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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

Partnership

Dear Partners,

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

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

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ASPECT**Global: Higher Education a driver of the MDGs**

Universities should use existing resources and capacities - however abundant or meager - to orientate their activities more directly towards supporting UN Millennium Development Goals, the Association of Commonwealth Universities conference in Cape Town heard last week. Strategies should be more directly linked to government targets and international higher education MDG collaboration should be forged at the national and regional levels.

"Education is one of the foremost Millennium Development Goals, but education in turn can be used to drive their achievement," said Piyushi Kotecha, CEO of the Southern African Regional Universities Association, SARUA, at the ACU conference of executive heads on *Universities and the Millennium Development Goals*.

She argued in a paper* that universities had a significant role to play in promoting the MDGs at a number of levels in higher education. But there is a dearth of information and research on the topic.

In September 2000 all 192 United Nation member states adopted the UN Millennium Declaration, a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty in all its forms by half by 2015. The following year, agreement was reached on eight goals supported by 21 quantifiable targets and 60 indicators through which progress could be measured.

The main responsibility for achieving the goals rests with governments. "While goals one to seven are committed to socio-economic development, the eighth goal explicitly asserts that eradicating poverty worldwide can only be achieved through international cooperation," Kotecha pointed out.

Many countries have been integrating the MDGs into national development frameworks, and strategies, and using them to help monitor progress. There had been some excellent gains made, she added, the most important being in poverty relief, education, child mortality and global reduction in consumption of substances that deplete the ozone layer, according to *The Millennium Development Goals report 2009* published by the UN.

But the global recession had severely hit progress, including by stalling advances in poverty alleviation, hunger eradication, gender equality and maternal health, by eroding the ability of country's to mobilise resources for development and by reducing donor funding. Other issues had been lack of political will and leadership, and weak planning and implementation.

"Developing nations will therefore need to find additional ways and means of achieving the MDGs, and one of the most viable ways of doing this is through higher education."

In recent decades, Kotecha said, higher education had assumed growing importance both as a driver of development and as a vehicle for personal development

towards a better life. "Now more than ever before, higher education in developing nations is being expected to take on the mantle of responsibility for growth and development, where often governments fail."

But in many poor nations, higher education functioned in a hostile environment with "often appalling socio-economic conditions that are basically antithetical to sustained progress and growth". As a result, success has been limited.

In the area of education, the MDG focus had been on universal primary education. But increased access to primary education should logically translate into increased access to university, and this was arguably already reflected in the 'massification' of higher education.

According to UNESCO there had been a five-fold increase in student numbers worldwide in four decades and 53% growth since 2000 to reach a total of nearly 153 million tertiary students in 2007. The pace of enrolment growth quickened to 7% a year after 1999. By 2025 higher education could enroll more than 262 million students - with demand expanding especially in developing countries.

Since the MDGs have to do with human and social development, Kotecha said, "they should *de facto* be of concern to higher education and, as such, there should be no moral obstacle to their inculcation into higher education practice in one form or another".

However, in the sparse researchable instances where MDGs did form a direct part of the higher education enterprise, they related mainly to the use of existing courses across various disciplines to give effect to individual goals.

Examples were in agricultural sciences, engineering, rural development, literacy, community service, teacher training, open and distance learning, gender policy and mainstreaming, and using faculties such as social work and medicine to train communities.

Universities had HIV-Aids programmes for staff, students and communities, had developed policies and had integrated HIV-Aids into curricula. They had also promoted and researched sustainable development and incorporated it into programmes. Some collaborations has been forged between universities in the North and South in alignment with the MDGs.

But more needed to be done, Kotecha insisted.

Globally, all universities in developed and developing nations could align individual MDGs to existing disciplines, resources and capacities.

At the regional level, the goals could be advanced by harmonisation and the maximum use of collective resources and capacities. One potential strategy was to enhance knowledge of regional higher education systems and promote international collaboration and networking between universities. "These initiatives could be introduced incrementally."

In the Southern African Development Community, the **SADC Protocol on Education and Training** aimed to

achieve the equivalence, harmonisation and standardisation of education and training systems. Eight technical committees covering areas ranging from research to lifelong learning, were created to achieve these aims.

"Experience has however taught us that the silos that come with territorial boundaries and national and political agendas are notoriously difficult to break down," Kotecha said. While there had been some excellent advances, for example in aligning legislation, progress had been slow. "It is likely these dynamics would characterise all regional harmonisation efforts."

As a basis for regional collaboration, SARUA conducted an audit in 2008 that for the first time provided substantial and verified information about the profile and state of higher education in the region and pointers to areas that needed support for its future development.

The report could be used to develop a comprehensive, integrated regional strategy, Kotecha said. It could also be complemented by, for example, an audit of collaborations. "This would maximise the efficacy of existing partnerships, eliminate duplications and identify possible areas for the introduction of additional partners." Gaps uncovered could offer pointers to which MDGs needed to be prioritised.

The purpose of regional collaboration in education is growth and development which, she continued, was in line with the goals in terms of increasing access to higher education and socio-economic development resulting from producing skilled and competent graduates. There were also further potential benefits to be derived through inculcating the MDGs into educational offerings and practices in universities.

This view was supported by the 2008 World Bank report *Accelerating Catch-Up: Tertiary education for growth in Sub-Saharan Africa*, which argued that the focus should increasingly be on using existing resources more efficiently, on innovative sources of funding and on improving higher education efficiency.

To contribute more significantly to development, universities needed to "consciously and persistently transform themselves into a different type of educational enterprise: networked, differentiated and responsive institutions on the production of strategically needed human skills and applied problem-solving research. If achieved this would constitute a 21st Century version of the African 'Development University,'" said the World Bank report.

At national level, the formulation and implementation of higher education policies towards specific developmental goals could support their achievement. Since all UN member states signed the MDGs, their support for the goals could be assumed. Universities needed to link to government development policies and initiatives, Kotecha said.

The South African government had been steering universities into desired behaviours and outcomes that

would promote its developmental agenda, which is closely aligned to the MDGs. The *Medium Term Strategic Framework (2009-14)* specifically states that it is the country's responsibility to strive to attain the goals - and where possible contribute to their achievement across Africa and further afield. This supports the notion of regional and continental collaboration, she argued.

In South Africa, the government determines the overall goals for the higher education system and establishes incentives and sanctions to steer the system - planning, funding and quality mechanisms. "Higher education is being steered ever more closely, in order for the state to achieve its developmental goals, which are consonant with the MDGs," Kotecha said.

Higher education institutions could also promote the MDGs more directly. A suggested framework for universities entailed the "inculcation and translation of the MDGs into every facet of institutional operations", including by:

- Taking each goal in turn and ensuring it found expression in university policies, for example development economics, sustainable development, ethics policies and conflict resolution as well as gender mainstreaming and HIV-Aids.
- Involving all stakeholders and role-players in drafting a declaration supporting the MDGs that would be reflected in university strategy and other framing documents, ensuring buy-in.
- Identifying and engaging all internal and external stakeholders to determine the level of support they could offer the institution in MDG-based initiatives. Stakeholders could include government agencies and businesses.
- Incorporating the MDGs in curricula by, for instance, offering a compulsory module for all students, infusing the values and focuses of the goals across modules, goal-focused research, and introducing qualifications that deal with specific MDGs.
- Promoting intellectual engagement on the MDGs by holding discussions and lectures.

"There are undoubtedly other initiatives that could be included in the framework but it is one that could feasibly serve as a basis for all institutions, with limited disruption and cost," said Kotecha. There were five ways in which universities could incorporate the MDGs to lasting effect:

- Use the lens of analysis to examine how policies at various levels, from institutional to national, could be used to achieve the goals.
- Develop a guiding framework as a basis for action.
- Set milestones and service levels to monitor and evaluate initiatives around the MDGs.
- Ensure planned reporting on progress and outcomes to ensure accountability.
- Derive maximum benefit and use from available internal and external funding streams.

However, Kotecha concluded, it must be borne in mind that commitment to the pursuit of the MDGs is essentially a moral imperative that requires a transformative and collaborative mindset. "As such their achievement will require dedication, commitment and drive-given that the MDGs have no legal status."

Source: [/University World News/2](#) May 2010

NEWS

12,000 more engineering seats likely

Around 50 new engineering colleges are expected to be started in the State with an additional 12,000 seats from this year.

Applications forms for the Tamil Nadu Engineering Admissions will be issued from May 3 and the university is gearing up for single window counselling, P. Mannar Jawahar, Vice-Chancellor, Anna University, Chennai, said here.

Speaking to *The Hindu* on Saturday, Dr. Jawahar said 1.8 lakh application forms had been printed by Anna University and they would be issued at 58 places across the State from May 3 (Monday). The last date for submission of application forms is May 31.

"Based on last year's experience, we have supplied more application forms this year. Last year, 1.6 lakh forms were printed, but this year the number has been increased to 1.8 lakh," he said. The Vice-Chancellor was in the city to participate in 'The Hindu Education Plus Career Fair 2010,' which was organised to guide students/parents on various courses and careers available.

Dr. Jawahar, who is also the Southern Region Chairman of the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), said 94 applications were sent to the AICTE from Tamil Nadu seeking approval to start new colleges. "The approval is awaited. But, we expect an increase of 12,000 engineering seats through the new colleges this year," he said.

Totally, there are 454 engineering colleges in the State with a seat capacity of 1.65 lakh. "Last year, 30,000 seats were left vacant as only 1.35 lakh students joined engineering colleges. Seats are available in excess and every one who applies will get an engineering seat in some college or other," he said.

A coordination committee for engineering admission counselling has been formed with Dr. Jawahar as its chairman. Members on the committee include the Higher Education Secretary, the Director of Technical Education and the Director of Collegiate Education.

The Vice-Chancellor informed that a meeting was convened on April 30 with heads of institutions where application forms for engineering admission would be distributed.

"We have instructed them that students should get the forms without any hardship. This year we are giving an improvised version of a comprehensive booklet with the

particulars of all engineering colleges in the State and the courses offered. It will be helpful to students," Dr. Jawahar said.

A five-member committee, including Dr. Jawahar, has been formed "to inform the government the procedures to be followed for admitting students under management quota in engineering colleges." He said Anna University would come out with a rank list for counselling by June third week

Source: Madurai [/Beta. The Hindu/2](#) May 2010

Bills on higher education to be tabled in parliament

Union Minister for Human Resource Development Kapil Sibal has said that four Bills connected with higher education, including one on setting up a national education tribunal, will be tabled in Parliament on Monday to address emerging challenges in the education sector.

Mr. Sibal, who dedicated the headquarters of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) campus here on Saturday, said that the education tribunal would be constituted to resolve disputes in the field of education.

The main task of the tribunal would be to resolve issues related to regulation, accreditation, quality of education and admission process. Many disputes would crop up with increased participation of the private sector in higher education and there was a need to set up tribunals at the national, regional and State levels, he said.

