

The Madras High Court has stayed the operation of the Revised Process Handbook published on January 9, this year by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and the consequential order dated February 1 of the Regional Officer of the AICTE in Chennai stipulating certain new conditions for extension of approval to the existing private self-financing engineering colleges in the State.

Justice K Venkataraman granted the injunction while admitting a writ petition from the Consortium of Self-Financing Professional Arts and Science Colleges in Tamil Nadu, represented by its secretary P Selvaraj, on Wednesday.

Advocate R Natarajan submitted that the revised procedure did not appear to be an amendment to the regulations or a fresh set of regulations framed by the AICTE under Sec. 23 of the AICTE Act. The new procedure had not been published in the gazette as required under the section to make it effective. The new and onerous conditions were impossible of compliance within the time frame of February 28 and was also questionable as to whether the new conditions could be imposed for the existing approved institutions.

The proceedings were liable to be struck down as being discriminatory and violative of Article 14 of the Constitution, since they were imposed only on the self-financing institutions and the government and government-aided colleges were spared. The time limit was too short and all the institutions within February 28 could not comply with the requirements, Natarajan said.

Senior advocate K Doraisamy has also filed a similar petition on behalf of the Association of Management of Coimbatore Anna University Affiliated Colleges and obtained the stay order.

**Source:** Chennai [/Express Buzz/](#)25 February 2010

### **Showcause notices to 44 deemed universities, Centre tells SC**

The Centre has told the Supreme Court that it has decided to issue showcause notices to 44 universities as to why they should not be stripped of their "deemed" status after individually offering them sufficient opportunity to be heard.

In an additional affidavit, the Union HRD Ministry also said it had independent powers to de-recognise the deemed universities for their lapses and was not bound by any contrary suggestion or advice given by the UGC.

"The institutions deemed to be universities which prima facie do not deserve to retain their status as deemed to be universities, as recommended by the review committee, will each be communicated the shortcomings found against them and will be afforded an opportunity to show cause why their declaration as institutions deemed to be universities should not be revoked by the Government.

"After receipt of their reply and due consideration thereof, the government will pass an appropriate order in each case. All this will be done within a reasonable time frame," the affidavit said.

On January 25, the Supreme Court had directed the union government to maintain status quo on the 44 deemed universities facing de-recognition for not being upto the standard.

The Centre also submitted in sealed cover reports of the high-powered review committee and the task force that has recommended de-recognition of the 44 varsities for failing to meet the required students.

**Source:** New Delhi [/Economic Times/](#)25 February 2010

### **Affiliation a must for universities stripped of deemed status**

Hardening its stand against universities stripped off their deemed status by HRD ministry's Tandon committee, the Centre on Wednesday stood by the expert body's recommendation that these institutions must revert to old status and be asked to seek fresh affiliation from nearby universities.

Students studying in these institutions would have to migrate to other colleges if the faulted institution failed to get fresh affiliation, it said and added that the cost of migration and fresh enrolment in the new college would have to be borne by the one stripped of its deemed university status.

But before taking a final decision on the fate of the 44 educational institutions recommended by the expert committee for being stripped of deemed status, the Centre said one final opportunity would be given to them to show cause why they be not treated as per the recommendations of the Tandon committee.

The Centre will take a final decision after receiving their response, the HRD ministry said in its affidavit filed in the Supreme Court on Wednesday.

The ministry had faced serious questioning from a vociferous lot of senior advocates on the ability and legality of the Tandon committee to pass judgment on the deemed university status of educational institutions conferred by the statutory body -- University Grants Commission (UGC).

Quoting the status report, the Centre said, "Medical colleges and dental colleges not found suitable to continue

as institutions deemed to be universities should also revert to status quo ante and should seek affiliation to the appropriate statutory State University or State Medical University to enable students to complete their courses."

It added, "Where an institution is unable to obtain affiliation, every effort should be made to facilitate migration/re-enrolment of students to equivalent or similar courses in other institutions. Students in doctoral programmes would need to re-register in affiliating universities."

All distance education programmes run by these faulty universities have to immediately discontinue the programme and those enrolled have to be shifted to IGNOU or State Open Universities, it said.

"The entire cost of migration and rehabilitation of students should be at the expense of the managements of the failed institutions from out of the corpus fund which was required to be maintained in respect of each under the extant UGC guidelines," the ministry said.

Defending the findings and mode of scrutiny adopted by the committee to review the deemed status of educational institutions, the ministry said it was concerned, not so much with the availability of land, buildings, other infrastructure, institutional finance, but primarily with issues relating to academic and research excellence, innovation, emerging areas of knowledge, post-graduate education, governance structures and an overall milieu conducive to the concept of a university.

Among the major aberrations that the Review Committee came across were:

- undesirable management architecture where families, rather than professional academics, controlled the institutions
- thoughtless introduction of unrelated programmes and proliferation of degrees beyond the mandate of the original terms of grant of deemed university status
- very few institutions could produce evidence of quality research
- many institutions on attaining deemed university status increased their intake capacity disproportionately
- several institutions deemed to be universities, undergraduate and post-graduate programmes had been fragmented with concocted nomenclatures
- several institutions prescribed fee structures considerably higher than those recommended by the official fee-structure committees

**Source:** New Delhi [/Times of India/](#)26 February 2010

### **IITs, IIMs face crunch in shift**

India has raised its national school education budget by over 30 per cent above last year's expenditure, largely to implement its landmark right to education law that

guarantees schooling to all children between six and 14 years.

But finance minister Pranab Mukherjee's budget today also represents a shift in the government's financial focus away from higher education, and suggests that central universities, IITs and IIMs will need to tighten their belts.

The budget has reduced the allocation for running existing higher education programmes and institutions, reflected in a drop in the non-plan budget from Rs 6,437 crore spent last year to Rs 5,694 crore in today's budget.

This means that the country's apex higher educational institutions will almost certainly need to either raise fees or levy extra charges on students in order to pay teachers and maintain their infrastructure.

The human resource development ministry's assessment suggests that the Centre and states will together need over Rs 170 crore over five years to implement the right to education law.

The budget today announced an allocation hike for school education from Rs 25,338 crore spent last year to Rs 33,214 crore this year.

Throughout the first term of the UPA and the first year in its second term, the government focused largely on higher education, promising new IITs and IIMs.

But the 2010-11 budget, while hiking the total allocation in higher education from Rs 14,389 crore spent last year to Rs 16,690 crore this year, has reduced the allocation on existing higher educational institutions. The non-plan allocation for the University Grants Commission has gone down from Rs 3,977 crore spent last year to Rs 3,450 crore.

This means that these universities will have less money to use on day-to-day expenditure.

The budget has introduced such a sharp decline in non-plan allocation for the IITs and the IIMs that even the hike in the plan component — for expansion — has failed to prevent a dip in the total allocation for these premier institutions.

"This is worrying. We may have enough money to build new hostels but clearly will need to hike fees or charge students for facilities we are subsidising, in order to even pay our teachers," an IIT director said.

### **Besu funds signal**

The Centre has allocated Rs 15 crore for the first time in the budget for converting the Shibpur-based Bengal Engineering and Science University (Besu) into an Indian Institute of Engineering, Science and Technology.

The allocation represents the first occasion that the Centre has made a budgetary allocation for the project that has survived several scares, and was almost called off last year after unrest on the campus. The allocation confirms that the human resource development ministry finally plans to take over Besu this year.

**Source:** New Delhi [/Telegraph India/](#)26 February 2010

**UGC nod faces Government veto**

The human resource development ministry has told the Supreme Court that it can withdraw deemed university status from institutions even if the University Grants Commission disagrees, challenging a key argument that could save 88 substandard varsities.

The ministry, in an affidavit filed before the court this week, has controversially argued that it can “reject the positive advice” of the UGC, India’s apex higher education quality regulator, on the deemed university status to institutions.

How the apex court evaluates the argument at a hearing on March 8 is critical as two independent probes into deemed universities by the UGC and the ministry threw up opposite suggestions.

The ministry probe found 88 deemed universities unfit for the tag, and recommended that the status be withdrawn from 44 of these immediately and from the remaining 44 after three years unless they improved.

The probe was announced by HRD minister Kapil Sibal within days of taking charge last year and was showcased by the UPA as indicative of the government’s intention of ridding higher education of corruption.

But the UGC probe recommended that all of India’s 130 deemed universities — including the 88 found unfit by the ministry probe — should be allowed to continue with the tag.

