



**Announcements**

ASERF has instituted **Dr Stya Paul Young Educationists 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 announces the opening of Apeejay Stya University**

The Apeejay Education Society, with over 40 years of Excellence in education, announces the initial opening of Apeejay Stya University at Sohna, Gurgaon. Sponsored by the Apeejay Stya Education Foundation, the University is currently located in a sprawling picturesque campus with the state-of-the-art infrastructure.

Apeejay Stya University will offer a diverse catalogue of technical, scientific, management and liberal arts courses for the academic session 2010-11. Applicants for admission will be accepted on the basis of comprehensive merit, judged by their academic excellence, their extracurricular achievements, and their utilization of the resources they have had available. As part of the application, the University would recognize a number of examination scores to establish academic excellence, including AIEEE, GMAT, SAT, and SAT II.

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

**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****Revitalizing Secondary Education Schemes in India**

With the central government lobbing its ball to the state governments for the implementation of the several schemes for the revitalization of the system of the secondary education in the country, the schemes of the access, equity, Mahila Samakhya, and quality in the field of secondary education has lost its very essence. Basic issues of quality, equity and access to secondary education in India still unresolved besides the central legislations by the Ministry of Human Resource development Govt. of India. The expert committees were formulated by the Govt. to gauge the system and suggest the measures to universalize the whole system. The central governments own figures indicate that many as two-thirds of those eligible for secondary education remain outside the school system today. A Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) committee estimates that 88,562 additional classrooms will be required in 2007-08 and over 1.3 lakh additional teachers. The CABE is the highest advisory body relating to policy making in education in India. Figures put out by the Ministry of Human Resource Development's Department of School Education and Literacy indicate that as many as two-thirds of those eligible for secondary and senior secondary education remain outside the school system today. While noting that adequate number of elementary schools is to be found at a reasonable distance from habitations, the ministry admits in its website that this is not the case with regard to secondary schools and colleges. The gross enrolment rate for elementary education in 2003-04 was 85 percent, but for secondary education, the enrolment figure stood at 39 percent.

Pertinently, the CABE report also notes that the benefits of India's reservation policy in higher education are unlikely to reach those it's intended for in the absence of a strong secondary education system. A large majority of children and youth belonging to SC and ST community do not have access to secondary education; less than 10 percent of the girls among SCs and STs have access to the plus two stage. Without secondary or senior secondary education, benefits of reservation to SCs/STs will remain elusive," the report says. These are questions that the CABE report tries to address. School systems, the report says, should strive for equality and social justice, transcending discrimination that may arise because of gender, economic disparity, societal norms on caste and community, location (urban area or rural), disabilities (physical and mental) and cultural or linguistic differences. However, these inequities seem bound to remain given the current circumstances, where the government involvement in secondary education is much less than what is expected of it. The Committee report says that almost 25 percent of the secondary schools today are private, unaided schools whose clientele comes only from the privileged sections of

society. Expert opines that Private education has always played an important role we have different types of private secondary schools, such as private unrecognized, private recognized but unaided schools, and private, recognized and aided schools. In Kerala and West Bengal, it's common to see private aided schools, which are schools run by private managements that receive government grants. Going by the Sixth All India Survey Data, the CABE report notes that private aided schools account for over 46 percent of all secondary school students. The overwhelming participation of the private sector in secondary education, however, in no way absolves the government of its many responsibilities. To improve access to secondary education, experts agree that the government should invest more money. Unfortunately, the Centre has balked at involving itself even in primary education, more so when it has to be on a collision of course with private schools.

Similarly, though the CABE committee report advocates a common school system, the government seems to have already shown its disinterest. The CABE report was accepted in principle, but soon after, the Planning Commission diluted our recommendation that the typical secondary school should be like a Kendriya Vidyalaya. The Commission started saying that instead of Kendriya Vidyalaya norms, SSA norms could be extended to secondary schools. Such a move would result in parallel streams of education with poor quality being accepted as a part of secondary education. The CABE committee, incidentally, had worked out the expenditure that will be incurred if all secondary schools are managed like Kendriya Vidyalayas. The total costs in such a scenario do not exceed six percent of the GDP but that does not seem to have been enough to convince the government. The report does not mention how many additional schools will be needed to meet the future demand. However, it presents two estimates, one projection based on the 100 percent success of SSA and the other, the 75 percent success of the programme. In the case of the former, the report estimates that 88,562 additional classrooms will be required in 2007-08 and over 1.3 lakh additional teachers