In order to ensure quality education and transparency in the system, a Bill on National Accreditation Authority would be introduced. The Bill envisages constitution of the authority to process the accreditation of higher educational institutions. "We need to inform the world that we are ready to change and compete with the rest of the world. The accreditation is compulsory for existing and new educational institutions and universities," Mr. Sibal added. To increase the percentage of graduates from 12 per cent to 30 per cent by 2020, there was a need to set up 800 new universities and 35,000 to 40,000 colleges across the country, he said. The authority would monitor and assess the quality of education in all these institutions. Many new universities had been set up at the State-level and the State governments had to set up a mechanism to assess the quality of education, he said.

A Bill would be introduced to "open our doors to foreign education providers."

The entry of foreign education providers would enable establishment of centres of excellence, joint ventures with foreign universities, and faculty exchange programmes, he said. "We have to change the environment," Mr. Sibal said and added that accreditation helped build centres of excellence. Noting that the academic world remained silent in the country, Mr. Sibal said: "We would like to hear diversity of voices. You (academicians) need to participate and set up benchmarks for excellence."

A Bill on punishment for malpractices in educational institutions would be tabled on Monday to ensure implementation of fair practices by institutions, he said.

NAAC Director H.A. Ranganath, University Grants Commission Chairman Sukhdeo Thorat, Higher Education Secretary Vibha Puri Das, and many educationists attended the programme. Union Minister for Human Resource Development Kapil Sibal has said that four Bills connected with higher education, including one on setting up a national education tribunal, will be tabled in Parliament on Monday to address emerging challenges in the education sector.

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Source: Bangalore [/The Hindu/](#)2 May 2010

Govt. likely to find it tough to table foreign education bill in LS

The government is likely to find it difficult to introduce the Foreign Educational Institutes Bill in the Lok Sabha on Monday. The proposed legislation, which allows foreign institutions to set up campus in India, is one of the four bills that the government is planning to introduce in Parliament as part of its higher-education reform agenda. The remaining three bills propose setting up a national education tribunal, a legal framework to deal with malpractices by education institutions and mandatory accreditation for all institutions.

The Left has said it will oppose introduction of the Foreign Educational Institution (Regulation of Entry and Operation) Bill, 2010. Opposition from the Left is not unexpected. In 2007, during the first stint of the UPA, the Cabinet approved an earlier version of this Bill. The Left's single-handed effort ensured that the then HRD minister Arjun Singh did not introduce the Bill in the Rajya Sabha.

The government can expect resistance from BJP as well. The party is yet to commit to opposing the introduction of the bill, calling instead for a substantive discussion. "The party is keen on understanding the bill in its entirety," BJP spokesperson Nirmala Sitaraman said. Sources in the BJP said party MPs would push for substantive discussion once the proposed legislation is laid on the table.

HRD minister Kapil Sibal attempted to reach out to BJP for their support for the proposed legislation. BJP has already expressed its reservations to the bill in its current form. The party has said it will take a final call only after it has the full details of the bill.

Former HRD Minister Murlu Manohar Joshi, whom Mr Sibal met in an effort to win over BJP's support, had asked that the party be supplied a copy of the bill for consideration and to study the implications. The government did not share the draft, only providing the principal opposition party with highlights of the proposed legislation.

Sources said most of the highlights were already in the public domain, and the government's note did not address any of the issues raised by Mr Joshi. Remaining three Bills are expected to be introduced without opposition. The proposed national education tribunal would be constituted to resolve disputes in the field of education. The main task of the tribunal would be to resolve issues related to regulation, accreditation, quality of education and admission process. Many disputes would crop up with increased participation of the private sector in higher education and there was a need to set up tribunals at the national, regional and state levels.

Source: New Delhi [/Economic Times/](#)3 May 2010

PMO may put medical education under NCHER

In a bid to stem the rot in medical education, the Prime Minister's Office has asked the HRD ministry to bring it under the purview of the proposed National Council for Higher Education and Research (NCHER).

In the present form, the NCHER Bill excludes medical and agriculture education. Inclusion of medical education in NCHER will mean that health ministry's proposal to set up a regulatory authority for medical education is likely to be shelved. PMO sources said a meeting between HRD and health ministry officials has already taken place on this issue.

Coming in wake of the arrest of MCI chief Ketan Desai, the decision can be seen as PMO's lack of confidence in health ministry's ability to clean the mess in medical education. Sources said, "The arrest of Desai has shown the extent to which the rot has spread. It can't be allowed." However, MCI's function as a regulatory to manage the medical profession will not be taken away.

Another reason for inclusion of medical education in the proposed NCHER is that the National Accreditation Regulatory Authority For Higher Educational Institutions Bill, 2010 provides for accreditation of higher educational institutions, including medical colleges. Another HRD Bill — Prohibition of Unfair Practices Bill — also accounts for malpractices in medical colleges. Both the Bills were introduced in the LS on Monday by HRD Minister Kapil Sibal. Sources said it would have created a strange situation whereby medical education would have been under MCI/health ministry but accreditation and control of malpractices would have been under HRD.

The PMO's directive has come at a time when HRD Ministry, after a nationwide consultation, is in the process of finetuning the NCHER Bill further. Sibal is planning to go on a retreat with experts like former NCERT director Krishna Kumar, Devesh Kapur of Pennsylvania University, educationist Vinod Raina, Pratap Bhanu Mehta of Centre for Policy Research, historian KN Pannikar and others for further consultations on NCHER.

Source: New Delhi /[Times of India](#)/4 May 2010

Funds agency for universities

The human resource development ministry is proposing a new inter-university agency that will take over the UGC's responsibility of funding varsities, divorcing the tasks of regulating and financing institutions for the first time.

The inter-university financing centre, though, will not have any of the regulatory powers held by a commission under the HRD ministry's plan, The Telegraph has learnt.

The plan for the new funding agency has been incorporated in the ministry's latest draft legislation for the National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) that will take over the regulatory powers of the UGC and other regulators.

Like the UGC at present, the new funding agency will fully fund central universities while also providing grants to state universities.

The inter-university financing centre will have one member from the NCHER but will function completely independent of the new regulator, sources said.

"The idea is that the NCHER will take care of all regulatory tasks, while the inter-university financing agency will be in charge of funding varsities and monitoring their expenditure," a source close to the development said.

An HRD ministry panel of experts had earlier this year held nation-wide consultations on an initial draft of the NCHER bill. The initial bill had empowered the NCHER with the task of funding universities along with the responsibility of maintaining academic standards — like the UGC.

But the ministry and the panel of experts faced opposition from several stakeholders during the consultations. The critics argued that by giving the NCHER the dual responsibility of financing and regulating institutions, the HRD ministry was repeating the flaws that plague the UGC.

The National Knowledge Commission had recommended that the roles of funding universities and regulating them be handed over to separate agencies. Its dual responsibility placed the UGC in a position of conflict of interest, critics argued. "If you are funding an institution it is hard to accuse it of violating norms as that would lead to questions about why you were funding it," an adviser to the government who was formerly with the NKC said.

Source: New Delhi /[Telegraph India](#)/4 May 2010

UGC gets CAG rap for doling out deemed tags

Recommendations of expert panel, state govt. ignored in many cases

On several occasions in the past five years, the University Grants Commission (UGC) violated established guidelines to recommend deemed university status for certain institutions. In many cases, the UGC even ignored the expert committee and state government recommendations to declare a favoured institution as "deemed".

In a report on the function of autonomous bodies presented in Parliament yesterday, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) took the UGC to task, saying four cases involving institutions in Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, UP and Rajasthan, were granted deemed tags by the UGC despite not fulfilling the minimum eligibility criteria. The CAG report comes days after the UGC revisited deemed varsity guidelines, making it stricter for institutions to apply. But the reality is it did not follow the old guidelines that were not weak either.

The four institutions granted deemed status in sheer violation of "basic eligibility rules" are Manav Rachna International University, Faridabad, Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts of India (ICFAI), Hyderabad, Nehru Gram Bharati Vishwavidyalaya, Allahbad and Modi Institute of Education and Research, Rajasthan. "Audit observed that ICFAI was given the deemed status by the Ministry of HRD despite the fact that AICTE had informed the UGC in January 2006 that the institution had been conducting technical programmes without their approval and a show cause notice had also been issued to them. The UGC still

went ahead and recommended to the HRD Ministry to grant deemed status to ICFAI," says CAG.

In case of Manav Rachna in Faridabad too, the AICTE warning was ignored to grant deemed status. Audit noticed that Manav Rachna in disregard of the notification issued by the Ministry included the names of other four unapproved institutions as constituents of the university and notified them in an advertisement published in April 2009.

Further, the UGC went against the advice of state governments in 14 cases to grant deemed tags to institutions. As per guidelines, UGC is to obtain the views of the state governments on the proposal from institutions seeking deemed status.

"Test check reveals that in 14 cases, the HRD Ministry, on UGC's recommendations, granted deemed status to institutions either against the recommendations of the state governments or without obtaining the views of states," says the report. Five of these institutions (where states' suggestions were disregarded) are in Tamil Nadu, four in Karnataka, two in Uttarakhand (Graphic Era Institute and Swami Ram Vidyapeeth); one each in Puducherry and Haryana (Maharishi Markandeshwar University, Ambala).

As of June 2009, 127 institutions were deemed, of which 57 were given the status between 2004 and 2009. The Supreme Court is currently hearing the case related to 44 deemed varsities blacklisted by the HRD Ministry for de-recognition. Only yesterday, the SC said they could admit students while the case hearing was on.

Tag Trouble

- Four institutions — Manav Rachna International University, Faridabad, Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts of India, Hyderabad, Nehru Gram Bharati Vishwavidyalaya, Allahbad and Modi Institute of Education and Research, Rajasthan — granted deemed status in sheer violation of basic eligibility rules.
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Source: New Delhi [/Tribune India/](#)8 May 2010

Sibal nod for sacking 62 teachers

In a big clean-up act, HRD minister Kapil Sibal has approved cancellation of appointment of more than 60 teachers of the prestigious Maulana Azad National Institute of Technology (MNIT), Bhopal, who were recruited illegally in 2005.

Sources in MNIT said 15 assistant professors and 47 lecturers besides training and placement officer and librarians would lose their jobs. Sources said many

teachers did not even meet the criterion of basic academic qualification while some paid bribes to get the job.

Sibal has asked officials to simultaneously rescind these appointments and begin fresh recruitment. However, officials at MNIT said they were still to get any communication from the HRD ministry.

These teachers in the rank of lecturers and assistant professors (system of designation has since changed) have been working for the last five years. NITs, directly under the HRD Ministry, are being modelled on the lines of IITs.

"Reversal of appointments in such a large number will definitely harm the reputation of NITs," an NIT director said.

"What is shocking is that no action was taken despite a report by a fact-finding committee in 2008 against their appointment," he added.

The issue of illegal appointments resurfaced when CBI sought HRD ministry's approval to investigate the role of Rajneesh Shrivastava, currently director NIIT, Jamshedpur, in recruitment of an assistant professor when he was at MNIT, Bhopal. It came to notice that as per the directions of the ministry, MNIT had set up a fact-finding committee in 2007 that looked into irregularities in appointments including the one for which Shrivastava was being held responsible.

The ministry then decided that since Shrivastava was not alone in taking the decision, it would be proper to deal with lacunae in appointments pointed out by the fact-finding committee. The committee had even suggested a separate inquiry to investigate allegations of bribery in appointment. Therefore, it was decided to cancel all the appointments.