The HRD ministry argument, sources said, represents a pre-emptive attempt at countering the strongest charges likely to be made before the apex court by deemed universities under the ministry’s scanner.

The court, in an order on January 25, had stopped the ministry from acting against indicted deemed universities for the time being.

The apex court had impleaded the 44 deemed universities, which the ministry wanted to act against immediately, to give them an opportunity to represent themselves.

Both the ministry and the deemed universities are aware that the UGC’s clean chit to the blacklisted institutions represents their biggest window to escape government action.

Under India’s higher education structure, regulatory authorities like the UGC — for universities — and the Medical Council of India, the apex medical education watchdog, are responsible for ensuring standards.

The UGC consists of experts and it is on their recommendation that the HRD ministry “may” grant deemed university status, under the UGC Act.

But the act is silent on whether the HRD ministry similarly needs the recommendation of the UGC to withdraw deemed status.

In this case, the UGC has expressly stated that these institutions should be allowed to continue as deemed universities.

The deemed universities under the ministry’s scanner are likely to question how the HRD ministry can overrule

recommendations of the body of experts — the UGC — tasked to determine whether an institution is fit.

But the HRD ministry has argued that the act says that the government “may”, on the advice of the UGC, award deemed university status.

“The advice of the commission to declare an institution a deemed-to-be university is not binding on the central government.... The discretion lies with the government,” the ministry has argued in the affidavit.

The ministry, explaining its argument in detail, has said that it “does not disregard” the UGC’s advice against granting deemed status to some institutions.

But it may “reject such positive advice and refuse to declare the institution in question as a deemed-to-be university”.

The same reasoning, the ministry has contended, is applicable where the existing deemed status of an institution is to be reviewed by the HRD ministry.

**Source:** New Delhi /[Telegraph India](http://Telegraph India)/27 February 2010

**ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE****Common Maths, Science course for all schools from 2011**

All school boards across India will have a common curriculum in science and mathematics for Classes 11 and 12 from the 2011 academic year to give students a level playing field and help them in competitive examinations, human resource development minister Kapil Sibal announced here on Tuesday.

"Today is a historic day for all students. There will be a core curriculum in the science stream (both science and mathematics) for all school boards across India. This will be implemented in 2011," Sibal told reporters.

"This was done with unanimity. This will provide a level playing field for all students studying in Classes 11 and 12," he added.

Sibal met at least 20 school educational boards across India to discuss the core curriculum in the science stream and prepare a draft for the same.

"It's a milestone that all school boards are one on this and want a core curriculum.. We hope it augurs well."

Welcoming the move, Bihar School Education Board chairman A.K.P. Yadav told IANS: "This will bring all students from the country on a single platform - to study a similar course and compete in examinations like IITs and medical entrance."

"In science, all students are competing at the national level. So the science course should be similar across the country. We are fine with this move and hope that students will benefit the most," C.L. Gupta, chairman of the school education board in Himachal Pradesh, told IANS.

He said the negotiations for this move had started in October 2009 and they "have moved real fast" to achieve such a consensus.

Explaining the decision further, Ashok K. Pandey, principal of the Ahlcon International School in Delhi, said: "The decision is like allowing all cricket teams to play on a similar pitch. With this move, all students will have similar opportunity in facing competitive examinations in streams like medicine and engineering."

The latest move comes as part of the continuing education reforms being ushered in by his ministry. On Monday, Sibal negotiated with Delhi school principals and reached a consensus to increase the nursery admission age from three years to four.

But it can only be implemented after the Delhi government accepts the recommendations as education is a state subject. Sibal will formally write to Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit on the matter.

Once the Delhi government accepts the measure, nursery admissions will be fixed at four and the admission to kindergarten (KG) will be at the age of five. A child will start his Class 1 formal education at the age of six.

**Source:** New Delhi /[Times of India](#)/16 February 2010

#### **Poverty, lack of education inextricably linked**

The Ambassador of the European Union Delegation to India Daniele Amadja said she was "very happy" with the progress that has been made in several EU-assisted community projects in north Chennai.

Ms. Amadja, in the city as part of a delegation that also included two Consul-Generals from France and Germany, visited a primary school and a rehabilitation centre for child labourers in Tiruvottiyur on Monday.

The EU has contributed €192,000 over three years to the programme, undertaken in 25 deprived communities across north Chennai. The implementation of the project was awarded to a joint partnership of non-governmental organisations from the U.K. and India, who have worked to improve access to education in these areas for children, not only by creating measures that will prevent more of them falling into child labour but also by helping those that have already done so.

The delegates were given a traditional welcome at the primary school, which they visited in Kargil Nagar, before going in to meet the young boys and girls and present them gifts. It was at this point that a group of clamouring children affectionately mobbed the Ambassador. Before this project was initiated in October 2007, there was no school in the area. But with the current facilities now in place, families in which both parents have jobs are no longer forced to take their children to work, therefore denying them education during the vital early years.

The final stop for the delegates was the Child Labour Centre in Kaladipet, which provides a second chance for those who have dropped out of school (because of child labour) to reintegrate themselves into the State education system. "Poverty and lack of education are inextricably

linked," said Alison Harrison of the International Children's Trust, which co-manages the project with Indian NGO Arunodhaya. It is hoped that by enabling them to get back into school & stay there children will avoid destroying their future at such an early age.

There are currently six different NGO projects being supported by the EU in Tamil Nadu, to the value of €4.3 million.

**Source:** Chennai /[Beta .The Hindu](#)/16 February 2010

#### **Sibal for unified entrance test of medicine, engineering**

Efforts are under-way to hold a single national-level entrance test for students to get admission into engineering, medical and commerce courses from 2013, HRD minister Kapil Sibal on Tuesday said.

"Efforts will be put to hold an All-India national test in science and commerce from 2013. This will smoothen the admission process into engineering, medical, economics and commerce courses," Sibal said, addressing a meeting of the Council of School Board of Education (COBSE) here.

He said this will reduce burden on students who are appearing in multiple-tests for admission into these sources.

At the meeting, the COBSE said it has prepared a core-curriculum for senior secondary classes in science and mathematics subjects.

"There is 90 percent census among the school boards on the core-curriculum prepared on science and mathematics," Sibal said. A similar core curriculum will be prepared in commerce in three months.

Sibal had in August last year pitched for a uniform core curriculum for Mathematics and Science for all school boards. He had said a core curriculum could pave the way for a common entrance exam for admission to professional courses.

**Source:** New Delhi /[News.in.msn](#)/16 February 2010

#### **Common college entry test for all streams by 2013: Sibal**

The Union government plans to introduce a single national-level entrance exam for students from all streams for entry into higher education from 2013, on the lines of the Scholastic Aptitude Test in the US.

Union human resource development minister Kapil Sibal said a 'task force' on how to go about this will be named in a month. Terming the decision a "historic" one, he said it would have two years to decide how to structure the said exam, including how much weightage to give the school-leaving examination.

"The idea is that there will be a single entrance exam for each stream," Sibal said in a speech at a meeting here of the Council of Boards of School Education in India (COBSE). The meeting had representatives from 20 different school boards.

“The common entrance exam for class 12 students will have synergy with the (proposed) board exam,” Sibal said, while noting that the idea would have to be formally presented by him to the Central Advisory Board of Education, formally the apex advisory body in this regard, with state education ministers as its members.

At today’s meeting, COBSE endorsed the contents of a core curriculum for senior secondary classes in physics, chemistry, biology and mathematics, which had been put together earlier. “There is unanimity among the school boards on the core curriculum prepared on science and mathematics,” Sibal said. He added that a similar core curriculum would be shortly prepared in commerce.

The recommendation to have a single entrance test for higher studies had been made by the Yash Pal committee on ‘Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education’.

The idea, said Sibal, is “to have a level-playing field and reduce the burden on students who are appearing for multiple tests to get into these disciplines”.

At present, universities follow different practices in selecting students for undergraduate courses. While some of them take students on the basis of marks, some hold entrance tests.

Recommendations to move in the proposed direction have been made by various educationists from time to time. Some streams have already taken an initiative in this regard, as with entry to business schools.