A worrisome trend in government schools, undoubtedly a factor contributing to their poor performance, is the fact that almost 95 percent of the government grants go into paying staff salaries. There is no money for buying teaching learning materials, for cleaning or blackboards," he explains. The ratio should be at least 80:20, with 20 percent of the grant being used for improving or creating infrastructure, he adds. To ensure that government schools are more efficiently managed, a committee comprising members from the neighborhood could be asked to take decisions concerning the school, suggest several experts of CABE Committee. Experts opine that there are several examples of successful private-public partnerships. "There have been initiatives like DPS Delhi Public School being given the responsibility to run two-three government schools in Gurgaon in Haryana In this way, the private



schools can manage the schools for a while and use their expertise to train teachers.

The educationists have a consensus that the children are actually walking out because there is no quality education. Poor children can ill-afford to spend their time in classes that are taken badly, or in schools that have no infrastructure or teachers. Instead of looking for the reasons that are behind the problem, the government appears to be trying to implicate parents or children for the 'drop-out' rates. The CABE committee report has already set down comprehensive norms that secondary schools should follow, ranging from having one classroom for 30 students, ensuring safe drinking water facilities and separate toilets for girls and boys to computer labs. Experts also suggest granting free ships or scholarships to those from disadvantaged backgrounds to encourage enrolment in secondary and senior secondary schools. The CABE report notes that expansion of secondary education can be achieved by setting up new schools, upgrading existing elementary schools into high schools by providing more infrastructure and adding to the facilities in existing secondary schools to accommodate more students.

In view of this, the Central and the State/UT governments must jointly initiate planning to implement the agenda of universal and free secondary education in the first phase by the year 2015 and then extend it to senior secondary education in the second phase by the year 2020. The conventional expectation from secondary/senior secondary education lies in its role in creating the necessary base for generating technical person power, raising the potential of a society in contributing to the growth of knowledge and skills and thereby enhancing the nation's capacity to face the challenge of global competitiveness.

The no of higher secondary schools has been raised to 50,273 with 100,112 teachers, and figure of secondary schools is 101,777 with 1,082,878 teachers. Official statistics reveal that the enrolment of secondary and higher secondary school level is 3.70 crore and the gross enrolment ratio is 39.91. The total dropout rate up to matric is 61.92 as on September 2004. The population of children in this age group has been estimated to be 88.5 million as per Census, 2001. Enrolment figures show that only 31 million of these children were attending schools in 2001-02,

However, Para 5.13 –5.15 of the National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 (as modified in 1992) deal with Secondary Education. Para 5.13 of the NPE, inter alia states that access to Secondary Education will be widened with emphasis on enrolment of girls, SCs and STs, particularly in science, commerce and vocational streams. The disparity between boys' and girls' enrollment is particularly marked at the secondary stage. As per the latest data available, out of the total enrollment of 21.2 millions in 1991-92 (as on 30.9.91) at the secondary stage (Classes IX and above), the girls account for 7 millions

only, i.e. mere 33 per cent of the total enrollment, whereas boy's enrollment at this stage of education is 67 per cent of the total enrollment.

Nevertheless, a significant progress is also made in all spheres of secondary education. More than 84 per cent habitations in 1993-94 had a secondary school/section within a distance of 8 km as compared to 70 per cent within 5 km. The number of unserved habitations declined from 21 per cent in 1986-87 to 15 per cent in 1993-94. During 1950-51 to 1999-2000, number of secondary & higher secondary schools increased from 7 thousand to 117 thousand. The increase (16 times) is much more rapid than the corresponding increase in primary (3 times) and upper primary (14 times) schools. In the latest decade (1990 to 99), more than 37 thousand secondary & higher secondary schools were opened. The ratio of upper primary to secondary schools also improved from 1.83 in 1950-51 to 1.69 in 1999-2000.