Source: New Delhi [/Times of India/](#)10 May 2010

UGC issues new guidelines for affiliation of colleges

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has come out with a fresh set of guidelines for universities to follow while granting temporary or permanent affiliation to colleges and recognised educational institutions.

Among other things, the commission has made it clear that colleges should not grant admissions to students to any programme of study while anticipating that they would be granted affiliation. Similarly, colleges cannot suspend offering a previously approved programme without prior permission of the university.

The guidelines are critical to varsities like the University of Pune (UoP), which has been pushing colleges, for quite some time now, to go in for permanent affiliation that qualifies them for UGC grants as well as autonomy or deemed university status.

Permanent affiliation is crucial for a college in terms of establishing physical (infrastructure), academic and financial stability, which are prime concerns for students seeking admission for higher study courses. Such affiliation not only sets the college free of the annual time-consuming ritual of visits by the varsity's local inquiry committee for

renewal of their temporary affiliations, but also enables them to draw UGC funds.

The UoP has 587 affiliated colleges and 320-odd recognised institutions spread across Pune, Ahmednagar and Nashik districts. However, barely 30 per cent of these institutions have permanent affiliation. The issue has prominently figured in the debates of the UoP's Senate meetings in the past.

A senior official from UoP's board of college and university development (BCUD) office told TOI, "The new guidelines will be placed before the university's academic council to decide how they can be integrated with the prevailing policies vis-a-vis affiliations."

The affiliation process is primarily guided by provisions under the Maharashtra Universities Act of 1994 and the ordinances and statutes of the concerned universities. "Changes in the affiliation process that can be affected at the local level can be done by amending the ordinances and statutes. However, changes that require an amendment in the MU Act will have to go through the legislative process," the official said.

The UoP had issued a circular on July 25, 2009, easing the conditions for grant of permanent affiliation to colleges after a five-member varsity committee had studied and submitted certain recommendations.

The relaxation primarily related to the earlier insistence that the college should have a full-time principal for three successive years at the time of applying for permanent affiliation. The new guidelines are expected to prompt a fresh look at the whole issue.

Source: Pune [/Times of India/](#)11 May 2010

Global footprints of education

An educational fair was recently held in Kochi with participation restricted to international universities and colleges from around the globe.

Four-hundred students registered for The Hindu-EducationPlus International Education Fair-2010 held recently at the Taj Gateway Hotel, while another 400 checked out the 33 stalls for identifying the course and institution that suited them the most. Many students came accompanied by their parents, since choosing the right university and course of study can be a life-changing decision.

Among the students were Abin Looka, Rahul V. and Jimmy Joseph, an effervescent group of B.Tech. degree holders from the Vishwajyothi College of Engineering and Technology, near Muvattupuzha. They came scouting for a good Master's course in management. "We were able to have an overview of different universities offering the course and the criteria for selection.

The spread out of stalls based on the country they represent helped us," Mr. Looka said. Experts guided the students on education overseas, different career options, country familiarisation, student visa counselling, education

loans and so on. Universities and colleges from the U.S., the U.K., Singapore, the Netherlands, the UAE, Germany, Canada, Russia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Australia, France and many other European countries participated.

A representative of Think Education USA spoke about the advantages of studying in the U.S. — for instance, you can create a programme that fits your interests. One can begin from a small community college, transfer to a four-year college or university and earn a degree.

The 'liberal arts' model develops broadly educated graduates, who have strong writing, reading, research and problem-solving skills. Which means a person will be ready for any job or career.

Critical and creative thinking are encouraged. Unlike in many other countries, there is no official ranking of institutions in the U.S. Thus, instead of aiming for the best, one can find a suitable college — big or small, located in warm or cold climate, in the city or suburbs or rural area.

John Waller from the University of Bradford in the U.K. elaborated on the institution's undergraduate and Master's courses in peace studies, which are famous the world over.

The topics include conflict resolution and development. The institution's School of Lifelong Education and Development offers foundation degrees in community justice, public-sector administration and so on.

The research arenas include "the widening access and social inclusion." Currently, students from 110 countries are pursuing different courses in the university, which "makes knowledge work."

There was a stall of RACUS, Russia, a country where higher studies is said to be relatively cheaper than in Europe. "Our medical course is popular. Select students would get scholarships," said an Indian representative of RACUS, which was founded in 1991 by a group of Russian State universities.

An Indian spokesperson of TOEFL spoke of how many students think that the test is not accepted in countries such as the U.K. "The test is held three or four times a month in most cities. Our resource centres guide the students. The scoring methods provide a complete picture of a student's ability to communicate in English," she said.

The Florida Coastal Law School came offering an Internet-based virtual classroom for LL.M. in U.S. law. Using this, law graduates will be able to attend lectures from their house or home town. "Examinations too are paperless.

After passing this, candidates can appear in 10 U.S. States for the American Bar Association examination. One gets a maximum of three years to clear the course," said Paresh Joshi, a representative.

Two institutions from Dubai in the UAE, Singapore and Malaysia which participated offered economical tuition fee and living expenses than in Western universities. Club FM was the radio partner for the fair.

Source: Kochi [/hindu.com/](#)11 May 2010

Delhi university to enroll additional 5000 students this year

University of Delhi, popularly known as Delhi University (DU), will enroll an additional of 5000 students in undergraduate courses, this year. DU admission process begins on May 28, 2010. As per sources, the announcement was made by a DU official on Tuesday i.e. May 11, 2010.

S.K. Vij, Dean of Students Welfare Department of DU, has said that in 2009-10, the total number of seats available for the undergraduate courses in Delhi University was 49,000. In the next academic session of 2010-11, the number of seats will be increased to 54,000. In 2008, the number of seats available was 42,000. Besides, the university also offers 5,000 seats in professional courses.

Application forms for various courses in the affiliated colleges will be available from May 28. Forms can be bought and submitted from May 28 until June 11. The first cut-off list for various courses in colleges will be announced on June 22 after which students will be able to take admission in the colleges.

DU will conduct open day sessions from May 15 to 23 on the campus, when admission seekers and their parents will get an opportunity to interact with teachers and senior students. For students belonging to the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST), there will be special counselling sessions from May 28 to June 11.

In addition, to help aspiring students, the university has launched a helpline, whose numbers are 011-27662507, 27662508, 24119832, and 24114634. For the first time, the university has also introduced online counselling with teachers and experts.

Source: New Delhi <http://highereducationinindia/> 12 May 2010

Mumbai university to offer credits system

Studying economics along with law or maths in tandem with music will now be possible at the University of Mumbai.

In a watershed move, the faculty of the university's three largest streams—arts, science and commerce—have approved a choice-based credit and semester system at the undergraduate and post-graduate level from this June. The three proposals will now move up to the academic council, and will be tabled later before the management council for official sanctions.

The credit system, followed for aeons in universities around the world, takes into account a student's performance throughout the entire duration of the course, unlike now, where only his/her final exam scores get recorded. Also, credits are given for the number of hours a student attends class, thus keeping a check on attendance. Hence, credit is defined in terms of hours, and students are evaluated based on classroom tests and final semester exams.

Each of the three-year-long courses will now be sliced into six semesters, two semesters making up a year. Eventually, the cumulative of each semester's average will make up the final score (see credit calculator). Examinations will have two components: a written examination at the end of each semester and a host of classroom-level tests, where teachers will conduct internal continuous assessment in the form of surprises tests, quizzes, written assignments or fieldwork. This will allow flexibility to faculty members and ensure that a student is up to date with course work.

"The credit system will ensure that students attend class to earn their credits. The final graduation mark-sheet will reflect what the student has picked up in the entire three-year course. Classroom tests and presentations will empower teachers & will cut down students' stress levels too," said Parvathi Venkatesh, dean of faculty, arts.

Internally, the university will continue assessing students in marks, but these scores will be converted to grades (quality) points. For example, a student scoring between 70 and 80 will have a quality point of 8. The maximum quality point is 10 (scores between 90 and 100) and minimum is 0 (scores less than 40).

Siddheshwar Gadade, dean of the faculty of commerce, said the university would not be able to immediately allow students to take up courses across different streams.

"Hence we have merely woven the credit system into the existing structure," he explained. "But once the system is well oiled and functioning smoothly, we will allow students to move across streams—eventually, our system will provide the flexibility to study commerce with chemistry or even history."

S B Patil, dean of science, said, "The new system will enable a science student to take up psychology if he wants and complete his credits. If a student wants to move to another university or institute, his/her credits will be transferred." He added that continuous assessment, open book tests and other progressive developments in colleges and university departments would follow soon.

The originating point of the credit system was in 2008 when the University Grants Commission directed all vice-chancellors to adopt the semester system, introduce academic reforms and go in for the choice-based credit system (CBCS). While drawing up the fund allocation under the 11th Plan Statement, the UGC had stated that grants would be directly proportional to the implementation of the academic & administrative reforms suggested by it.

When varsities in Maharashtra did not act upon the directive, the state government rapped them and linked their annual grants to the implementation of CBCS. Now other state universities are to follow suit and usher in the academic reforms from either the coming academic session or the next one.

According to the UGC, close to 70 universities have so far agreed to adopt the new system—several central and state

varsities have already implemented CBCS. Currently, the UGC give grants to 180 universities across India.

"The semester system will hopefully end the tried-and-tested method of selective cramming just in time for the final exams," said a former vice-chancellor. Mumbai University will be expected to conduct exams more frequently so that students can take them as and when they want to.

Once the university councils okay the proposals, the varsity will conduct workshops for college heads and teachers so that the implementation process is smooth.

Source: Mumbai [/Times of India/](#)13 May 2010

Cabinet approves setting up of India's first national defence university

The Union Cabinet has given its consent for the setting up of the India's first National Defence University. Moreover, it has also sanctioned an amount of Rs 295 crore for establishing the Indian National Defence University (INDU), near Delhi. INDU is envisaged to create synergy between existing institutes of learning in the sector and address strategic security challenges

Ambika Soni, Information and Broadcasting Minister has told the reporters that the Union Cabinet has accorded in-principle approval for setting up of INDU as a fully autonomous institution to be constituted under an act of parliament at an estimated cost of Rs 295 crore. She made the announcement after a cabinet meeting presided over by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today i.e. on May 13.

In addition, she mentioned that the Cabinet also accorded approval for acquisition of 200 acres of land at Binola in Haryana's Gurgaon district for the proposed site of INDU at an estimated cost of Rs 100 crore. INDU will undertake long-term defence and strategic studies and create synergy between the academic community and government functionaries. It will promote policy oriented research on all aspects relating to national security as an input to strategic national policy making.

Furthermore, INDU will encourage awareness of national security issues by reaching out to scholars and an audience beyond the official machinery. It will also teach national security leaders on aspects of national security strategy, national military strategy, national information strategy and national technology strategy through teaching and research. As per sources, the establishment of INDU was one of the recommendations made by a committee headed by eminent security analyst K Subrahmaniam after the 1999 Kargil conflict with Pakistan.