**Source:** New Delhi [/business-standard/](#)17 February 2010

### Experience with the privatization of education in India

The experience of recent decades has shown clearly that, unlike Education, does not lead to the privatization of a significant improvement of higher Education and vocational training. But in the period prior to economic reforms in 1991, the IMF, the Bank world and the countries that control them have been crying hoarse on the welfare of higher Education in India at the cost of schooling presumed. The fact that the issue was that the school> The training had gone so far that the school was an option for those who can not afford private schools privatized like mushrooms in every street corner, even in small towns and villages. On the other hand has been in higher Education and professional courses, relatively better quality of teaching and infrastructure are available only in state schools and universities, while private universities in India to capitalize on modern Courses with a minimum of infrastructure.

However, successive governments have over the past two decades, only to continue the path of privatization and deregulation pursued higher education, regardless of which political party led government. Punnaiah committee for reforms in higher education by the Narasimha Rao government to the Committee established by the Vajpayee government Birla Ambani, the only difference in the degree of alignment with market forces and not in the fundamentals of their recommendations.

The result has been witnessed over the past decade, many far-reaching changes in higher education and training: for example, has appeared thousands of private universities and colleges with IT courses throughout the country since the late 1990s and disappeared in less than a decade, with devastating consequences for students and teachers who were dependent on them for their careers. This situation is now repeating itself in the management Biotechnology, bioinformatics and other emerging areas. No question about the opening or closing a facility or care, if the qualified teachers at all much less concerned about the teacher-student ratio of floor area, classrooms, laboratories, libraries, etc. All these rules that existed at the time (if not always strictly enforced are, so long as it is to collect bribes) have been liberalized or below the self-tender for the funding of universities and The training organized by the UGC in the 9th Five-Year Plan and enthusiastically followed by central and state governments.

This situation reached its extreme recently in the new state of Chattisgarh, which has suspended more than 150 colleges and private universities in the coming few years for fraud by a public interest litigation and the court ordered the state government in 2004 to reschedule and to close most of these universities, or combine them with nor recognized. A whole generation of students and teachers suffer irreparable harm to their careers because of this development, for no fault of theirs. Even state-funded colleges and universities in most states started many "self-financing" courses in computer science, biotechnology, etc., without qualified teachers, labs or infrastructure and imposing huge fees from students and abundance to hide their marks and grades for their shortcomings.

Not that the other services established in schools and courses financed by public funds and universities are no better. Decades of government neglect, poor funding, a ban on hiring teachers and frequent promotions, reduced library budgets, lack of investment in modernization, obsolescence of equipment and infrastructure, and start the trend for new universities political reasons without the consolidation of existing today threatens the entire university sector System.

Another consequence of this trend is that an educational institution shall limit is not recognized in a particular state to operate in this state. This meant that universities can set up following the adoption by governments of Himachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and colleges in Delhi and Noida, where he will receive more students from affluent families who can afford their fees are astronomical. Moreover, they are not even against local governments, as their recognition from a state away. In addition, a new crop of well-branded private educational institutions will allow the affiliates to faraway places for their course without being responsible for students and teachers in any other way. This is a trend with foreign universities, especially for those who do not want to establish their own shop here, but would benefit from the degree of purchasing power of the growing emerging economy class in India. Soon we may be Private educational institutions increasingly see itself in the stock

market and called for investment in education than ever the slogan for his request to see the sunset.

The economics of higher education are teaching, so that, from a few courses in Literature and Philosophy aside, the inclusion of quality education in science, technology, engineering, medicine, huge investments in infrastructure, which do not need to be restored of tuition fees, with no higher education inaccessible for most students. Unlike many private schools, better known in Western countries to engage in modes of charity with the waiver of tuition and scholarships (which is one reason why our students are) wearing the most private colleges and Universities in India, for profit. This has forced the main reason for the collection of tuition fees in large part to the donations, fees and the head of others – Taxes. Despite the great dissatisfaction of the public, the actions of the media and many court cases that have not been able governments to regulate the fees and donations in these institutions. Even the judges have only played with the concepts, such as the seats of payment, etc. shares management, without compromising the fundamental question of property rights.

Source: [/The Company Marketing/](#)17 February 2010

### **Need for PPP in healthcare delivery and education**

Public-private partnership or PPP is what Mahad Narayanamoni, Partner, Corporate Finance, Grant Thornton, considers should be the top priority of the forthcoming Budget. And, in the set of 'nice-to-haves' that he shares with Business Line over the email, as the head of his firm's healthcare practice, tax benefits and FDI (foreign direct investment) relaxation do feature.

#### **The must-haves.**

1. There is an immediate need for a policy and budgetary allocation for PPP in healthcare delivery and education. This should significantly increase access to healthcare and improve outcomes.
2. The coverage of national health insurance scheme (such as RSBY or the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana) needs to be increased. Further, positive features of the schemes run in states such as Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu may be incorporated into the national health insurance scheme.
3. The Indian medical equipment and medical devices sector is in dire need of fiscal and even financial support. Benefits such as tax incentives and land allocation should enable this sector to start competing with imported products and thereby facilitate reduction in cost of delivery of healthcare. Allocation of funds for direct financial support to early-stage companies in this sector will enable development of indigenous products and making India self-sufficient in this critical healthcare segment.
4. The Government needs to actively consider revamping the medical education system, including the need to have an MBBS degree before being able to practise, with a view to increasing the availability of medical practitioners in rural areas.

#### **The nice-to-haves.**

1. While healthcare is defined as infrastructure, companies with a desire to provide hospital infrastructure on a turnkey basis are constrained by the FDI norms (such as, a minimum built-up area of 5,00,000 sq. ft. for a hospital). At 5,00,000 sq.ft., the hospital size will be in excess of 500 beds; the hospital then needs to be located in high-paying urban areas to generate returns. Relaxing the FDI policy associated with this will significantly boost investments in healthcare from an infrastructure perspective and enable smaller operators also to thrive.
2. The Government should consider providing tax benefits for hospitals in tier-1 and tier-2 towns as well, similar to benefits available to hospitals in rural areas. Availability of quality healthcare is an issue even in several tier-1 and tier-2 towns and not just the rural areas.
3. The Government may consider improving efficiency of rural healthcare delivery by promoting tele-medicine on a PPP basis and enabling the adoption of villages by corporate/ large government hospitals.

#### **On related areas where policy changes can impact the healthcare sector.**

1. Allocation of spend to infrastructure-building and additional sops to the infrastructure sector should have a positive indirect impact on healthcare as well.
2. Increasing the FDI limit for the insurance sector should have a significant positive impact on healthcare spend.
3. Any relaxations in the FDI policy for higher education will have a major positive impact on availability of qualified practitioners and thereby quantity and quality of care in the medium-term.

Source: Chennai [/Beta. The Hindu/](#)17 February 2010

### **Public Opinion of Higher Education Continues Downward Slide**

The proportion of people who think colleges are more concerned with their financial well-being than with giving students a quality education continues to grow, according to an annual survey of the public's view of higher education.

A nationwide poll conducted in December found that 60 percent of respondents believed colleges are "like most businesses and mainly care about the bottom line," compared with 32 percent who said colleges are mostly interested in "making sure students have a good educational experience." In 2007, 52 percent of people polled said colleges were more concerned about being in the black, with 43 percent saying education was the biggest concern of institutions.

A report containing the poll's findings, "Squeeze Play 2010: Public Attitudes About College Access and Affordability," is being released on Wednesday by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education and Public Agenda, a nonpartisan, nonprofit policy-research organization. The results of the poll, a national telephone survey of more than

1,000 adults, are the latest indicator that public confidence in higher education is experiencing a long-term decline, said Patrick M. Callan, the national center's president.

### ***Image Problems***

Higher education has been knocked off the pedestal of public opinion in recent years because of the perception that colleges are not doing enough to innovate and keep costs low for students, Mr. Callan said.

In the survey, 54 percent of people polled said colleges could spend less and still maintain a high level of quality. Only 28 percent of respondents agreed that the "vast majority of qualified, motivated students have the opportunity to attend college." That figure has dropped; 45 percent agreed with that statement when the same question was asked in 2000.

At the same time, 55 percent of people polled for this year's survey agreed that "a college education is necessary for a person to be successful in today's work world." That number has increased from 31 percent in 2000.

Sixty-four percent of respondents also said that colleges should use federal stimulus money to hold down tuition even if that means there is less money for programs and operations.

Mr. Callan said the results could bode ill for colleges trying to protect their state appropriations at a time when tax support is already difficult to protect, and could even make it harder for institutions to lobby for state aid when the economy does improve.