Keeping in view the dismal statistics of secondary education in the country, Ministry of HRD launched several schemes, like scheme for strengthening of boarding and hostel facilities for girl students of secondary and higher secondary schools. The scheme is being implemented by NGOs and of the state governments. A one-time grant non recurring grant @Rs.1500/- per girl boarder for purchase of furniture (including beds) and utensils and provision of basic recreational aids, particularly material for sports and games, reading room equipments and books. And recurring Rs.5000/- per annum per girl boarder for food and salary of cook. Finally, The CABE Committee in June 2005 recommended that "there is no alternative acceptable to regular schooling of good quality to all the girls". The Committee also felt that "incentives offered for promotion of girls education need to be revisited and measures taken need to be of such nature, force and magnitude that they are able to overcome the obstacles posed by factors such as poverty, domestic/sibling responsibilities, girl child labour, low preference to girl's education, preference to marriage over the education of girl child, etc." The key issues relating to secondary education highlighted in the Tenth Plan are: greater focus on improving access; reducing disparities by emphasizing the Common School System; renewal of curricula with emphasis on vocationalisation and employment-oriented courses; expansion and diversification of the Open Learning System; reorganization of teacher training and greater use of ICT. After merging several schemes like ET & CLASS scheme, a new Scheme called ICT Schools was launched for which the Annual Plan Outlay for 2006-07 was Rs. 67 crore.

The intervention of the Central Government in Secondary Education has primarily been in two areas, (i) through apex level bodies and (ii) through various Centrally Sponsored Schemes.

Central Government supports autonomous organizations like NCERT, CBSE, KVS and NVS and CTSA, the first named body for providing research and policy support to

the Central and State Governments; CBSE for affiliating Secondary Schools and the remaining three for their own school systems. There are 929 Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVS) and 507 Navodaya Vidyalayas (NVS), and 69 Central Schools for Tibetans (CTSA). Scheme of Vocationalisation of Secondary Education at secondary level to enhance individual Employability. Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) launched in 2007 is a mission-mode exercise to universalize secondary education in which the centre is all set to universalize the secondary education till 2020.

The irony is that the arguments on the part of HRD ministry on community participation in implementing such schemes are not encouraging.

Government should initiate evaluation mechanism and core commission to evaluate the progress of the schemes and policies to support the education sector by community mobilization to revitalize the schemes and put the policies into practice.

**Source:** [yuriliberzon.com/](http://yuriliberzon.com/)13 September 2010

## NEWS

### AICTE blames colleges for mix-up

Several engineering seat aspirants who were turned away from the colleges that they had opted for, following "confusion" regarding the seat matrix uploaded by the All India Council of Technical Education in July, selected seats in the casual vacancy round that began here on Wednesday.

The mix-up in the seat matrix had landed around 19 students in a fix. These students who had opted for civil engineering in PESIT were left in the lurch because the fresh AICTE list, uploaded in the middle of the counseling process, showed a 'reduced' intake. These students were forced to opt for seats in other colleges.

The State Government blamed the AICTE for bungling up this year's CET counseling process.

Speaking to The Hindu, AICTE Chairman S.S. Mantha placed the blame on the colleges. "Colleges made several errors while uploading information and the new software automatically formulated the list. How are we to blame for the discrepancies," he asked.

Refuting allegations by Minister for Higher Education Arvind Limbavali, Prof. Mantha said the new online system introduced by the AICTE this year is based on a self-certification system.

"Colleges were required to upload their approved intake; some of them confused that with existing intake or with the intake that they had applied for." Later, clarifications were issued and the lists rectified.

**Source:** Bangalore [hindu.com/](http://hindu.com/)2 September 2010

### UGC admits flaws, will review faculty regulations

The University Grants Commission has agreed to review controversial regulations for the appointment of faculty at varsities and colleges in an admission that its norms — opposed by most universities — may be flawed. The UGC on Wednesday formed a panel of experts to iron out anomalies in the regulations, days after Vice-Chancellors of central universities complained to Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal.

The three-member panel is headed by former Madras University Vice Chancellor S.P. Thyagarajan.

The UGC has also been flooded by complaints from aspiring teachers and researchers.

HT had reported first on August 25 on the V-Cs complaining that the UGC regulations were killing their attempts to hire faculty to fill large scale teacher vacancies.

The regulations mandate that only those holding PhDs meeting standards set in 2009 are eligible for any teaching post. According to estimates by academicians, this has left several thousand PhD holders across the country potentially ineligible for teaching jobs — for no fault of theirs.

"When these people were pursuing their PhD, the rules setting new standards weren't there. Now, their PhDs run the risk of being invalid. Why cannot the UGC enforce the new rules prospectively," a V-C questioned.