Source: New Delhi [/highereducationinindia/](#)13 May 2010

Eligibility marks for engineering admission to be reduced

The government has decided to lower the total marks required in Class 12 for admission to bachelor's degree

courses in engineering, Higher Education Minister K. Ponmudy told the Assembly on Thursday.

Replying to a question from S. Peter Alphonse (Congress), Mr. Ponmudy said that the quantum of reduction would be decided in consultation with the Chief Minister. There were many representations from engineering colleges as more than 30,000 seats remained vacant last year.

Mr. Ponmudy said private engineering colleges wanted a mere pass as criterion for admission to engineering courses. This demand could not be conceded. However, there could be some concession in marks, which would be lower than the present level. As of now, students in the open category have to score 55 per cent marks; those belonging to backward classes 50 per cent; and those from most backward communities, 45 per cent. K. Balabarathi (CPI-M) demanded that the government not relax the current norms. If this was done, there would be no takers for courses in arts and sciences colleges.

V. Sivapunniam (CPI) said reduction in eligibility marks would help students.

Mr. Ponmudy said that it was wrong to claim that arts and science colleges would face a dearth of students. The 67 arts and science colleges run by the government were operating in two shifts every day, and had sufficient intake. Besides, most other States in south India, including Kerala, Puducherry and Karnataka, had reduced the aggregate marks for admission to engineering courses.

Source: Chennai [/Bbeta. The Hindu/](#)14 May 2010

ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

PM slams legal education in India

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh Saturday slammed the country's legal education system, describing it as "a sea of institutionalised mediocrity".

Inaugurating a two-day national consultation on second generation reforms in legal education, the prime minister said: "We do have a small number of dynamic and outstanding law schools but I am afraid there remains an island of excellence amidst a sea of institutionalised mediocrity.

"We are not even marginally nearer to profound scholarship and enlightened research in law."

An economist of repute, Manmohan Singh said: "We need to focus on utilizing the rich, vast and diverse resources available in the legal domain for imparting legal education in the country.

"If we are to have the rule of law in our country, if we are to have an economic environment where contracts are easily enforceable, we must ensure that our law teachers, advocates, corporate lawyers, legal advisors, judicial officers and legal facilitators are of very high standard.

“This is possible only if there is dramatic reforms and improvement in the scope and quality of our legal education systems.”

Source: New Delhi /[Blog. Taragana](#)/1 May 2010

Sibal highlights importance of accreditation

HRD Minister Kapil Sibal today lamented that India had not yet embraced accreditation as a process to achieve the level of excellence needed to compete globally and asked the education sector to "put systems in place" to take advantage of global opportunities that will unfold in future.

"Accreditation is the most important element in achieving excellence. Without accreditation there are no benchmarks or basis by which we can judge quality," Sibal said, dedicating the National Assessment and Accreditation Council campus in the service of higher education here.

He said the 21st century would see investment in countries which are low-cost economy but high in human resources. The success that India has witnessed in the services sector "will happen in the education sector", he said but the problem was "that we are not ready for it".

Source: Bangalore /[ptinews](#)/1 May 2010

Frame rules on handling of radioactive material, UGC told

Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal on Friday asked the University Grants Commission (UGC) to immediately frame guidelines for procurement, transport, storage and disposal of all hazardous material, including chemicals and radioactive substances, used for research in universities.

Mr. Sibal took the decision at a meeting with UGC chairperson Sukhdeo Thorat here.

The guidelines will be circulated to all universities under the Ministry.

Death in Mayapuri

The directive follows the death of a scrap dealer and injuries to eight others at Mayapuri here after handling a radioactive substance.

Mr. Sibal will also write to all other research-oriented Ministries and institutions, seeking inputs for dealing with hazardous materials so as to lay down common guidelines for handling and disposal of hazardous substances. This would include biological, chemical and other materials used for cutting edge research like nanotechnology.

As of now, the UGC does not have any system in this regard and universities get radioactive material for their laboratories with the permission of regulating agencies.

The Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) has guidelines that are supposed to be followed by universities for procurement and handling of such materials.

The Human Resource Development Ministry is awaiting the report of a three-member enquiry committee set up by Delhi University Vice-Chancellor Deepak Pental to go into

the entire issue of the disposal of the radioactive material, before taking any action.

Source: New Delhi /[Beta. The Hindu](#)/1 May 2010

Come to India to solve the world's problems Sibal.

Three bills pertaining to higher education are ready to be presented in parliament on Monday, said Kapil Sibal, Union minister for human resources development. He was speaking at the dedication of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) campus on Saturday.

One bill relates to the setting up of educational tribunals in this country. "That would be necessary as we move forward in reforming the higher education sector. A lot of disputes will emerge, especially in the private sector. We will be confronted with unprecedented issues relating to regulation, accreditation and many others that will need to be resolved," he said. National, state or regional tribunals will be formed once the bill gets the parliament's consent.

The second bill is about setting up a national accreditation authority under which the assessment and accreditation agencies will assess institutions.

"We have ensured that this process [accreditation] is mandatory for all higher institutions in the country. We do not want that institutions of dubious quality start imparting education to our children," he said.

Here, it is necessary for states to come up with their processes and methodologies too. "Each state should set up a council through which it can coordinate with the various institutions to ensure that they go through the accreditation process. The states must take up ownership and realise it is important for them to ensure quality," he said.

The third bill would be related to the entry of foreign educational institutes into India. This is crucial in a world that has to change its economic model, he said. "When I go around the world, I tell people, you can't solve the problems of the world by accessing human resource from India.

You have to come to India to solve the problems of the world. Once you are able to set up an institution in India and develop the human skills that are required, people might just come to your country. You can't expect them to come to you. That's not the economic model for the 21st century," he said. Outsourcing has happened in manufacturing and services sector and will happen in education too. But we are not ready for it, the minister emphasised. "We have to ensure that we have systems in place, that we are ready to take advantage of the enormous opportunity that is available to us."

Voice of academic community

"I don't hear the voice of the academic community in any debate and I wonder why," said Sibal, addressing a city "that has very high quality educational institutions and very high quality private investment in the area of science and technology as well as in the public sector".

Source: Bangalore /[Dnaindia.com](#)/2 May 2010

India: Severe academic shortage hits elite institutes

India's élite institutes of technology, or IITs, and institutes of management, IIMs, which train some of the country's top engineers and managers are battling a severe shortage of academics that threatens the quality of education at the sought-after institutions.

The number of academic vacancies in the seven old IITs has increased from 877 in 2008-09 to 1,065 in 2009-10, Junior Education Minister Daggubati Purandeswari said in a Parliamentary answer last week. The vacancies in the seven institutions in 2007-08 stood at 971.

Many top staff are lured away by better salaries in industry which can amount to three times an academic's salary. Despite the prestige of these institutions within India, they have been unable to attract faculty from abroad because of limited finances.

"Recruitment of faculty is a continuous process and all-out efforts are made by the institutes to fill up vacant posts," Purandeswari said. "Institutions have been employing suitable strategies to attract and retain quality faculty which include attractive pay structure, provisions of good residential accommodation, medical facilities, initial research grants and so on."

The technology institute at Kharagpur has 299 academic vacancies, followed by 222 at IIT Bombay, 194 at IIT Roorkee, 138 at IIT Madras, 78 at IIT Delhi, 69 at IIT Kanpur and 65 at IIT Guwahati, Purandeswari said.

The problem has been compounded with the opening of eight new IITs during 2009 and 2010 to cope with a burgeoning demand for engineers. The new institutions are struggling to fill 280 faculty positions.

Meanwhile, some 95 vacant posts exist at the country's seven institutes of management. Seven new IIMs planned by the Education Ministry will need 392 more academics over the next three years. According to the IITs, the 15 institutes will need 12,000 academics over the next 10 to 12 years to maintain the current student teacher ratio of 10:1. In 2010, 450,000 students applied for the 7,000 places at 15 IITs.

The teacher shortage is threatening the quality of the coveted government institutions. But the situation echoes shortages elsewhere in the university system. A sample survey of 47 universities by a government pay review committee in December 2008 showed that 48.6% of teaching posts were vacant. Out of the 16,579 posts, only 8,064 were filled.

The 12 new central universities that became functional this year are also struggling to fill vacancies. The Central University of Orissa, located in Koraput - a tribal-dominated district with minimal facilities - is finding it extremely difficult to attract faculty. The university has four academics for 150 postgraduate students and needs to recruit a further 11.

The National Knowledge Commission, a think-tank on education, said in 2006 that India would need 1,500 additional universities to cater to the aspirations of young

Indians. There are 504 universities and higher education institutions at present. But focusing on expansion without planning for academics or infrastructure has left the newly established higher educational institutions in a lurch.

Education Minister Kapil Sibal plans to raise the gross enrolment ratio in higher education of 18-30 year olds from the existing 12% to an ambitious 30%. To achieve that he has to find the teachers for the university classrooms.

Source: [/University World News/2 May 2010](#)

Private equity players bunk Indian classrooms

The Indian education sector holds a \$40-billion potential, but few private equity (PE) players have ventured into this sector, despite the sector's projections of a 16% CAGR for five years, with 25 PE deals every year. In reality, PE deals have barely inched up in the last three years.

A slew of regulations, lack of companies with the ability to scale up and the occasionally non-profit nature of the sector have discouraged many PEs from venturing deep into education.

According to Venture Intelligence data, the sector saw 8, 9 and 10 PE deals in 2007, 2008 and 2009, with \$75 million, \$100 million and \$123 million investments, respectively. In 2010, only four deals have been concluded yet.

Says Ashish Gupta, managing partner, Helion Advisors: "Investment this year too will not be anywhere near the amount the sector actually needs for enabling quality education to Indian consumers."

Regulatory restrictions in formal education (K-12) and higher education block investment, say investors. In India, any formal education institution has to come under a non-profit structure where the bulk of the assets is controlled by a trust—and no PE player loves a not-for-profit trust. K-12 is estimated at \$20 billion, the largest chunk of the education market.

Says Jacob Kurian, partner, New Silk Route Advisors, "The trust or charitable society structure creates hurdles to a profit-oriented business.

They are great if you want to fiddle with the system, but PEs usually require very high levels of corporate governance."

Says Anand Sudarshan, CEO, Manipal Education: "PE investments have so far been on service organisations (mostly technology players), coaching classes, online education and training institutes. No degree-granting institution has received funding."

However, according to Jayaram K Iyer, spokesperson at the Loyola Institute of Business Administration), scalable verticals like online education do attract PE funding.

According to reports, e-learning receives a quarter of PE funds in education. Less-regulated players in vocational studies, test preparation, distance learning, technical training, play and pre-schools too have attracted PEs.

In the biggest PE deal of 2010, Manipal Universal Learning (MUL) received \$43 million from PremjiInvest.

An education and training company, MUL owns institutions abroad, where profit-based models are allowed. However, in India, it offers only training services.

Investors claim that it is difficult to find credible pre-school and test preparation companies. "Most players have only 1-5 centres and very few have scaled to a stage when they become attractive to PEs," says Ashish...