**Source:** [/chronicle/](#)17 February 2010

### **Education Steps in Right Directions**

Union HRD minister Kapil Sibal has been as good as his word. In August last year he had raised the prospect of having a common curriculum for mathematics and other subjects of the science stream for all schools in the country at the senior secondary level. Some school boards had demurred but the Council of Boards of School Education in India had broadly gone along with the idea. Now COBSE has reportedly endorsed the proposal unanimously. Language, history and literature have presumably been left out of the scheme for the reason that India is a diverse country and school boards in different states need to consider regional or local content. This appears to be a fair concern.

On the whole, however, we would do well to be alive to the consideration that if India is to emerge as a net producer of knowledge in the world, it would help to have across the country a uniformly high standard of education in fields such as mathematics and the sciences. Once students clear this bar at the school level, they could enter university in any part of the country without worrying about variation in standards. At present, this factor sets some students at a disadvantage. Since all school boards would be offering the same curriculum in science and mathematics in the changed situation, children in all states

would now have equal opportunity to aspire for the best centres of higher learning anywhere in the country. In this important sense, the proposed measure has a strong democratic dimension that must not be overlooked. The government is already considering extending the scheme to commerce. This is good thinking. Like science and mathematics, commerce as a scholastic discipline does not lend itself to regional or cultural considerations or bias. Mr Sibal and the school boards in the country can, in the same vein, also look to broadening the scheme of common curriculum to certain other subjects as well. These can include geography, economics, health science and art. It may also be a splendid idea to introduce the theory of knowledge as a subject at the school level under the common curriculum. An elite international school board such as IB (International Baccalaureate) has this as a part of its syllabus. Why should the general run of students in our schools be deprived of the opportunity? Being in the front rank of conceivers and implementers of thoughtful ideas in the important field of education — which bridges social gaps and enhances productivity and incomes both within the country and in international comparisons — is a good in itself, but it is also a necessity if India hopes to be a leading member of the international community in the coming decades.

Along with bringing certain subjects of study under one framework, the government hopes to introduce common entrance tests for the top universities. This is in the nature of a logical follow-up. The challenge, however, lies elsewhere. If a curriculum of a certain standard in key subjects is to be brought into effect across the country, ways will have to be found to create an enabling environment as well. This means creative teachers of acceptable standard and laboratory facilities. It is futile to contemplate raising the bar across school boards and not have the right level of teachers in adequate numbers. Mr Sibal is thus invited to engage in some degree of multi-tasking. He has got to invest in updating the infrastructure of schools, lending support to school boards in need in all parts of the country. He must also, of necessity, invest in teachers' training. But, on the whole, he is on to a good thing. He must plug away.

**Source:** [/Asian Age/](#)18 February 2010

### **India shining? Not when govt. is stingy with education funds**

Nowhere is the disconnect between the dreams of a billion Indians and the cold, hard reality more stark than in education. Even as funds from both, the government and the private sector, flood the system, daunting tasks remain — bringing down the jaw-dropping drop-out rate of over 50% by secondary stage, or making over 300 million adults literate, or making higher education available to more than the meagre 11% youth at present.

One striking aspect of this complex problem is that there is a disconnect between promises made by politicians or policy makers and actual action. The Centre for Budget and

Governance Accountability (CBGA), a Delhi based think-tank has picked up a few significant promises made in election manifestoes and budget or plan documents and tracked down the actual financial allocations made towards it. The results are stunning in most cases the money falls far short of what is needed to implement the rosy promises.

Take the case of the promise made by the Congress in its 2009 election manifesto, and later included in the 2009-10 budget to set up model schools (on the Kendriya Vidyalaya lines) in each block of the country. That means 6000 schools in all. This wouldn't solve the problem of either drop out rates or poor quality, but at least it was a beginning. But CBGA analysis shows that the provisions in the 2009 budget for the first 2500 schools was a mere Rs 9321 crore, of which the central govt.'s share was Rs 7457 crore.

How much does it cost to set up a KV type school? CBGA says that as per the ministry of human resource development (MHRD) itself, each school will cost Rs 6.77 crore, and 2500 of them would need Rs 16,925 crore! So, the government has allocated less than half of what is required for setting up less than half the number of schools they had promised. For all 6000 schools, to be set up till 2012, the cost would be Rs 40,620 crore but the Eleventh Plan has set aside just Rs 12,750 crore, according to CBGA.

Another hollow promise, made by the ruling party in its 2009 manifesto, is that of providing free education to dalit and adivasi children. CBGA calculations show that the government allocated Rs 11,352 crore through schemes under 4 ministries for giving various types of assistance to dalit and adivasi students. Using census data, a population of 13.68 crore for dalit and adivasi youth aged between 5 to 29 years can be assumed. Thus, government help works out to about Rs 830 per student per year. The amount will be even less as all of them are not in educational institutions.

Compare this to what the latest 64th round of National Sample Survey data has to say: out-of-pocket expenditure by an average parent on a child in government school is Rs 1243 at the elementary and Rs 2597 at the secondary/higher secondary level. A set of books can cost between Rs 2400 and Rs 7500 for professional courses, but the scheme for maintenance, including books, gives only Rs 130 to Rs 340 per month for day scholars for all expenses. Another huge promise that seems to be floundering is that of providing for monetary incentives to girl child for educating her from primary to higher secondary stages. This promise has been repeated in budget documents, plan documents and election manifestoes.

According to CBGA calculations, the government allocated Rs 11,417 in 2009-10 for different schemes under 5 ministries for helping girl students. The number of girl of age 5 - 18 years, projected from Census data, is about 15.7 crore. So the financial allocation is a measly Rs 725 per year. This is less than a third of the expenditure

incurred by parents for a daughter at the higher secondary stage.

Source: [/Times of India/](#)18 February 2010

### Medicine & engineering are complementary

Growing up in an educated middle-class neighbourhood, my childhood memories are filled with parents aspiring for their children to become either an engineer or a doctor. The decision was based simply on an aptitude for mathematics (engineer) or ability to memorise (doctor).

Moreover, this decision had to be made early, in standard IX. Few schools offered the option of studying both mathematics and biology and fewer students (read parents) opted, preferring to choose Sanskrit or French that were perceived to be less taxing and better scoring. Studying both was a waste anyway, as entrance exams for engineering did not test for biology and medical schools did not require high-school mathematics!

This splendid isolation of medical and engineering education in the country has been ensured in multiple ways: by background, by educational institutions and by regulatory authorities (MCI and AICTE). This is affecting both the research and practice of the two professions. The most challenging R&D problems in computer science, mechanical and electrical engineering are in areas such as drug design, drug delivery, sensors and high-resolution image processing.

Collaborative research is hampered by lack of a common language for communication. On the practice side, doctors routinely employ sophisticated diagnostic facilities and instrumentation.

Going forward, dialogue and integration are required at multiple levels. Both engineering and medical school admissions, at least in select institutions to begin with, should be based on common school requirement of maths and biology. Life sciences are entering engineering education and MCI should ensure that basic engineering courses are part of the medical curricula.

A simple solution would be to design specialised post-graduate programmes that admit both medical and engineering graduates. On the positive side, joint research is on the rise but focused teaching programmes will create a pool of expertise to ensure growth. The long-term objective should be to create an environment for easy mobility and communication between the two professions.

Source: New Delhi [/Economic Times/](#)19 February 2010

### NCHER not to infringe on state autonomy: Minister

The proposed National Council for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) will not infringe on state autonomy as alleged by the Tamil Nadu government, Union Minister of State for HRD, D Purandeswari, said today.

"NCHER will only have a list of qualified persons for the vice chancellor's post in the national registry. But choosing vice chancellors for state universities will have to be done

by state governments. So state governments need not fear that their autonomy is taken away," she told reporters on the sidelines of the Anna University convocation here.

She was responding to Higher Education Minister K Ponmudy's opposing stand to NCHER, saying it would infringe on state autonomy.

Minister said NCHER would not do away with regulatory bodies like UGC and AICTE, but only subsume them.

**Source:** Chennai [/PTI News/](#)19 February 2010

### **Kabil Sibal seeks to balance Central and State education Acts**

Union HRD Minister Shri Kapil Sibal has said that he wants to build a consensus with state governments, ahead of the implementation of the central Right to Education Act coming into effect from April 1.

Private schools in India will now have the right to decide on the fees they charge from their students, and the salaries they pay to their teachers, Sibal has stated.