Another "anomaly" V-Cs have pointed out in the UGC regulations involves the requirement that even those applying for ad hoc posts must hold PhDs.

Ad hoc posts are created by universities precisely to get teachers when they are unable to find faculty meeting qualifications required for regular posts. If a PhD is required for adhoc posts, universities are unlikely to attract any teachers for these positions, the V-Cs has complained.

But the government will not find it easy to defer the implementation of the new regulations or the new PhD standards.

"If we defer the regulations by, say, a year or two years, we will have to be prepared for pressure from institutions after that time is over to once again defer it," an HRD ministry source argued.

**Source:** New Delhi [hindustantimes.com/](http://hindustantimes.com/)3 September 2010

### State heading for teacher-less universities, courtesy HRD

If the state HRD department has its way, the state will soon have teacher-less universities. The posts of teachers sanctioned in the colleges and universities in the past are being drastically reduced in the name of so-called rationalisation and no effort is being made up to fill up the vacant posts.

Not a single post has been sanctioned in most of the higher education institutions by the state government since 1975 even as the number of students as well as courses in different universities have increased manifold during the period.

No fresh appointment of lecturer has been made since 2003 and all the superior posts of readers and professors are lying vacant since 1986. Teachers are retiring every month and the posts remain vacant causing great dislocation of teaching work. The state government is yet to announce its decision on the age of superannuation of university teachers in the light of the UGC recommendations.

The government seems to be in a hurry to close teaching in some faculties and abolish posts from a large number of colleges in the state though more than 4,000 posts are lying vacant.

The state HRD department, in its recent notification on pay revision of university teachers, has clearly stated that the new appointments shall not be made in any college or university till the process of rationalisation of teaching posts is completed.

It has pointed out that many a department of different colleges do not have sufficient number of students. As many as 1,600 departments of 250 constituent colleges do not have even 10 students on their roll. The HRD department wants that the non-viable departments of a college be merged with other institutions to achieve the desired teacher-student ratio.

Furthermore, the government also wants to complete the process of bifurcating intermediate posts from degree colleges before initiating the process of recruitment of teachers.

But all these exercises will take a long time and the teaching institutions would be completely devoid of teachers by then.

Ironically, while the existing colleges are facing an acute dearth of teachers, the state government is contemplating to open 19 new degree colleges at the sub-divisional level soon. But where these colleges will get students from when the existing institutions fail to attract students? Patna University Teachers Association general secretary Randhir Kumar Singh says the colleges would attract a good number of students from within and outside the state only if they were provided with all the infrastructural facilities along with a sufficient number of competent and qualified teachers.

**Source:** Patna/times of India/3 September 2010

### **Manmohan Singh wants teachers to be associated in education policy formulation**

The Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, on Saturday said the educational system in India is at a very critical juncture, adding that we have to maintain the fine balance between tradition and continuity, between tradition and

modernity on the one hand, and innovation and change on the other.

"As teachers, you are the most important nation builders, you constitute our nation's most precious national resource, and we look to you to guide our children in their quest for knowledge, truth and in their capacity to lead a life of dignity and self respect," said Dr Singh addressing the Awardee Teachers on the eve of Teachers' Day here today.

Congratulating the distinguished Teacher Awardees on winning this very prestigious national award, Dr Singh said teaching has always been considered a noble profession.

"My own years as a teacher have been the most satisfying and fulfilling in my life. Through teachers flow the values and culture of a nation and its people. Teachers' own value system, their character and their behaviour directly influence our children," said Dr Singh.

"But, misinformation and limited learning behaviours, those children sometimes internalize can also be traced back to teachers' lack of knowledge, poor understanding, or biases. We must guard against these negative features," he added.

The Prime Minister said the teachers are invariably seen as front-line participants in educational reform, critical to successful quality schooling in our country.

"But, sadly, teachers are often excluded from policy-making, governance and management of our educational system as also from day-to-day instructional strategies and decision making," said Dr Singh.

"It is my belief that all teachers are creative, talented people; teachers respond remarkably when they are respected and included in the decision-making integral to their work in the classroom," he added.

Dr Singh further said one critical area that all teachers must reflect upon is equality and inclusiveness of our educational system.

"Numerous programmes have been initiated in our country that focus on equality and inclusiveness paying particular attention to the girl child, or children from the scheduled caste or scheduled tribe or minority communities, or for differently-abled children with special needs and problems," said Dr Singh.