Source: Bangalore [/Financial Express/](#)3 May 2010

UGC sets up panel to frame guidelines on use of nuclear substance

In the wake of radioactive exposure in Delhi, UGC on Tuesday set up a five-member panel headed by an AIIMS professor for framing guidelines for the use, storage and disposal of radioactive and hazardous chemicals.

The committee has been given a month's time to prepare the guidelines keeping in view all safety guidelines framed by the regulating agencies.

Besides Prof. G.K. Rath from AIIMS, other members of the committee are Dr. A.K. Kohli, Dr. S.P. Kale and Dr. H.S. Kushwaha from Bhaba Atomic Research Centre (BARC) and Dr. D. D. Deshpande from Tata Memorial Centre.

"The guidelines will give a formula on how to handle all types of hazardous material, including radioactive and chemical materials used in scientific labs in universities, colleges and other institutions," UGC Chairman Sukhadeo Thorat said.

Mr. Rath is from the department of radiotherapy from AIIMS and has been associated with Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB).

UGC's action follows a direction from HRD Minister Kapil Sibal who wanted a comprehensive policy on procurement, handling, storage and disposal of such material.

Mr. Sibal had a discussion with Mr. Thorat in this regard last week.

Mr. Thorat said the UGC on Tuesday also issued a circular to universities and colleges to follow existing norms prepared by AERB, BARC, Board of Radioactive Isotopes Technology and similar bodies till the policy on safety measures are finalised.

The issue assumes significance in the backdrop of the recent incident of exposure to radioactive materials, leading to the death of a scrap shop worker in west Delhi. A few others, including the shop owner, are undergoing treatment after they were exposed to the same material this month.

The source of material was later traced to the chemistry department of Delhi University.

Source: New Delhi [/Beta. The Hindu/](#)4 May 2010

Life skills will become more important than technical skills for winning

Public policy makers now realise that unemployability is a bigger challenge than unemployment. Do managers? I work for a people supply chain company that has hired somebody every five minutes for the last five years.

But tragically we have only hired 3% of the people who came to us for a job. This ongoing agony and ecstasy of India's labour market has deep roots and different implications for policy makers and managers. Policy makers now realise that India can't convert growth to poverty reduction without improving the productivity of our people and only a radical revamp of our 3E ecosystem (education, employability and employment) will put poverty in the museum it belongs.

This includes destroying the regulatory cholesterol that holds back Indian education (AICTE, MCI, UGC, etc), revamping our skill system and reforming labour laws to increase organised employment. All the ideas are on the table and we need hard decisions that take on the antibiotic reaction of the entrenched insiders because India's official unemployment rate of 8% is dwarfed by our working poor of 18% of the labour force. The working poor are stuck in low productivity jobs because of their lack of skills and employability.

Public policy will soon need to acknowledge the increasing chant among economists that India may not completely follow the journey of China in reducing poverty with massive organised manufacturing driven by exports. In fact, our current model of domestic consumption and services has important labour market and public policy implications that have not been fully played out yet. But do most managers who benefited from the hyper growth in salaries of the last decade realise that it had to do more with luck than skill? A rising tide lifts even the leaky boats; India's economic growth and broken 3E ecosystem created talent shortages that were solved by lower hiring standards and salary inflation.

So many salaries paid — particularly in middle management — did not reflect productivity or skills of the individuals but the price of rice in a famine i.e. not market price. But just like financial market bubbles, famines don't last forever.

The biggest lessons of the economic downturn for companies has been that lowering hiring standards in high tide creates huge organisational and individual pain in low tide. So, an important consequence of the downturn might be a "new normal" which arose from organisations realising they can do more with less as long as they select their people carefully and invest in training. While this increased employee assessment and training will support public policy employability efforts, the shift to "people who hit the ground running" has important implications for managers at an individual level; the hyper inflation in salaries will only continue mostly for top talent at the top of organisations.

Organisation pyramids will get steeper as many traditional organisations adopt the up-or-out system of IT

organisations to avoid middle management obesity and this will accelerate the shift of employment from a life-long contract to a taxicab relationship. Life skills— curiosity, confidence, creativity, risk taking and teamwork – will become more important than technical skills for winning. But do most managers bake this into their personal learning plans? The best time to do this was ten years ago. The second best time is today.

Source: [/Economic Times/5 May 2010](#)

Sound move Mr. Sibal

The government's move to make education loans cheap and extend their repayment period is welcome. This is a key component of education reform to greatly expand the base of higher education. A National Education Finance Corporation to refinance banks for giving education loans below prime lending rates is also a workable idea. The feasibility of the government lending directly to students through educational institutions, as in the US, needs to be examined.

Human capital is the primary driver of economic growth in this country of young people all of whom need to study, and study longer than they used to. Sure, banks cannot carry the burden of a social objective. The onus is on the government to bear the extra burden of providing cheap loans.

Securitisation of student loans and extending sovereign guarantee to the resulting securities would lower the cost of financing. The government can consider subsidising the loans as well.

There is a strong case for extending government funding of education both to students, as interest subsidy and liberal scholarships, and to educational institutions. Students would vie to get enrolled in the best institutions and institutions would vie to enroll students and thus get funds. Such competition is likely to help raise standards.

The cost of education would go up when private, including foreign universities increasingly fill the gap between demand for education and the state-funded supply. So, student loans should be cheap, plentiful and easily available.

The requirement of physical collateral for loans above Rs 4 lakh should go. The real collateral is the earning potential of the student being funded. With information technology, especially the unique identity programme, banks can track any borrower and realise loan repayments.

The government can enter into agreements with foreign governments to take cognisance of the student loan repayment obligation of guest workers. Private companies should also expand their endowments and scholarships to build a rich talent pool. Lack of finance should not stop a young Indian from realising her desire to study and enhance her creative potential.

Source: [/Economic Times/6 May 2010](#)

The foreign educational institutions bill: A critique

Five bills on higher education are under consideration of the government and as many as four of them were introduced in Parliament on 3 May. Here, a critical discussion of the bill which aims to roll out the red carpet to foreign educational institutions.

According to media reports, there are currently five bills being formulated by the Ministry of Human Resource Development relating to higher education and they are at various stages of preparation. Four of these bills were introduced in Parliament on 3 May. The five bills are: a bill for setting up the National Educational Tribunal, a bill for setting up a National Accreditation Authority, a bill for checking malpractices in higher education, a bill for setting up a National Commission for Higher Education and Research and a bill for Foreign Educational Institutions.

It may be necessary to look at all these bills together, as they constitute a package of reforms that the government plans to make for the development of higher education. However, each one has also to be examined in detail. As some have been intensively discussed in these columns and some not, besides being constrained by the non-availability of other bills, in this short note only the Foreign Educational Institutions Bill is critically examined.

A similar bill was first introduced in the Rajya Sabha in 1995, and was revived in 2007 but it could not go through. The United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government resolved immediately after resuming office for the second term, to work for the enactment of the bill. Now a fresh bill, viz, the Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations) Bill (Bill No 57 of 2010), was introduced in Parliament on 3 May 2010. Its stated objective "to regulate entry and operation of foreign educational institutions imparting or intending to impart higher education" is based on certain faulty assumptions that the government makes, some of which are clear from the pronouncements of the government in the overall context of this and other bills. They are:

(a) once the bill is passed, a large amount of foreign direct investment (FDI) will flow into India;

(b) top ranking universities will come to India which will provide access to high quality education to students in India, that too at a fraction of cost of normal foreign education, as students save on travel costs and costs of living abroad, besides partial savings in tuition, etc;

(c) India will save foreign exchange which is now flowing out in the form of students numbering about 1,00,000 going abroad for studies, which is estimated to be around \$7.5 billion a year;

(d) foreign institutions not only provide high quality education, but will also contribute to improvement in the quality of overall education, as their entry will result in competition and competition automatically improves quality and efficiency; and

(e) most importantly, foreign institutions will come to India to solve our problems relating to inadequate access, quality

and funding in higher education and hence the government can reduce substantially, if not minimise its responsibility of providing education to the people.

Invalid Assumptions

There is no basis for any of these assumptions. First, since 100% FDI is allowed in higher education, it is assumed that many foreign universities will come with capital to invest in India. But foreign universities are found to be more interested

(i) in taking students to their home universities as that will yield more revenues to their universities and their economies at large, and that will also promote diversity in the university campuses;

(ii) in collaborations with Indian counterparts as a part of twinning and other similar arrangements (which involve use of locally available infrastructure), than in coming to India with large amounts of capital to invest in building university campuses in India. In the recent past this has been stated very clearly by some of the visiting ministers and university delegations from abroad.

Second, from recent indications it is also clear that no top ranking university is eager to come to India or to other developing countries to offer quality education programmes. It is the second and third tier universities, which would be interested in coming to India to exploit the huge markets and to offer low quality programmes (even unaccredited programmes), taking advantage of the loopholes in our rules and regulations and weak regulatory mechanism. Top ranking universities are interested in India, but only for collaboration in high quality research activities, and not for normal degree programmes. This does not result in a flow of FDI and setting up of foreign universities on Indian soil. Further, even when top ranking universities come to India to offer education programmes, it is important to note that only those newly created wings of the universities, whose mandate is to go abroad to raise resources on a business mode, will come to India so that they can make money and cross-subsidise the education of local students in their home countries.

Third, many students who go abroad, do so not only for a degree, but also mainly for studying in a foreign university in a foreign atmosphere and to settle there at least with a work permit. A large number of those who are going abroad for studies will not opt to study in a foreign university within India. Even if foreign universities set up campuses in India, they will not be able to transplant the ambience of a foreign university and its sociopolitical milieu to India. Hence, they will not be attractive to a large number of students who are nowadays going abroad. The students will continue to emigrate in growing numbers. Therefore, to say that we will save huge foreign exchange may not be right.

Fourth, if at all the entry of foreign institutions results in any competition, that will be between unequals, as many of our public and even private institutions are severely starved of resources – financial, physical as well as teachers – and they are subject to tough regulations of the

government, while the foreign universities will not be subject to any regulations of the government. Competition between unequals will be unhealthy, producing unhealthy results. More importantly, competition does not necessarily result in an increase in improvement in quality and in efficiency. It can indeed produce avoidable costs to society.

Lastly, the most untenable assumption is that the goal of the foreign institutions is development of our nation and that they will come here to solve our problems, relating to inequitable access, falling standards and scarcity of public finances – the three most important problems that the Indian higher education system is facing.

One should note that the foreign institutions will come here to solve their own problems; even some of the best universities in the west are increasingly experiencing falling enrolments and facing a shortage of public funds, and they are encouraged by their governments to go abroad to make money. They will not be interested in offering solutions to our problems of inadequate access, poor quality and resource scarcity.

The assumption that foreign institutions will expand access to higher education and will help in boosting the gross enrolment ratio in higher education to realise our goal of 30% is highly contestable, given their interests and given the relative magnitude of the number of students who will join foreign institutions, which will have unregulated fee structure. There is no evidence of any developing country having prospered educationally or economically by relying on foreign universities. In fact, there is abundant evidence to show that strong and vibrant higher education systems are built mainly by the governments and with public funds.