Speaking at a conference here, Sibal said that a national consensus, however, was necessary. He said discussions would be held with state education departments ahead of the implementation of the central Right to Education (RTE) Act, which comes into effect in April this year.

"Where there is a conflict between the RTE and the state legislation, we will try to mend this and build a national consensus. We will hold meetings with the state departments and find ways to balance the state acts with the central act," said Sibal.

In Delhi, Sibal's proposal contradicts the 1973 Delhi School Education Act, which stipulates that teachers in private schools cannot be paid less than their counterparts in government schools.

Sibal defends his stance, saying the contradiction would be invalid once the RTE is implemented.

"The law on the subject is the following; where there is a conflict between the state law and the RTE, the RTE will prevail. Where there is no conflict, the state law will prevail," said Sibal.

Teachers working at public schools are required to be paid a minimum of 22,000 rupees a month, according to the Sixth Pay Commission set up in 2006 by the Cabinet to revise the salaries of government employees.

**Source:** New Delhi [/News. One India/](#)20 February 2010

### **Keep testing the kids**

The Right to Education law, recently passed by parliament, starts from the laudable premise that it would make sense to harness the private sector in the project of making sure every Indian has access to a free education of reasonable quality. However, as designed, it could become an instrument for protecting failing government schools from competition from better private sector alternatives, and as such, may indeed end up hurting the poor.

The new law reserves seats for weaker sections of society in all private schools, which, we feel, may well be its most effective part. If the government does pay anywhere close to government school costs for these seats, this will be a tax only on the better schools, ones that mainly cater to the middle classes or the rich. We say "tax" because the parents of the other students will pay higher fees to make up for the lost revenues on government seats. However, the tax may be worth paying if it furthers the cause of broader access to quality education and social justice. These schools, not least because they have parents that are able and willing to demand quality, offer a kind of education that the poor, mostly, have no access to. For the relatively small fraction of poor children who will get into these schools (we hope that the seats will be allocated based on a free and fair lottery) this could represent an opportunity of a lifetime. However we must be pro-active in making sure that the poor actually benefit from such schools. In particular, given that poor children lack many of the advantages that their peers have (parental help, tutoring at home), they may end up as second-class citizens in the schools. For that reason, instead of paying the schools a flat amount, it might make sense to base a large part of the compensation on the performance of these children in standardised tests, so that the school has an incentive to pay attention to them.

There are, however, an enormous number of private schools that are not privileged schools like these: schools that are small, under-equipped, and cater only to the poor. The law requires all these private schools meet a certain set of infrastructure and teacher-qualification norms. They are unlikely to be able to meet them without help; which means they will either be shut down or have to pay hefty bribes to stay in business, making them much less affordable.

The fact that the poor are willing to pay to send their children to private schools that have worse infrastructure and less qualified teachers, is telling us something important about the disastrous performance of government schools. A number of careful evaluations have now found that low-performing children learn more from a couple of hours a day over two months with college students (trained for a week by the NGO Pratham), than government teachers manage to teach them in a whole year.

If we had to take a guess, the problem with government schools is motivation. (The World Absenteeism Survey found government teachers teaching less than 50 per cent of the time they are meant to be teaching.) Yet the entire law as written has nothing to say about failing government schools. While the 2005 version of the bill talked about giving school management committees (which involve parents) control over salary payment to teachers, the current version is silent on this. The current version talks about monitoring of schools by parents, but not about how to give the committee enough leverage that the teachers take the monitoring seriously.

There are, however, an enormous number of private schools that are not privileged schools like these: schools

that are small, under equipped, and cater only to the poor. The law requires all these private schools meet a certain set of infrastructure and teacher-qualification norms. They are unlikely to be able to meet them without either help; which means they will be shut down or have to pay hefty bribes to stay in business, making them much less affordable.

The fact that the poor are willing to pay to send their children to private schools that have worse infrastructure and less qualified teachers, is telling us something important about the disastrous performance of government schools. A number of careful evaluations have now found that low-performing children learn more from a couple of hours a day over two months with college students (trained for a week by the NGO Pratham), than government teachers manage to teach them in a whole year.

If we had to take a guess, the problem with government schools is motivation. (The World Absenteeism Survey found government teachers teaching less than 50 per cent of the time they are meant to be teaching.) Yet the entire law as written has nothing to say about failing government schools. While the 2005 version of the bill talked about giving school management committees (which involve parents) control over salary payment to teachers, the current version is silent on this. The current version talks about monitoring of schools by parents, but not about how to give the committee enough leverage that the teachers take the monitoring seriously.

The problem with testing, it is worth underscoring, is that it is often used punitively against children, both by the school and by parents. The response therefore needs to be to make testing less threatening, more about helping the child identify his or her own broad deficiencies and then fixing them, than about that dreaded report card day at the end of each term. Children and parents need to be persuaded that if a substantial fraction of the class fails to learn basic skills, the school deserves a significant part of the blame; and that, if the school does not respond, there will be consequences. We have an opportunity to broaden access to quality primary education; but we have to act fast to make the law what it needs to be.

Source: [/Indian Express/](#)20 February 2010

### Private schools free to fix their own fees, says Sibal

In what comes as a blow to the efforts of city parents' associations which have been campaigning for reining in school fees, Union HRD minister Kapil Sibal said on Friday that the fees of private schools cannot be regulated and that each school had the right to fix the salaries of its teachers.

Sibal's claims contradict provisions in the Delhi School Education Act, 1973, which stipulate that remuneration of teachers in private schools cannot be less than their counterparts in government schools. The minister said this contradiction will go away once the Right to Education Act

is implemented from April 1 this year ^ implying that the central Act will override the state law.

"There is no such provision in RTE," Sibal said about the salaries of teachers while addressing principals at the 37th annual meet of National Progressive Schools' Conference -- a group of nearly 110 private unaided schools in the city.

"The salaries of teachers in private schools do not have to be according to the government. They will decide to pay what they want to pay," he declared, while countering a speaker at the meet who had earlier said that small schools, which are now mushrooming in the city, did not have quality teachers because they could not afford to pay good salaries.

While all schools were not required to pay Rs 22,000 (the minimum basic salary as per the Sixth Pay Commission) to their teachers, there should be no compromise on the qualification of teachers, he added.

The minister's new announcement indicates that private schools in the city may finally get a free hand in deciding teachers' salaries and consequently the fees, much to the dismay of parents. There have been many protests against schools hiking their fees last year. After the Sixth Pay Commission was implemented in the second half of 2008, schools sought to hike their fee to generate revenue to pay the teachers more.

Delhi government then formed the Bansal Committee to decide how much fee a school could be allowed to increase and issued a notification in this regard on February 11 last year.

According to section 9 of chapter IV of the Delhi School Education Act 1973, private schools need to pay salaries at a par with government schools. "The scales of pay and allowances, medical facilities, pension, gratuity, provident fund and other prescribed benefits of the employees of a recognized private school shall not be less than those of the employees of the corresponding status in schools run by the appropriate authority."

However, according to Sibal, this act will be rendered ineffective from April 1. "Once the Right to Education (RTE) is implemented, the Delhi School Education Act will not apply." RTE Act has already been notified.

On regulation of fees, Sibal referred to the T M Pai case saying, "The Supreme Court has also said that fees of private schools cannot be regulated and yet some state governments have passed such acts," he told the teachers present.

The minister said he has also moved a malpractices bill under which all schools will have to give details of their infrastructure, number of students, salaries of teachers etc on their website. If the online information is found to be false, the school can be prosecuted.

As per the provisions of RTE, all unaided private schools operating in a city should be recognized. Sibal said that the bill did not aim at shutting down unrecognized schools. "Our purpose is to enhance infrastructure and quality of private unaided schools," he said.

Source: New Delhi /[Times of India](#)/20 February 2010

### **A project to secure autonomy and excellence**

The National Commission on Higher Education and Research Bill aims, in letter and in spirit, to secure the true autonomy of universities and institutions of higher learning.

The Member-Secretary of the Kerala State Higher Education Council, in an article published in these columns on February 6, 2010 on the draft National Commission on Higher Education and Research (NCHER) Bill, argued that the Bill “does not allot appropriate levels of autonomy to States and universities, and in the process violates the principles of federalism and autonomy in the governance of higher educational institutions”. As one associated with the Task Force which prepared the Draft Bill, I felt that the article was written either without a proper understanding of its provisions, or with a motive to prejudice the public mind against true autonomy of higher academic institutions.