Further complimenting Union Human Resource and Development Minister Kapil Sibal, Dr Singh said the Government is committed to provide quality education to all and the Right to Education Act was passed by the Parliament last year in this regard.

"The Right to Education Act and Article 21-A of our Constitution guaranteeing elementary education as a Fundamental Right, have now become operational with effect from 1st April 2010," he added.

He appealed the teachers to develop in the children independence of thought, action and capacity of carefully considered, decision making which is based on reason and understanding.

"Through you, our children must develop sensitivity to others' well-being and feelings. Through you, our children must develop the ability to work and participate in economic and social processes and in processes of social change," said Dr Singh.

Remembering former President Dr Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan on the eve of Teachers' Day, the Prime Minister said the Teachers' Day is celebrated all over the country to honour and to express our nation's gratitude to all teachers for their dedicated service to the nation.

Source: New Delhi [/news.oneindia.in/](http://news.oneindia.in/)4 September 2010

### Academics from north zone discuss challenges of higher education

Taking up the theme of the two-day North Zone Vice-Chancellors' Conference, 'Expanding horizons of higher education: challenges' being hosted by Panjab University in collaboration with the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) at the PU campus on Saturday Jagannath Pahadia, Governor of Haryana made his opening remarks by stressing on the dire need for the education sector to move in tandem with the country. He expressed his concern at an education system that does not guarantee jobs. He also enjoined upon the gathering of Vice-Chancellors, deans and chairpersons to ensure that along with education, students were also taught to value their cultural heritage.

Prof Beena Shah, Secretary General, AIU, while elaborating on the theme of the Conference, cited statistics to illustrate the plan of action required in the higher education sector. Prof G K Chadha, CEO, South Asian University addressed the issue of higher education against the backdrop of a world scenario that is akin to a global village. He stressed, "Conventions should be there only to be ignored. We need to recognize that to be truly a global power we need to put our education system into a 'vision and research' mode rather than one that focuses on a degree-oriented approach".

Prof Chadha stressed on the need for an innovative, inclusive approach to education that should be geared towards equitable distribution of education avenues. He struck a note of caution when he pointed out that a blindly egalitarian approach should not be followed when dispensing grants.

Prof P K Chande, Vice-President, AIU, in his presidential remarks called for an equitable and sustainable education sector. Citing the fact that India gave the university system to the world, he made an impassioned plea to proceed with caution where the issue of entry to foreign universities in the country was concerned. "Partnership with private universities also should be between equals and India should not be reduced to the status of a market for the educational institutions based abroad", he said.

The technical sessions saw in-depth presentations by Prof. K K Bhutani, NIPER, Prof. Vinod Kumar Singh, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Bhopal, Prof.

A S Brar, GNDU, Amritsar, Prof. S S Gill, CRRID, Dr. Parmod Kumar, IDC, Prof M S Kang, PAU, Ludhiana, among others. Discussions revolved around equity in higher education, quality upgradation, focus on human capital and the repositioning of research.

While welcoming the vice chancellors of over 50 universities in the region, Prof R C Sobti urged delegates to address the elemental question: "Are we actually educating or merely giving education?"

Source: [/indianexpress.com/](http://indianexpress.com/)5 September 2010

### Institutes globally turning attention to India-focused research

Over the last few years, India-focussed research has become the big story at many of America's Ivy League colleges. The Stanford Center for International Development (SCID) is a centre within the university's institute for economic policy research, which focuses on international trade and development. Faculty members at SCID focus their research on economic policies in developing and transition countries and work to advise and influence the international economic system by working with policy makers. At present, SCID's India programme is among the most important. "As with much of development economics, there have been a large number of studies which used randomised experiments as a means of learning about what works and what does not in development. Much of this work is based in India. At SCID, while a number of our researchers have used a similar methodology, we are also engaged in a number of studies which examine large-scale projects, and assess issues relating to the implementation of projects, gaining insights into why some programmes may show promise in pilot stages, but do not generate the same benefits when taken to scale," says Dr Anjini Kochar, director of the India programme at SCID.