Two Features

Two important features of the bill are very striking. According to it, with respect to the foreign educators, the role of the government of India or bodies like the University Grants Commission (or any other body to come up in its place) is extremely limited. The role of the government is confined to granting permission to set up the institution. The government has no role in administration – admissions (forget about reservations), fee policies, recruitment of faculty or other staff – domestic or foreign, their qualifications, salary structure, etc. It will have no role in academic aspects – curriculum, methods of teaching, evaluation and examination systems, recognition of degrees, etc. It will have no role of any kind in the governance of institutions, and there is no supervision of any aspect, no accreditation or no assessment by any Indian bodies.

All this means a very high degree of laissez-faireism – non-involvement of the government in higher education to be provided by the foreign institutions. To allay any doubts that the government might formulate rules later, the bill clearly states that further rules will be made only to clarify the provisions of the Act and that no rules will be made two years after the Act is made.

The second feature, which is a corollary to the first, relates to the free hand given to the foreign institutions in all these

matters, from setting up institutions to running them. Once they get the permission from the government, which also does not require any promise or statement, if not an affidavit on any of the above issues, they can decide on every major and minor issue on their own. They do not have to even submit any annual reports to the government. Their operations and their performance will not be subject to any examination by anybody. There is no provision for any kind of social control and they are accountable to none. This reflects the neoliberal government's unquestioned faith in markets. One doubts whether even in a free market economy, any educational institution is so free to do whatever it wants to do and whether governments in those countries have so much faith in the markets, and opt to be only onlookers.

However, the bill provides for revoking the status granted to a foreign institution, "if the [University Grants] Commission is satisfied that someone has violated any provisions of this Act or of the University Grants Commission Act 1956 or any other Act in force in India". The problem is how will the commission be satisfied? After all, it will not have any overseeing powers, if not supervising and inspecting responsibilities, it will not have to receive any reports on the activities or practices of the institutions or their accounts or on any activity and it will not have to visit the universities for inspection or for any purpose.

The bill offers two kinds of guarantees to promote the entry of foreign institutions and to let them flourish. It guarantees speedy processing of applications – the concerned statutory authority is to give the recommendation to the registrar within three months after receipt of the application from the foreign institution; the registrar will have to submit the report to the commission within six months and the commission will have to tender advice to the central government within 30 days; and the central government will notify or communicate the rejection within a period of 30 days. Everything will be done on a fast track mode, all within a period of eight months. The second kind of assurance is to the students, so that students do not worry, and do not have to feel the need to be too cautious about applying for admission in these universities. The bill guarantees to the students that they will be taken care in case of any eventuality. The bill states that in case of withdrawal of the foreign education provider for whatever the reason, the central government shall make alternative educational facilities for students.

According to the bill, the conditions to get permission to set up a foreign institution in India are very minimal: an institution has to have experience of offering educational services for about 20 years; it has to deposit Rs 50 crore as a corpus fund; it has to offer courses of study which should be "in conformity with the standards laid down by the statutory authority, and is of quality" compared to those offered in the main campus of the university in the country in which it is established; it cannot repatriate surplus revenues; 75% of revenues generated should be used for development of the institution in India and 25% need to be

deposited into the corpus fund; and it has to publish prospectus of the institution giving details on fees, number of seats, admission criteria, etc.

While actually we need tough regulations, as foreign institutions and international forces are very strong and their activities cannot be easily controlled, the bill provides only for token regulations. In recent years there was talk that these institutions would be recognised as deemed universities and the rules and regulations applicable to deemed universities would be applicable to them. Further that these institutions would be subject to the policies of the government of India relating to reservations in student admissions, their fee structure would be regulated, and the courses they offer would have to be recognised by the parent universities abroad as well as Indian bodies.

But none of these conditions figure in the draft bill! It is important to note that some of the countries that have allowed the entry of foreign institutions have laid down strict conditions regarding accreditation of courses, and also regarding enrolment of native and foreign students, and on faculty, physical infrastructure and other aspects. Quite surprisingly, the bill makes no mention of any condition regarding accreditation and recognition of the courses of study by the appropriate public bodies either in the country of origin or in India, if not both.

The bill makes a distinction between a "Foreign Educational Institution" and "Foreign Education Provider". The latter is the one which will be recognised by the central government to enter India and to offer education programmes, and the foreign educational institution is the one that will be established or incorporated outside India and has been offering educational services in the country in which it had been established or incorporated, and which offers or proposes to offer educational programmes in India through conventional methods independently or in collaboration with any institution in India. In other words, the latter one is not recognised by the government of India.

No Permission Needed

One would expect that such a bill will require these institutions to seek formal permission from the government to continue their activities, and apply for recognition of their education programmes or to quit, so that all the foreign educational institutions come under the purview of one common set of regulations. The bill does not propose any thing of this kind. Only those institutions, which intend to offer degree/diploma or equivalent programmes have to take permission. As it states, No foreign educational institution shall admit any person as a student, or collect any fee from such person or its students in India for any course of study leading to the award of a degree or a diploma, by whatever name called, unless such institution has been notified by the Central Government as a foreign education provider...

The bill not only recognises that non-recognised institutions exist in India, but it also allows for their continuation in the country without seeking permission from the government. They will of course be required, according to the bill, to

furnish a report about their activities to the Commission and publish the information on their websites. The question is why will they do so, especially as an institution which is permitted and notified by the government to carry on its operations in India, in contrast, does not have to submit any report to anyone. So the ongoing business, however murky it is, of several unauthorised foreign educational institutions can go on uninterrupted and the bill will have no effect on these institutions.

‘Red Carpet Welcome’

The private sector has extended a “red carpet welcome” to the bill, probably expecting that eventually the government will be forced to extend a similar freedom with a similar token minimal set of regulations to them in order to provide a level playing field for ensuring competition, etc.

The private sector might view it as an added opportunity for the private institutions along with foreign institutions to work together to relegate the public higher education system to a distant insignificant second place on the higher education scene in the country, as is already happening in the case of higher professional and technical education in some of the major states in India.

As stated in the “Statement of Objects and Reasons” of the Bill, “there is no comprehensive and effective policy for regulation on the operations of all the foreign educational institutions in the country”. It is also stated that “due to lack of policy or a regulatory regime it has been very difficult to make a meaningful [assessment] of the operations of the foreign educational institutions.”

One wonders whether the bill provides any *comprehensive and effective policy* and helps in making any *meaningful assessment* of the operations of these institutions, and whether the bill will help “to maintain the standards of higher education within the country”.

In the recent past, the Yashpal Committee and C N R Rao Committee have suggested caution in the whole approach. They have suggested adopting a highly selective approach – to identify and invite a few of the best universities in the world to come to India and offer education programmes, and not to offer a blanket entry permit for all kinds of institutions to come and do business in higher education, which treat higher education as a commodity, as an international trade-able commodity meant for profit-making, and not as a public good.

Unfortunately, the Bill does exactly what these committees have said we should not do. It treats higher education as a trade-able commodity. The stated objective of the bill is “to provide for regulation of entry and operation of foreign educational institutions ...”; but the actual objective seems to facilitate easy entry of foreign institutions into India and to help smoothen the process of making a commitment on higher education by the government of India to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) under the framework of the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS), an issue which has been pending for the last several years, particularly after the confusion created by making an “initial

offer” to the GATS and then its “withdrawal” by the government of India in the mid-2000s.

Source: EPW vol xlv no 19 epw.in/8 May 2010

New teaching methods for special students

The school education department has finally woken up to the learning disability woes of students. With the Right to Education (RTE) Act opening up gates of private schools to students from poor economic and social backgrounds, the department has decided to offer 'special education' to children with learning disabilities.

With studies stating that 18 per cent of the students coming from rural backgrounds suffer from specific learning disabilities or slow learning and writing disabilities, the department took the decision to introduce special teaching ways in classrooms for the benefit of students who get admitted under RTE into private schools. In these special education sessions, the lessons will be rendered keeping in mind the disabilities of the students to enable them in overcoming their learning difficulties.

"With RTE getting implemented from the coming academic year we had to devise a way to ensure quality education for students who get benefited under the Act and hence decided to introduce special education sessions in schools. Once the Act gets implemented, there will be an influx of students from rural backgrounds to private schools in urban areas and these students would benefit from the programme," a senior official from school education department said. The Dept has even selected reading material to train teachers who would interact with children with learning disabilities in these schools.

The new teaching methods would focus on the reading, writing and memorising problems of students. The focus would primarily be on making the students expressive in their writing. The spelling and grammar of the written word is later corrected at ease. The students will also be given training in phonetics to understand the 'letter-sound connection' that will enable them to read without trouble.

They would also be given special training in improving their memory with the teachers taking care to repeat subjects ample times in class. A special focus will be given to learning of mathematics as it's an area which requires attention while teaching children with learning disabilities. With the academic year beginning in June, State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) has even selected teaching handbooks for teachers of all schools. Meanwhile, experts in learning disabilities said that students who land up in urban schools under the RTE Act will have to be taught in special classrooms before they get integrated into the mainstream.

"There should be a special focus on children who come from these backgrounds as their competency levels are likely to be lower due to bad schooling or even no schooling. If implemented with care, the students who come with learning difficulties will soon be as normal as other children. One might be able to integrate them into regular

classrooms soon," said Farida Raj, a specific learning disabilities (SLD) expert and author of the book — *Breaking Through* — which is now prescribed in the state for training teachers in dealing with students with SLD.

Source: Hyderabad /[Times of India](http://TimesofIndia/9)/9 May 2010

Make the right moves

Manisha Talwar had always dreamt of becoming a doctor, a heart surgeon to be precise. After securing 92 per cent in her XII class board exams last year Talwar, she applied to various universities abroad to study. Her sound and impressive academic background helped her get a number of calls from various universities. "I'd applied to a lot of countries in Europe. I was particularly interested in a Hungarian college because of its course and lesser fee compared with other European institutes. I wanted a loan of Rs 20 lakh but could not get it as the course wasn't recognised by UGC. I'd written to a number of banks but they denied saying that since the course was not recognised, they couldn't fund it," says Talwar.

She later homed in on a college based in London and is now pursuing her studies there. She has also managed to secure a scholarship for the course.

While this is just one story, there are cases galore of students who wish to pursue higher education but are hamstrung by a lack of funds. If public banks are infamous for doing work at snail speed, private ones do not offer education loans that aggressively. "Public sector banks have a mandate from the government to disburse education loans. Therefore, it is easy to get a loan from a PSU rather than a private bank. While the government has done a lot to improve the condition, there is a lot that still needs to be done," says Harsh Roongta, chief executive officer, apnaloan.com.

Basics: - Education loan is broadly classified into two categories: For studies in India and studies overseas. These loans are available for all types of education: preliminary schooling, undergraduate programme, post-graduation and above. Even though there is no limit or upper ceiling prescribed by the Reserve Bank on loans, banking system has a self imposed limit of Rs 10 lakh for studies in India and Rs 20 lakh for studies abroad. However, on case-to-case basis, banks do sanction higher amounts of loans as well. "We usually adhere to the ceiling of Rs 20 lakh for courses in foreign universities. However, if somebody wants more loan than this, we do look at such cases on merit basis. However, loans of such huge amounts require commensurate security papers," said a senior official with the Bank of India.