The author also invoked the concept of federalism to attack the Bill, presumably to say that the Union, without competence to legislate on the subject, is attempting to take away the States' authority. Is it his case that the Acts in respect of the University Grants Commission (UGC), the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), which the NCHER is to replace, were also passed by Parliament without constitutional authority? What does he make of Entries 63 to 66 of the Union List and Entry 25 of the Concurrent List in this regard? If the argument is for consultations with States before a law affecting the States and the Union is adopted, that precisely is what the Union government is doing by putting the draft Bill in the public domain and asking the Task Force to visit each State to gather views and comments from the stakeholders. Of course, based on such feedback, the Bill may undergo changes before it is submitted to Parliament for consideration.

Reforming higher education is the common interest of the Union and the States and there is no room for dispute in this regard. The Yash Pal Committee recommended that the key reform needed is restoring the autonomy of universities (not the autonomy of the State governments, which is the function of the Constitution) by avoiding multiple regulators and preventing politicisation of university administration. Autonomy of universities involves autonomy from Central and State governments as well.

The Preamble of the NCHER Bill says it is an “Act to promote the autonomy of higher education institutions for the free pursuit of knowledge and innovation, and for facilitating access, inclusion and opportunities to all... and to provide for an advisory mechanism of eminent peers in academia.” One would expect critics to give reasoned arguments on how the provisions of the Bill contradict these objectives, or in what manner it could be better achieved.

### **Centralisation**

The attempt to unify the multiple regulators and standardise the norms and procedures in a transparent manner is interpreted by the author of that article as centralisation of powers. Yes, the Bill seeks to vest the standard-setting and policy-planning functions in the NCHER. However, the delivery of educational services is a decentralised activity at the institutional level, and the NCHER plays only a facilitatory role in it. It is therefore wrong to say that an “authoritarian system” is being put in place.

Entrusting education in the hands of educationists is what is proposed. In this, they have to function democratically under legislative mandate and on the advice of acknowledged experts in different fields of knowledge. The NCHER cannot be seen as a “benevolent dictator” under the provisions of the draft Bill, as it is to function through various bodies set up with educationists in different branches of knowledge. Its functioning is to be reviewed once every five years and it is to report annually to the President or the Governor on the state of higher education in the country or State as the case may be.

### **Collegium**

The Collegium of Scholars and learned men is indeed an innovation proposed for advising reform on the structure and content of higher education. They are to be Nobel Laureates, Fellows on learned societies of international repute, Jnanpith Award winners and people of similar distinction. Respecting the federal and democratic principle, the Bill seeks to have nominees of States also in the Collegium. Utilising the expertise and experience of learned men and women settled within and outside the country to promote standards of higher education is the intended objective of the Collegium proposal. If there are suggestions on how the objective can be achieved by changing the composition and constitution of the Collegium, these are to be welcomed. It is an idea with a purpose. It is not intended to give a subordinate status to the nominated members, though the core members are expected to serve the Collegium for a longer period for obvious reasons. All Collegium members serve in an honorary capacity without having to be present physically at one place.

The States and Union Territories have their nominees in the Collegium. The nominees are also expected to be educationists or eminent persons of equivalent status. The core members are not the nominees of the Union government. They are there by virtue of their accomplishments in higher education and research and are invited because of their expertise, experience and status in higher education. If it is desirable to limit the term of the core members also, it can be recommended on the basis of cogent reasons. It is the anxiety to keep the government out in constituting the Collegium that led the Task Force to recommend the method of inviting persons on the basis of their accomplishments in education and research. It is not to be seen as an assault on federalism or democracy. It is the concern for the autonomy of the institution that elections or nominations in the usual course cannot accomplish.

Leaving the Union or State governments to “nominate experts of their choice,” as contended in the article, may not serve the objective for which the Collegium is put in place. The Collegium members are not to be government employees; nor can it be assumed that they would agree to become members of the Commission, as suggested in the article.

The State governments' power to set up universities will not be taken away or eroded by the NCHER. As it happens today with the UGC and the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), the authority to accredit universities, determine standards and finance them will be regulated by the new Commission. Academic clearance is not to be given by the Commission on its own. Accreditation is to be done by an independent accreditation agency recognised under law on the basis of credible evidence gathered according to objective parameters. Towards this end, the NCHER may authorise the academic operations of new universities on the basis of norms and standards set for the purpose. How does the authority of the AICTE or the Medical Council of India (MCI) or the Bar Council of India (BCI) to accredit institutions erode the States' authority to set up universities, as argued in the article?

#### **Vice-Chancellors**

An innovative measure to secure academic autonomy that is proposed in the Bill relates to the selection of Vice-Chancellors. Many ills of higher education, at present, can be traced to corruption and manipulation involved in the appointment of Vice-Chancellors. The Bill empowers the Collegium to prepare a registry of suitable persons with expertise and experience after a worldwide search and to keep it updated from time to time. It is not necessary that only persons who figure in the registry be appointed. Whenever the Central or State governments want to appoint Vice-Chancellors they can ask, if they so like, for a panel of names from the Commission as per their requirements, and the Commission may provide it. This is to facilitate the search and to present available candidates of distinction within and outside the country. There is no infringement of autonomy in the process; rather, it enhances autonomy by removing potential risks to such autonomy. The States' choice of the person and the right to choose one from outside the registry is in no way compromised by the provisions in the Bill.

Let there be no confusion or misunderstanding that the Bill, in letter and in spirit, aims to secure the true autonomy of universities and institutions of higher learning. The autonomy proposed will, hopefully, percolate down to each department and each member of the faculty so that teaching and research tend to innovate, experiment and compete for academic excellence and inclusive development. Looked at from this perspective, the NCHER Bill provides a framework and a strategy for securing autonomy of academic institutions and providing an environment for competitive excellence in higher education.

Source: [/Beta.TheHindu/](#)22 February 2010

#### **Karat thinks indoctrination not enough, school soon**

In suburban Beijing, a school tutors senior officials of the Chinese government and specialises in disseminating Marxism-Leninism theory. Now, CPM is planning to set up a Central Party School here for political indoctrination.

CPM general secretary Prakash Karat has put out an appeal to all supporters and friends of the party to donate for the cause. The school will be named Harkishan Singh Surjeet Bhavan after the former party general secretary, who often played kingmaker in the national political scene.

The Centre has already allotted land to the party in the heart of the capital. CPM had paid Rs 55 lakh for the land and it is on this plot that the party is planning to build the school, which will be attended by cadres from across the country.

The decision to call for funds was taken at the party's central committee meeting earlier this month in Kolkata. It was at the same meeting that the party finalised its new rectification document, which lays down the code of conduct for party members at all levels.

“The party has been aiming to have a permanent party school which can provide political and ideological education to the party cadres,” Mr. Karat said in an appeal published in the latest issue of the party mouthpiece, People's Democracy.

The central committee has given quotas to the state committees to collect funds for the new project. “Since the building of the central party school is an important task for the further development of the party, I request all supporters and friends for the party to donate generously for the cause,” the appeal stated.

CPM sources said the school would not be set up on lines of such institutes in other countries, including China, as the party wanted to set up an Indian model of the party school. “The details have yet to be worked out,” they said.

In China's Central Party School, all high-ranking Chinese officials, including provincial party chiefs, governors, ministers, generals, as well as mid-ranking officials receive training. In three decades, since 1977, when it was revived after a gap, over 50,000 middle and top-ranking officials have graduated from it. The students get a dose of not just Marxism-Leninism concepts but also western political models, religion, science, economics and strategic affairs. When Hu Jintao became its president in 1992, the school had started inviting foreign scholars to give

Source: New Delhi [/Economic Times/](#)23 February 2010

#### **Tread carefully Mr. Sibal**

It is not easy undoing a dozen years of damage inflicted by two successive Union ministers for human resources development. Pity Mr. Kapil Sibal. He has the dual task of reversing the bad decisions of both Mr. Murali Manohar Joshi and Mr. Arjun Singh and doing some good of his own.