Affiliated faculty members at SCID work on a broad range of topics, ranging from micro-empirical work on development to research on the macro-economy and international economics. On India, specifically, there's work being done on the macro-economy, trade, and federalism issues by Professor TN Srinivasan as well as issues relating to credit, political economy, nutrition, health, micro-finance, education, and firm level productivity and management practices. The India programme enables visits to Stanford by senior policy makers from India, the most recent of which was Dr Rakesh Mohan, former dy governor of RBI.

"India and China are the two regions which are the biggest focus areas of our programme. We have an annual series of conferences on both the Indian and the Chinese economy, including policy conferences at Stanford, as well as in India and China," says Dr Kochar. She is of the opinion that the Indian government should utilise good research and be open to using it to inform policy. "Through

policy conferences, we do reach out to the Indian government — both central and states — to keep them informed about our research. We also plan a number of conferences in collaboration with different governments,” she adds. Currently, SCID is in talks with the Indian ministry of human resources development on a joint workshop focusing on education issues, for elementary and higher education. The workshop will address the policy issues which are important in this area and how they can best be implemented, drawing on experiences in India and other countries.

**Source:** [/economic times/](#)5 September 2010

### UGC asks varsities to verify certificates on time

Inordinate delays by Indian universities in verifying the academic certificates of citizens employed abroad have finally caught the attention of the Union human resource development ministry.

Following complaints from officials of the Embassy of Kuwait in New Delhi that many Indians working in the Middle-East nation had lost their employment due to undue delay in verification of their certificates, the ministry has directed the University Grants Commission (UGC) to instruct universities to put an end to such procedural delays.

In a recent letter to UGC vice-chairman Ved Prakash, HRD joint secretary Amit Khare had asked the UGC to "issue instructions to process requests for verification of certificates on time bound basis and to ensure timely and complete responses to references received from the Embassies." The Kuwait Embassy officials had complained to the HRD ministry that "the delay (in verification of certificates) is due to tardy response from the Indian universities who either do not give timely response to references made by the Kuwaiti Embassy or give incomplete responses."

Acting on these instructions from the HRD ministry, the UGC deputy secretary Ashok Mahajan has written to all universities to complete verification of certificates of Indians employed abroad in a short span of time.

It is a common practice for employers in foreign countries to send the academic certificates of Indian employees to the respective universities to verify if they are genuine. However, there have been numerous complaints that most Indian universities fail to promptly respond to these queries posing hurdles for the certificate holders. Sometimes, due to the lack of response from universities, the services of the employees are terminated.

There have also been cases where employees working abroad fly down to India to meet university officials and personally pursue the issue of verification of their academic credentials.

**Source:** Chennai [/times of India/](#)5 September 2010

### Autonomy for tech quality watchdog

The National Board of Accreditation, the agency to assure the quality of technical education in the country, has been separated from its parent body, the All India Council of Technical Education, in a step to make it more independent.

The NBA has been registered as a society and now has its own general council and executive council to decide on accreditation and quality control of institutions teaching engineering, management and architecture.

Set up under the AICTE Act in September 1994, it at present assesses and accredits the courses offered by nearly 8,000 technical institutions in the country.

“The NBA is a society and has been separated from the AICTE. Earlier, it had board members who were deciding accreditation related matters.

The minutes of the board were also going to the AICTE council meeting. Now the NBA is independent and can take decisions without depending on AICTE,” acting AICTE chairman Prof. S.S. Mantha told *The Telegraph*.

The step was taken to meet the requirements of the Washington Accord, an international agreement for recognising engineering degrees of signatory countries.

The accreditation agencies of at least 14 countries, including the US, Britain, Australia and Canada, are signatories.

India has applied for permanent membership of the accord to help engineering graduates from the country to move easily to any of the other member countries for work or higher education.

India is a provisional member of the Washington Accord. The AICTE, which has applied for permanent membership for the NBA in the accord, hopes for a favourable decision by early next year.

“The member countries of the accord held a meeting in Canada in July. They are in favour of India’s permanent membership. They have asked for some more documents with regard to the status of the NBA, which is the accreditation body.

As per the accord, the accreditation body should be separated from the agency giving approval to engineering institutions. Accordingly, the NBA has been made a society. We have supplied all the information and we expect full membership by early next year,” Mantha said.

After being made a society recently, the NBA notified its new rules, according to which the general council will be the highest authority to decide on accreditation. The AICTE chairman will remain president of the general council which shall have 20 members, including four vice-chancellors and six principals.

The NBA will have its own executive council of at least 20 members to deal with administration and implementation of its guidelines.