Depending on the amount, these loans fall into three slabs: loans of up to Rs 4 lakh, loans between Rs 4 lakh and Rs 7.5 lakh, and loans above Rs 7.5 lakh. Loans below Rs 4 lakh do not require any collateral or third party guarantor and, therefore, are by far the easiest to secure. Loans between Rs 4 lakh and Rs 7.5 lakh require third party guarantor and loans above Rs 7.5 lakh need to be backed

by tangible collateral security like government securities, property, gold, shares, or a third-party with assets matching the loan amount.

"The real problem is the third party guarantor or collateral for students who cannot furnish any. Apart from the admission letter they do not have anything. There should be some scheme to help those students," said Roongta.

Interest rates

Apart from banks, Credila, a non-banking finance company also gives education loan. Banks and Credila, both, offer fixed and floating rate of interest. As of now banks cannot charge a rate that exceeds their prime lending rate by more than a percentage point. However, the scenario will change post July 1 when the base rate is going to come into effect. "For now, our interest rates are linked with the prime lending rate but after the base rate model kicks off, rates for personal loans, education loans, and other will be different. We are still working out the modalities, but they will be cheaper," said TM Bhasin, CMD, Indian Bank.

Special discount for girl students

Most of the banks offer discount between 50 basis points and 100 basis points to female students. As on May 3, education loans are offered in the range of 9.75 to 14 per cent.

Repayment

Most of the banks allow a breather of six months to one year after the completion of the course or till you get a job, whichever is earlier, before repayments begin. However, if you pay the interest amount during the moratorium period, then you can bargain for a lower rate of interest. Usually banks offer discount of 100 basis points on interest rate. "We give a lower rate of interest to students who pay during the moratorium period. The discount can be up to 100 basis points," said a senior official at the Union Bank of India.

Courses

A good course from a reputed institute is likely to be approved easily. However, if you have secured admission in a low-rung institute, then you might have to do a lot of running around. Banks are wary of providing loans for undergraduate generalist courses because the chances of getting placements are weak. Moreover, there are no loans for distance learning or online education. Courses that are not recognised by the AICTE or UGC often do not get funding from banks. Students also encounter problems for getting funds for a newly introduced course. "If the course is not mentioned in our list, we request students to write to us about that course and after doing our due diligence, we usually approve the loan," said a senior official at the Bank of India.

Inadequate funding

Foreign education is usually costly. For a management course abroad, the fee can be well above Rs 20 lakh a year. In such cases, if banks in India are not able to fund the education, then students should look at foreign banks. "Students can try foreign banks of that country too.

There are, at times, special deals available for foreign students. They can look at a mix of loans, scholarships and funding from various corporates to meet their needs," says Pervin Malhotra, director, Career Guidance India.

Source: New Delhi /[Indian Express](#)/10 May 2010

Need public-private-partnership in education and health sectors: CM

Highest number of applications for new institutes from Maharashtra, says AICTE chief

The state government is looking at public-private partnerships (PPP) for affordable and improved health and education facilities for the public, Chief Minister Ashok Chavan said on Monday.

"We need affordable education and health facilities for the poor and downtrodden, and the focus will be on increased public-private partnerships in these two sectors. Private sector will also be involved in creating improved infrastructure in the state," Chavan said.

Chavan was in Pune to attend the 46th Foundation Day of Bharati Vidyapeeth Deemed University. Speaking about the need for research in 'employable' sectors, he said the state would invite industries that promise good placement for youth in the state.

Other who attended the event were All India Council of Technical Education's (AICTE) chairman S S Mantha, Union Minister of State for Heavy Industries Arun Yadav, veteran poet N D Mahanor, chancellor of Bharati Vidyapeeth University Patangrao Kadam and vice-chancellor Shivaji Kadam. Mantha said that the AICTE has received 350 applications from all over Maharashtra to set up new educational institutes.

"We have received a total of 2,176 applications from all over the country, out of which the highest are from Maharashtra," he said.

Mantha added that a new accreditation process for colleges would be in place soon. "The present accreditation system is based on inputs given by the institute. The revised system, however, would be outcomes based. Institutes would be evaluated on the basis of what students get in return," Mantha said.

He added that there is need for improved research in the country. "Any good research needs good money. The government is not in a position to shell out huge funds needed for good research. Therefore, industry participation becomes vital," he said.

Source: New Delhi /[Indian Express](#)/11 May 2010

Abiding interest in legal studies

The Common Law Admission Test (CLAT) - 2010, for admission to eleven national-level law universities across the country may have just got over, but the nation has embarked on its second generation legal reforms. With a plan to set up National Law Universities in every State, CLAT could be the key to soar as a legal eagle in future.

The number of candidates appearing for CLAT has almost doubled since its introduction. "We have received over 18,000 applications.

The number of applicants from south India is less than that from the north," says S.S. Singh, convenor, CLAT'10.

The focus on engineering and management could be the reason for fewer applications from the south, he says.

CLAT essentially seeks to reduce the mental agony of the aspirants who had to apply separately to the law universities. CLAT has made it economical for the student.

Statistics reveal that the student interest in law as a career option is growing. The number of applicants has gone up from about 11,000 in 2008 to 18,000 this year. The principal advantage of the CLAT is that it is the gateway for admission to the National Law Universities. Like in most other competitive tests, CLAT checks the English, arithmetic, logical reasoning, general and legal awareness of the aspirants. "The faculty and infrastructure present at the NLUs give them an edge over other law colleges in the country. Law firms, Indian and foreign, make a beeline there during placement season," says Aditya Singh, ranked 78 in CLAT 2008. Currently pursuing BA LLB (Hons.) at NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad, Aditya says: "Of late, FMCG companies and public sector enterprises (PSE) have been showing a growing interest in recruiting legal officers from the NLUs."

Recently, NLSIU, Bangalore, signed an MoU with the Maritime University in Chennai to produce advocates specialising in marine law for which there is a great demand but with very few practitioners. Usually restricted to criminal and civil law in common parlance, the legal profession is encompassing new terrains spread over multi-disciplines. An inter-disciplinary approach to law has come to stay, say academicians.

As the vision document of legal reforms envisages setting up of a National Law University in every State, CLAT is the exam to crack to pursue legal education in the top institutes of the country.

Setting up of NLUs will not be a tough task for the Central government but the challenge lies in standardising each of the 913 law schools in the country.

Uniform legal education could still be a distant dream as there is a sharp and marked difference in the quality of students coming out of NLUs and law colleges.

Take the case of Tamil Nadu. While the students at the School of Excellence have the ability to compete with the legal graduates at NLUs, the students passing out of the government law colleges find it harder.

"The cut-off marks for the School of Excellence are quite high. Compared to that, the admission trend in law colleges shows that mostly students who pursue vocational streams in Plus Two and score high marks get through," says S.S. Sachithanandam, vice-chancellor, Tamil Nadu Dr Ambedkar Law University.

According to officials, Tamil Nadu has not opted for CLAT for the School of Excellence as it has abolished entrance examinations for professional courses and also because it follows 69 per cent reservation.

In the absence of an entrance exam, students from vocational streams find their way into the law colleges as they score high marks in Plus Two, say faculty of the prestigious Madras Law College.

“There is a false opinion that survival is difficult for lawyers. Legal profession is definitely lucrative. The governments and companies are recruiting law officers in more numbers. In fact, the governments give the legal officers the salary of Group I officers. Moreover, legal graduates can also start law firms,” says V Kannadasan, special public prosecutor.

Source: [/hindu.com/](http://hindu.com/)11 May 2010

Prospects are good but...

The last few years have seen a slew of new initiatives undertaken by the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government towards reforming higher/university education. Two committees — National Knowledge Commission and the Yashpal Commission — have made a number of significant recommendations towards improving university education. The 11th Five Year Plan has made a whopping allocation of Rs. 84,942.79 crore towards higher education and it set a target to increase the percentage of students going to higher education from the present 12 to 15 by the end of the Plan. India's young demography coupled with low cost and quality human resources will see opportunities moving to India in a big way. Huge investment, both foreign and domestic, is likely to flow into the education sector in the coming days. As HRD Minister Kapil Sibal says, India needs 800 new universities and 40,000 colleges across the country not only to compete with the rest of the world, but also to take the percentage of graduates from the present 12 to 30 per cent by 2020.

Mr. Kapil Sibal points out that “The 21st century is likely to see investment in countries which are low-cost economy but high in human resources. The success that India has witnessed in the services sector will happen in the education sector...but the problem is that we are not ready for it. We have to ensure our systems are in place to take advantage of the opportunities. This is because the crowd is here, the market is here and the human resources is here and naturally the money will be here.”

Though the increase in share of private unaided institutions is a welcome development, experts have opined that the government needs to regulate the mushrooming deemed universities, engineering and management colleges “which are mere business entities dispensing very poor quality education.” Further, private institutions have improved access in a few select disciplines such as engineering, management, medicine, IT, etc. where students are willing to pay substantial fees.

According to Mr. Sibal, “We have to change the environment” for building centres of excellence. Noting that the academic world remains silent in the country, Mr. Sibal said “We would like to hear diversity of voices. You (academicians) need to participate and set up benchmarks for excellence.” He has also appealed to State Governments to set up a mechanism to improve academic climate and research in their universities. Recently, Governor H.R. Bhardwaj said the political interference will have to be toned down, which is crippling the system of state universities.

To improve the higher education system in the country, the UPA Government has introduced in the Lok Sabha a slew of legislative proposals providing for the prohibition of unfair practices in technical and medical educational institutions, the setting up of the National Educational Tribunal with a series of State Educational Tribunals to resolve disputes on service matters, the constitution of a National Accreditation Regulatory Authority and the Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations) Bill, 2010, to enable foreign institutions to set up institutions.

The Prohibition of Unfair Practices in the Technical Educational Institutions, Medical Educational Institutions and Universities Bill, 2010 bars accepting admission fee and charges other than those declared.

Source: [/hindu.com/](http://hindu.com/)11 May 2010

RESOURCE

N-list project inaugurated by Shri Kapil Sibal

The “National Library and Information Services Infrastructure for Scholarly Content (N-LIST)” was formally launched by Shri Kapil Sibal, Union Minister for Human Resource Development, here today. The N-LIST project provides access to more than 2,100 electronic journals and 51,000 electronic books to students, researchers and faculty from colleges and other beneficiary institutions through server(s) installed at the INFLIBNET Centre.

Authorized users from colleges can now access e-resources and download articles required by them directly from the publisher's website once they are duly authenticated as authorized users through servers deployed in the INFLIBNET Centre.

Faculty, staff students and researches from colleges covered under section 12B of UGC Act are eligible to access e-resources through the N-LIST project. These colleges are required to register themselves on the N-LIST Website. Currently, 665 colleges are registered members. Registered colleges are issued Log-in ID and passwords for their authorized users including faculty, staff, researchers and students. Colleges that are not covered under 2F/12B Act of the UGC may join as N-LIST Associate Members.