So, it is not surprising that Mr. Sibal has been working at a scorching pace trying to overhaul India's archaic educational system. Whether it is reviewing the board examination system, overhauling the higher education system, building links across borders, setting up model colleges in educationally backward areas, or setting up central universities in states where they do not exist, he is trying everything. Recent announcements relate to the Draft National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) Bill that calls for abolishing the University Grants Commission, All India Council of Technical Education and National Council of Teacher Education and establishing a seven-member NCHER that will oversee these functions. Reports are also being received for the development of a core science and math school curriculum across the country. Elementary and higher education, and skill development programmes need an open and decentralised environment supported by a non-constraining regulatory regime. And the country requires an educational system that promotes common benchmarks while encouraging decentralisation. But Mr. Sibal would be well advised to consult all stakeholders and not be in too much of a hurry.

Ideas like a core national curriculum, a single central authority that has the sole responsibility over appointments of Vice Chancellors across all universities fly in the face of the principle of decentralisation and autonomy. They have the potential of centralising control in the hands of a few joint secretaries in the ministry, or worse, a corrupt educational administrator. What are the safeguards built in to prevent the abuse of power? What will ensure that decentralisation is encouraged not merely from Centre to state, but state to local governments as well? What will ensure that our educational establishments can function with autonomy not only from the political forces at the state level, but also from those at the Central level? These are important questions if educational reforms are to be sustained.

A sustainable educational reform package needs to be built around consensus, decentralisation and minimum common benchmarks. Post-1991 India has had enough experiences where non-consensus-based approaches led to desirable changes, only to be withdrawn later. The educational establishment, with its lobbies and pressure groups, is politically sensitive and highly susceptible to rearguard action by entrenched forces. This is the core reason why significant reforms have so far eluded the educational sector in India. Mr Sibal would do well to focus more on advocacy and build a consensus around his ideas. Consensus would be only possible if he is able to promise that the principles of decentralisation and autonomy are not sacrificed in our desire to improve quality.

**Source:** New Delhi [/Business-Standard/](#)25 February 2010

### **India firmly on growth track: TK Arun**

Economic Survey 2009-10 is very upbeat on India's growth prospects, urges commencement of fiscal consolidation,

introduces 'skewflation' to sarkari jargon and admits, pretty much, that the government messed up on releasing food stocks to contain inflation. It calls for liberalising foreign investment in sectors such as higher education, health insurance and rural banking; usefully highlights there's a lot of sand in the transmission mechanism between RBI policy signals and the banks' lending behaviour; and exhibits considerable political naïveté in identifying the reasons why India ranks so low in any global survey on ease of doing business.

India is well on its path to achieving double-digit growth and becoming the fastest-growing economy, says the Survey, citing an entrenched shift to higher saving and investment rates (well above 30%), comparable to those of Asia's miracle economies. That Indian growth has found its feet again, after the slippage induced by the global crisis, automatically becomes proof that India's macroeconomic management has been sound. The Survey endorses the 13th Finance Commission's recommendations on fiscal responsibility by both the Centre and the states.

Fiscal consolidation, says the Survey, has to be calibrated to revival of capital formation. The IMF, incidentally, chose Wednesday to make its recommendation that fast-growing economies like India should kick off fiscal consolidation. And growth in the core sectors has been 9.4% in January, according to figures released on Wednesday, suggesting that investment growth is, indeed, robust.

The Survey makes the point that given the extremely low rates of interest in the developed countries, capital is likely to flood into a fast-growing country like India. And stops short with the bland observation that there could be problems if such inflows are in excess of the economy's absorptive capacity. At a time when even IMF economists are recommending capital controls in specific situations, it is perplexing that the Survey plays coy on debating whether India should levy a tax on capital inflows à la Brazil or adopt some other form of restriction.

The Survey introduces a new chapter on the micro-foundations of macroeconomics. Its high is inducting an insight from the theory of industrial organisation to identify the right way to offload food from the government's stocks to have optimal impact on inflation — it turns out that the way in which the FCI has been carrying out open-market sales has not helped. Frequent, geographically-dispersed sale to a large number is much superior to selling grain to a handful of large merchants, as has been the FCI practice. The chapter's low, arguably, is blaming political philosophy for Indian entrepreneurs' myriad difficulties while doing business: the Indian state wants to be provider, rather than enable the provision of, goods and services.

Why do Indian businessmen have to routinely bribe their way past dozens of hurdles, merely to carry on with their business, a fundamental right accorded by the Constitution? Does the failure to institutionalise political funding and the resultant need for every party and every politician to mobilise funds, making use of the opportunity to sell patronage and abusing the state machinery to extort

money from the public, play a role in this? The question is not, obviously, genteel like a choice of political philosophy.

The Survey rightly argues for ending the unsustainable subsidies on petroleum fuels in a scenario in which global crude prices remain ever upwardly mobile. It argues for better ways to distribute subsidy as well, whether on food or fertiliser: transfer the subsidy directly to the beneficiary, leave product prices to be determined by a competitive market.

While this is eminently desirable, a design of implementation that the Survey explores has huge gaps. Give the poor food coupons, and let them choose to buy food from whichever PDS outlet they like, says the Survey. As if every village had multiple PDS shops that would compete to lure coupon-holding customers by offering good quality food at competitive prices!

The Survey highlights the skewed pattern of inflation in India of late. Food prices have risen sharply (17.8% for the week ended February 13, lower than the 19.5% reached early January, but still unacceptably high) but other prices have not. Similarly, retail price increase has been several times as high as wholesale price rise. But the Survey refrains from making the logical recommendation to reform the supply chain between the producer and the consumer by encouraging organised retail. The net contribution of this discussion is to add the term skewflation to the official jargon.

**Source:** New Delhi /[Economic Times](#)/26 February 2010

### **Sibal for more Pvt. sector involvement to build rural schools**

Human Resource Development (HRD) minister Kapil Sibal on Saturday lamented that private sector is not showing much eagerness to be involved in the expansion of elementary education in the country, especially in the rural areas.

Holding that investment on human capital is the key to development of the country, he said the government wanted the private sector to be involved in a big way as it wanted to expand the education system.

"Very little private capital wishes to go to building schools in rural areas," he said at the Annual General Meeting function of industry association FICCI.

About 93% of primary schools in the country are in private sector. There are not enough people in rural areas having the capacity to pay, he said.

Sibal said the government would never allow private sector to make profit from education and share it among shareholders. But they could make profit and plough it back for the development of the institute, he said.

"No country in the world allows profiteering in education. If education has reached excellence without shareholders getting into the act, why cannot it happen in India," the minister said in reply to a question.

Sibal said the country would need another 800 universities and nearly 20,000 colleges in the next 10 years to increase the enrolment rate in higher education from 12.4% at present to 30%.

**Source:** New Delhi /[Times of India](#)/27 February 2010

## **RESOURCE**

### **Resource: Press Information Bureau; Govt. of India COBSE unanimously endorses core curriculum for Maths and Science for the country for Plus Two stage**

A meeting of Council of Boards of School Education (COBSE) was held today at Delhi. The meeting discussed core curriculum for Science and Mathematics for + 2 stage. Twenty Chairmen/Secretaries/Representatives of different Boards participated in the meeting. The Draft core curriculum prepared by the COBSE in consultation with Boards earlier was again discussed. Groups of Boards in different subjects were formed and suggestions were invited. The members gave some suggestions on certain additions/deletions. Incorporation of Projects and other activities oriented methods of assessment was also suggested. With these suggestions, the common core curriculum in Science and Mathematics was finally approved. Most of the Boards were in favour of its implementation from the year 2011. Teachers training and admissions orientation was emphasized. There may also be more workshops to disseminate the common core curriculum.

It was also agreed that subject to incorporation of these suggestions, the Boards may move towards a common entrance examination in these subjects in 2013. A task force would be set up to formulate the modalities for this Common Entrance Exam.

**Source:** New Delhi /[pib.nic.in](#)/16 February 2010

### **MoU signed between HRD and Railway Ministries**

An MoU was signed between the Ministry of Human Resource Development and the Ministry of Railways here today in the presence of Smt. Mamata Banerjee, Union Minister of Railways and Shri Kapil Sibal, Union Minister for Human Resource Development. The MoU for the HRD Ministry was signed by Smt. Anshu Vaish, Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy for matters related to school education and by Smt. Vibha Puri Das, Secretary, Department of Higher Education for matters relating to higher education. On behalf of the Ministry of Railways, Shri A.K. Goel, Member (Staff), Railway Board signed the MoU.