The NBA will periodically assess institutions and award grades. It will also ensure that the accredited institutions follow the AICTE curriculum.

**Source:** New Delhi /[telegraph India.com](http://telegraph India.com)/6 September 2010

### **NBE agrees with proposal on regulatory framework**

With uncertainty over the nature of the proposed National Council for Human Resource in Health (NCHRH) as an overarching regulatory body for health care still prevailing, the National Board of Examinations (NBE) on Sunday said that it was in "full alignment" with the objective of the government to revamp the regulatory framework.

The NBE governing body discussed the suggestions made at the consultation meeting held in June, where the representatives of the accredited institutions and experts had pitched for NBE as an independent entity in the medical education sector, and said that it should exist as a separate autonomous statutory body in the field of post graduate medical education. The post graduate medical education board of India should be a national authority on assessment and examination to provide a complementary and supplement role in the NCHRH, the recommendations had said.

According to board president Srinath Reddy, the members agreed that the board was performing an important function of creating a parallel cadre of Post Graduate students in medicine and also conducting courses ranging from rural surgery to aviation medicine which were not available in the traditional stream. "Since the NBE makes a significant contribution to the health sector by way of trainings and courses, its functions must be preserved in the new structure," he said.

An autonomous body, the NBE is the only examining organisation of its kind in the country that conducts post graduate examinations in the field of medical sciences, awards Diplomate National Board (DNB) degrees which are now considered equivalent to M.D. degrees, and has been conducting screening tests for foreign medical graduates from 2002 onwards. It also accredits hospitals.

The consultation meeting had recommended that creation of an independent body was needed to bring about standardisation of post graduate medical education. An apex body, the post graduate medical education board of India, after receiving statutory powers, should be totally responsible for the post graduate qualifications in the country.

A majority of the participants at consultation meeting supported the case of the NCHRH saying that such an overarching entity would be able to ensure vibrancy and dynamism in the functioning of various constituent bodies and respond to the needs of the health care systems.

There was unanimity that medical education should remain with the proposed NCHRH.

**Source:** New Delhi /[thehindu.com](http://thehindu.com)/6 September 2010

### **Global: Changes looming in global student market**

After analysing international trade data, Angel Calderon of RMIT University in Australia predicts the sun is setting on international students from some East Asian countries, continues to shine on India and China, while sunrise countries such as Chile and the Czech Republic may not yet be visible on the horizon but will be a source of international students in future.

Traditional sources of mobile students such as Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Malaysia and Singapore are now 'sunset' markets, with the number of students from these countries going to Australia, Britain the US and elsewhere for higher education remaining stable or expected to decline in the next five to 10 years.

However, India and China will continue to be 'sunshine' markets for international students going abroad, with medium growth to 2020, according to Calderon in an analysis presented at the OECD's Institutional Management in Higher Education conference on Monday.

Other Sunshine states likely to emerge as exporters of students in the near future include Pakistan, Brazil, Vietnam, Brazil, Russia and Georgia.

In his paper "Emerging Countries for Student Recruitment in Tertiary Education", Calderon projected global international student numbers to the year 2020, based on international trade data. "Countries have been benefitting from the link between trade and education," he told *University World News*.

Although some analysts have attempted to assess international student mobility trends based on economic growth rates and GDP, this is the first time trade flows have been used as a predictor of student movement.

"Intuitively, countries that have closer relations in terms of exchanging goods and services are likely to encourage the cross-border flows of people for study between them," he said.

In his study of trade patterns and their growth rates, Calderon found that countries with faster growth in high-value trade products compared to non-high value products were the most likely to see a rise in students going abroad.

This pattern creates conditions for the labour force to look for "greater opportunities to further their education, skill base and skill development, thus creating a demand for student mobility," he said.

Sunset countries are those where student mobility, while high, is no longer growing. "Sunset countries are strong in trade and are reaching a level of development that their situation is becoming reversed from exporters of students to net importers of students."

Japan and Malaysia sent abroad fewer students in 2007 than in 1999, according to international data. Japan was 7% down over the period and Malaysia saw a 4% drop.



Some countries such as Malaysia and Thailand that previously sent students abroad are now becoming hosts of internationally mobile students.

Sunshine markets have been sending students abroad for some years and show potential for further growth in years to come.