The N-LIST Project is being jointly executed by the UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium, INFLIBNET Centre and the INDEST-AICTE Consortium, IIT Delhi. The project provides for i) cross-subscription to e-resources subscribed

by the two Consortia, i.e. subscription to INDEST-AICTE resources for universities and UGC-INFONET resources for technical institutions; and ii) access to selected e-resources to colleges. Also present at the launch were Shri Ashok Thakur and Shri Sunil Kumar, Addl. Secretaries in the Ministry of HRD and also Shri N.K. Sinha, Shri Amit Khare and Dr. Anita Bhatnagar Jain, Joint Secretaries in the Ministry of HRD.

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

Education to all

In order to attain the objective of Universalisation of Elementary Education, the Government has enacted the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 which provides for free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of 6-14 years. The RTE Act has come into force with effect from 1.4.2010. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which is the main vehicle for implementation of RTE Act also seeks to attain the objective of Universalisation of Elementary Education in the age group of 6-14 years in a time bound manner. The target fixed vis-à-vis the achievements made under SSA during the 11th Plan period are as under:

Activity	Targets for 11 th Plan	Achievements during the first three years of 11 th Plan (Till 31.12.2009)
Opening of Primary Schools	20000	29850
Opening of Upper Primary Schools	70000	49920
Construction of Additional Classrooms	887000	631360
Drinking Water Facilities	68000	26209
Toilet Facilities	204000	83641
Teachers sanctioned	818831	181949

In order to strengthen and bring qualitative improvement in school education at Secondary/Senior Secondary stages the following three centrally sponsored schemes have been launched during the current 11th Five Year Plan;

- Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan;
- Schemes for setting up of 6000 Model Schools at Block Level as benchmark of excellence;

- Scheme for construction and running of Girls' Hostels for Students of Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools.

The Government have fixed target of achieving 80% literacy, bridging the gender gap of 10 % and minimizing the social and regional disparities by 2012. To achieve this goal, Government have launched Saakshar Bharat, a new variant of National Literacy Mission w.e.f. 1.10.2009. During 2009-10 this programme was rolled out in 167 districts in 19 States to cover 3.83 crore non-literates in over 80,000 gram panchayats under basic literacy programme and to establish 81.007 adult education centres, one each in gram Panchayat, under Continuing Education component. Grant-in-aid of Rs. 325.98 crore has been released to 19 States as first instalment of Government of India's share.

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/5](http://pib.nic.in/5) May 2010

Promotion of basic science

A Task Force under Prof. M.M. Sharma had made recommendations for strengthening basic scientific research in universities and colleges and the same has been converted to an Empowered Committee to monitor the implementation of its recommendations. An amount of Rs. 1200 crore has been allocated for implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force in the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-12). An amount of Rs.475.00 Crore has already been provided to University Grants Commission (UGC) in the three year period from 2007 to 2010 for the purpose. On the recommendations of the Empowered Committee, UGC has extended financial assistance to the Science Departments of various universities/institutions under the UGC approved Special Assistance Programme (SAP) Scheme. A fellowship programme namely the "Dr. D.S. Kothari Post-Doctoral Fellowship" has also been introduced to award fellowships for advanced studies and research in the areas of sciences

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/5](http://pib.nic.in/5) May 2010

Establishment of laboratories on ppp mode

As per the information received from Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, its has invited Expression of Interest (EOI) from Public funded institutes, PSUs/Private Organizations working in the area of Drug and Pharmaceuticals for setting up of two GLP compliant Biological Testing Laboratories, one GLP compliant Chemical Testing Laboratory and one GLP compliant Large Animal Facility to create an enabling environment for Research and Development initiatives in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode, preferably, in the

region of high concentration of pharmaceutical industry. The objective of the scheme is to inspire innovation in pharmaceutical science and ensure availability of quality pharmaceuticals at reasonable prices for domestic and export purposes.

The EOI(s) have been received. The Department of Pharmaceuticals provides 50% of the total cost in setting up of the GLP compliant laboratories, whereas the Public funded institutes, PSUs/Private Organizations applying under the scheme need to invest an equal amount. The funding is provided for purchase of the equipment only.

This was stated by Shri Prithviraj Chavan, the Minister of State (I/C) for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences in the Lok Sabha today.

Source: New Delhi pib.nic.in/5 May 2010

Consultative committee meeting of HRD ministry held

Committee Members Express Appreciation for National Mission on Education through ICT

The National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has, under its aegis, created Virtual Labs, Open Source and Access Tools, Virtual Conference Tools, Talk to Teacher programmes, a Non-Invasive Blood Glucometer and also for simulated lab experiments, a Di. Electric frequency shift application development of resonator for low cost oscillators. This was disclosed during a presentation made to the Consultative Committee of Parliament for the Human Resource Development Ministry, in a meeting held here last evening. In the Presentation, it was also disclosed that this Mission is encouraging development of low cost access-cum-computing devices to facilitate participation of masses in the e-learning process.

Addressing the meeting Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Shri Kapil Sibal stated that the cardinal philosophy in this Mission would be that all e-learning applications would be free of cost, in order to give access to high quality learning material and processes to students in deprived rural and undeveloped areas. He emphasized that all this effort was for the benefit of the poor and the marginalized living in technologically deficient areas so that they can also compete with the more advantaged. He said that this would be an essential means to overcoming the huge shortage of faculty in our teaching institutions. He expressed confidence that this would help India be at the forefront of creation of knowledge in the world He pointed out that this Mission is developing e-content for all Undergraduate and Postgraduate courses including polytechnic courses and is to provide connectivity across the country to all universities (488 approximately), all colleges (22000 approximately).

The Members of Parliament attending the meeting expressed their appreciation and congratulated the Minister, the officials and the faculty who had developed this impressive content. Some Members pointed out that efforts should also be made to ensure that colleges and

universities have adequate physical infrastructure in the form of laboratories etc. Many Members were keen that an effective monitoring mechanism and a study of end use beneficiaries be undertaken so that the Mission has the desired impact. It was also pointed out that adequate publicity be given to the various forms of e-content being developed so that remote colleges and universities are also able to demand these for their students. A point was also made to tap the knowledge from the unorganized sector. One Member stated that the script for Urdu e-learning material be Nastaliq script. Two Members during the meeting also raised the matter of the MP's quota of two for Kendriya Vidyalaya admissions being done away with, registering their unhappiness with the decision.

Also present at the Meeting, from the Human Resource Development Ministry were Smt. D.Purandeswari, MOS, HRD, Smt. Anshu Vaish, Secretary (SE&L) and Smt. Vibha Puri Das, Secretary, (HE), besides senior officials of the Ministry and Faculty Members of premiere institutions who participated in the presentation.

The Members of the Consultative Committee who attended the meeting are: Dr. Chinta Mohan, Shri Jagda Nand Singh, Shri Adagooru H. Vishwanath, Dr. Nirmal Khatri, Shri Ghansyam Anuragi, Shri Ganeshrao Nagorao Dudhgaonkar, Shri Jitendra Singh, Dr. M. Thambi Durai, Shri Prem Das Rai, Shri Baijayanta 'Jai' Panda, Smt. Kaisar Jahan, Shri Kabindra Purkayastha, Smt. Rama Devi, Shri Lalji Tandon, Shri Sucharu Ranjan Haldar, Dr. Ranjan Prasad Yadav, Smt. Vasanthi Stanley, Dr. (Smt.) Kapila Vatyayan, Shri Mohammed Shafi, Dr. Prabhakar Kore and Shri G.N. Ratanpuri

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

National means-cum-merit scholarships

The National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship Scheme was launched in 2008-09. Each year, there is provision for one lakh new scholarships. Each State/UT has a quota. 54564 scholarships were sanctioned to the selected students of class IX of 33 States/UTs in 2008-09.

In the selection test, a student needs to secure minimum of 40 per cent marks whereas this cut-off is 32 per cent for the SC/ST students. Also, the scholarship is available only for students whose parental income is not more than Rs.1,50,000/- per annum. Some States did not avail of their quota as:

- (i) adequate number of students did not secure qualifying marks and/or
- (ii) the total number of candidates appearing in the selection test was not adequate.

All the States/UTs have been requested to ensure adequate publicity for the scheme among prospective students.

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

Source: New Delhi pib.nic.in/7 May 2010

Rural-urban divide in education

The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 (as modified in 1992) provides for a National System of Education, which implies that up to a given level, all students, irrespective of caste, creed, location or sex, have access to education of a comparable quality. It also accords priority for improvement of the standard of education at all levels for children living in rural and urban areas.

The NPE recognizes that the rural areas, with poor infrastructure services, will not get the benefit of trained and educated youth, unless rural-urban disparities are reduced and determined measures are taken to promote diversification and dispersal of employment opportunities. Pursuant to this, a large number of schemes/programmes are being implemented through out the country which predominantly addresses the educational including rural areas.

The XIth Plan envisages implementation of a centrally sponsored scheme for Universalisation of access to and improvement of quality of education at secondary stage (SUCCESS) with the objective to make secondary education of good quality available, accessible and affordable to all young persons by providing a secondary school within five kilometers of every habitation. It also envisages setting up of six thousand good quality secondary schools at Block level, at the rate of one school in each Block, which will serve as benchmark of excellence for other schools in the area.

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

Source: New Delhi pib.nic.in/7 May 2010

Private sector must rise to the occasion in R&D sector

The Indian Industry in private sector has so far not given adequate importance to Research and Development (R&D). As a result, the share of private sector in total R&D expenditure is hardly 20 per cent. Calling upon the industry in private sector on the occasion of inauguration of 2nd Global Industrial R&D Conclave the Union Minister of Science & Technology and Earth Sciences, Shri Prithviraj Chavan said that private sector must rise to the occasion in R&D expenditure and take full advantage of incentives announced by the Government in the current budget. Giving a background of development made by India in building infrastructure he said we have to go a long way, though India has made progress in every field in general and in education in particular and we have been able to increase our literacy rate from 18 per cent (in 1947) to 70 per cent now. On this occasion the Minister released two reports

(i) Water : A Framework for Encouraging R&D and

(ii) Renewable Energy: A Framework for Encouraging R&D.

Shri Chavan said that India and Czech Republic have a long tradition of mutual cooperation and this must continue. He complimented Czech Republic, CII, CSIR and Ministry of MSME for jointly organizing the 2nd Global Industrial R&D Conclave coinciding with National Technology Day. In order to achieve 9-10 per cent growth rate on sustained basis, India will have to address challenges of water, food, climate and security, he added.

He called upon Indian industry to engage Czech industry, academia and other research oriented institutions in our R&D activities. Signifying the Government priority on R&D, Shri Chavan said that Government have declared the present decade as 'decade of innovation' and aims to achieve the target of R&D expenditure from present 1 per cent to 2 per cent of our GDP. To address energy issues Government have recently lauched Jawaharlal Nehru Technology Mission on Solar Energy, the Minister said.

Lastly, he called upon the Indian industry to create more job avenues for Ph.D holders because the present number of Ph.Ds in technology based research is hardly 50.

Czech Deputy Minister to Trade and Industry and Head of Czech Delegation Mr. Lubos Vanek, Secretary DSIR, Ambassador of India to Czech Republic and dignitaries from Government and Indian industry were also present on the occasion.

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

Contribute

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

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

Please email your contributions to aserf@apeejay.edu

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

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