As per the MoU, on the railway land identified by the Ministry of Railways, the two ministries will strive to develop educational infrastructure in the form of around 50 Kendriya Vidyalayas in civil sector (about 20 during the 11th Plan and the balance during the 12th Plan), 10 Residential Schools on the pattern of Navodaya Vidyalayas ( to be set up by Ministry of Railways in collaboration with Ministry of

HRD on mutually agreed terms), an appropriate number of Model Degree Colleges and Technical and Management institutions of National Importance to meet the demand for education including wards of Railway employees, either as per the norms specified under the existing schemes/programmes and projects being executed by Ministry of Human Resource Development or through special programmes and projects mutually agreed by the parties or through innovative financing under Public Private Partnership Models or any combinational thereof.

The development of educational infrastructure would include new facilities. This will also include upgradation of existing educational and technical institutions being managed by Railways for which Ministry of Human Resource Development would provide necessary assistance and know how in the interest of improving over all quality of education.

For the achievement of objectives outlined above, the two ministries will constitute a high powered working group, consisting of Senior Officials and Experts to work out a road map for viability and feasibility of upgradation of existing and development of new educational and technical institutions on Railway land within the framework of existing norms and policies.

**Source:** New Delhi [/pib.nic.in/](http://pib.nic.in/)16 February 2010

### Government steps to make teaching attractive

While the power to make appointments to the teaching posts in a Central University vests in its Board of Management/Executive Council, the Government keeps on reminding the Central Universities to fill the vacancies at an early date. The Government/UGC is taking the following measures aimed at attracting the bright young people to adopt teaching in higher education as a career vis-à-vis the opportunity available to them in view of the emerging sectors of economy, thereby managing the teaching positions at various levels:

- Enhancing rates of Junior and Senior Research Fellowships by about 50%;
- Strengthening science based education and research in Universities;
- Disbursement of grant for presentation of research papers in international fora/conferences;
- Enhancing the quantum of research grant to Universities aimed at encouraging research;
- Introducing Ramanujan Fellowship to attract distinguished Indian faculty serving in foreign Universities;
- Introducing Bose Fellowship aimed at strengthening research background of the distinguished faculty serving in India.
- Allowing consultancy charges to be shared by the faculty;
- Revamping Academic Staff Colleges;

- Organizing summer school to train teachers; etc.
- Enhancing the retirement age of teachers from 62 to 65 years as also retention of the re-employed teachers upto the age of 70 years.

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

**Source:** New Delhi [/pib.nic.in/](http://pib.nic.in/)24 February 2010

### Computerisation in Schools

The Centrally Sponsored Scheme “Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Schools” is being implemented since December 2004 to promote the usage of ICT in Government and Government aided secondary and higher secondary schools for enriching the teaching learning process and to enable the students to acquire skills needed for the digital world. Financial assistance is provided for ICT infrastructure, including internet connectivity, capacity building of teachers and development of appropriate e-content for ICT – aided teaching and learning. The schools are selected based on the Computer Education Plans received from the States/UTs.

An outlay of Rs.6000 crores has been provided in the XI Five Year Plan for the scheme. The sharing pattern between the Central Government and States is in the ratio of 75:25 for general category States and 90:10 special category States.

The Centrally sponsored scheme is implemented by the State Governments using the financial assistance from the Central Government.

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

**Source:** New Delhi [/pib.nic.in/](http://pib.nic.in/)24 February 2010

### Coaching to Minority Students

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has provided coaching under (i) ‘Remedial coaching at Undergraduate and Post-graduate levels’, (ii) Coaching for Entry in services and (iii) Coaching to prepare for National Eligibility Test (NET) or State Eligibility Test (SET) for lectureship’, during the Xth Plan for beneficiaries belonging to the minority communities in the country. From the XIth Plan onwards the UGC coaching schemes for minorities have been merged under the scheme of Development grants. In addition, UGC has provided assistance to Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow and Aligarh Muslim University for setting up of ‘Residential Coaching Academies for Minorities/SCs/STs and Women’.

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

**Source:** New Delhi [/pib.nic.in/](http://pib.nic.in/)24 February 2010

### Schools in Rural Areas

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) provides for opening primary schools within one kilometer of the habitation as per State norms. Upper primary schools are opened as per requirement based on the number of children completing primary education upto a ceiling of one upper primary schools for every two primary schools as per State policy without any distinction between urban and rural areas.

#### **SSA outlay for the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan is Rs.71000 crore.**

In the Secondary Education sector, two new centrally sponsored schemes namely, "Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan" (RMSA) and "Setting up of 6000 Model Schools at Block Level as benchmark of excellence", have been launched during the XIth Five Year Plan. RMSA envisages setting up of new secondary schools, so as to provide one secondary school within 5 kilometers of every habitation. Under the "Schemes for setting up of 6000 Model Schools at Block Level as benchmark of excellence", it has been decided, in the first phase, to set up of 2500 schools in educationally backward blocks (EBBs). The funds allocated and the expenditure under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan for the last three years and the current year is as under:

Rs. In lakhs

Year	GOI Releases	Expenditure (Including share)
2006-07	1083719.91	1477929.69
2007-08	1143203.94	1556557.24
2008-09	1261120.41	1905652.36
2009-10	1206700.83 (as on 12. 2. 2010)	1363701.71 (as on 30. 12. 2009)

Against a Revised Estimate of Rs.550.00 crore for RMSA for the year 2009-10, Rs.148.65 crore has been released to 5 States/UTs so far for implementation of Annual Plan proposals, which include more than 500 new schools.

Under the Scheme of "Setting up of 6000 Model Schools at Block Level as benchmark of excellence" Rs.215.03 crore has been released to 7 States/UTs out of the Revised Estimates of Rs.280.00 crore for the year 2009-10.

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

**Source:** New Delhi [pib.nic.in/](http://pib.nic.in/)24 February 2010

### **Economic survey stresses importance of primary schooling, higher education**

Quality primary schooling for all should be the target for effective learning, while focus on higher and technical

education is the need of the hour for employment generation, the Economic Survey said today.

"Universalisation of elementary education of adequate quality to ensure satisfactory learning standards among children is an objective that needs to be pursued vigorously," the Survey tabled in Parliament today said.

The Survey said under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), 2,88,155 new schools have been opened till September 2009. In addition, the initiative has also seen supply of free text books to 9.05 crore children.

A total of 10.11 lakh teachers have been appointed under the SSA and another 21.79 lakh have been provided in-service training, it added. "There has been significant reduction in the number of out-of-school children on account of SSA interventions."

The pre-budget Survey stressed the importance of higher and technical education segments also.

"Quality higher and technical education increases the employability of the youth and can help reap the benefits of India's looming demographic dividend," it added.

The government has spent Rs 425 crore for setting up of new polytechnics during 2009, covering 175 districts.

"Two new Indian Institute of Technology (IITs) at Indore and Mandi started functioning from the academic session 2009-10," the Survey said.

During the 11th Five Year Plan, one new Indian Institute of Management (IIM) was established in Shillong in 2008-09.

"...the remaining will be set up in Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand, Chhatisgarh, Haryana, Uttarakhand and Rajasthan."

Besides, the Central Universities Act was promulgated in January last year for conversion of three state universities into central universities.

It also brought new central universities in 12 states.

On examination reform, the Survey said, "Government policies have been focusing on providing quality education and upgrading skills as well as creating a more child-friendly educational environment."

It mentioned that the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) took some important decisions, like doing away with board exams for Class X from 2011, after consultations with various stakeholders such as school principals, teachers, parents, students, academics and the people.

The survey further said the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), launched in March last year, has objectives of achieving an enrolment ratio of 75 per cent for Classes IX-X within five years and universal access to secondary level education by 2017, among others.

Besides, the government has sanctioned 167 model schools across six states.

Also 163 girls' hostels have been set up in seven states under a centrally sponsored scheme.

**Source:** New Delhi [dnaindia/](http://dnaindia/)25 February 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](mailto:aserf@apeejay.edu)

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

### **Disclaimer:**

**Data included in this newsletter is only for educational purpose and wider dissemination. All liabilities and rights belong to respective writers & authors.**



### **Apeejay Stya Education Research Foundation**

**Apeejay Stya House**  
14 Commercial Complex, Masjid Moth, Greater Kailash, Part - II  
New Delhi - 110048

Tel. No. (91 – 11) 29228296 / 97 / 98  
Fax No. (91 – 11) 29223326

E-mail: [aserf@apeejay.edu](mailto:aserf@apeejay.edu)  
Website: <http://aserf.org.in>