"With the exception of students from Europe, students from countries in this cluster tend to be spread across multiple regions," Calderon said. "Sunshine state Russia would be a country feeding lots of students to Europe and the US, but based on trade data, I suspect there are still a few years to go."

China and India will continue in the 'sunshine' category of countries sending students abroad.

"There are still parts of China near the industrial centres reaching a level of development where they will be desire to acquire skills," Calderon said. "While India has yet to feel its weight in education generally"

"Countries like Chile and the Czech Republic are becoming more integrated in global trade, and could begin to attract students," he added. "Sunshine countries show potential for further growth in student mobility for years to come. Examples are Romania, Colombia and Saudi Arabia."

Meanwhile, a number of 'dawn' and 'sunrise' markets could start to emerge in five to 10 years as sources of international students. These include Latin America countries such as Chile, Bolivia and Peru and Central Asian states such as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

In the last 10 years over 50% of international students were from Asia. But "past performance of global student mobility is not indicative of future trends," Calderon said.

With a large group of 'sunshine' countries taking the place of 'sunset' nations, "for host countries that attract considerable numbers of international students, the loss of a market or its relative decline will be hard to replace by a single market."

\* The Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE) General Conference is being held in Paris from 13-15 September 2010 and is titled *Higher Education in a World Changed Utterly, Doing more with less*.

Source: [universityworldnews.com](http://universityworldnews.com)/13 September 2010

## ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

### Dilemmas of equality in education

Kerala has done well in the field of higher education and holds much promise. But further policy initiatives are needed to sustain the momentum and prepare for future challenges.

Kerala, almost alone among Indian States, has pursued a consistent and in many ways successful higher education policy. It educates 18 per cent of its young people, doubles

the national average, and has universal literacy. It is worth looking at what might be called "the Kerala model" in this sector to see if it has relevance to the rest of India.

The State's approach to higher education is somewhat unique in the Indian context. Most higher education in the State was at one time supervised and funded by the State government. However, this situation has been changing, especially during the last decade. Resource crunch and budget constraints have forced universities to change their priorities. The Central government has, with a few exceptions, ignored Kerala in this sector. But, given its commitment to sponsor at least one Central university in each State, plans are on to build a Central institution in a rather isolated location in the northern part of Kerala. The rationale behind this move is unclear to most higher education experts in the State, for it is unlikely that such an institution located far from academic or urban centres can succeed.

In keeping with its egalitarian philosophy, the government has provided generally equal support to all of the universities and has not identified any one of them as a "flagship." Thus, there are few nationally or internationally prominent universities in the State. One exception is the Cochin University of Science and Technology. The Central Ministry of Human Resource Development recognised its excellence and supported its up-gradation to the level of an Indian Institute of Technology. However, a campaign against its conversion into an IIT forced the authorities to shelve the plans. The Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology was recently established by the Central government in Thiruvananthapuram, the State capital. The Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology in Thiruvananthapuram is another exception: it has the status of a university and offers postdoctoral, doctoral, and postgraduate courses in medical specialties and health care technology. It is under the administrative control of the Department of Science and Technology of the Government of India. The Indian Institute of Science Education and Research in Thiruvananthapuram, established in 2008, can also be considered to be nationally prominent. It is an autonomous institution affiliated to the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development. Kerala might be well served if these high-quality institutions were closely linked or even merged in order to produce a world-class scientific institution.

Several arts and science colleges that have a long historical tradition — such as the University College in Thiruvananthapuram, or the Maharaja's College in Kochi — attract bright students. But the facilities in these institutions are far from world-class. Most of the top students prefer to take professional courses in engineering, medicine (which is an undergraduate subject area in India), and business. There are 96 engineering colleges in Kerala. Almost 90 per cent of them were started during the last decade, and only 11 of these are government-sponsored. Of the 96 colleges, 60 are purely in the private sector. In general, their facilities are no better than the average found in the State.

Kerala has instituted some significant reforms, suggested by national authorities but not initiated widely so far. These include the semester system and reforms in undergraduate examinations. The idea is to provide better assessment through more frequent examinations and evaluations tied closely to course content. This reform required significant changes in the way the curriculum is organised, how courses are taught, and how students are assessed. Policymakers hope that it will result in improvements in teaching. The Kerala State Higher Education Council was set up to provide advice to the State government, conduct research on higher education issues, and serve as a forum for discussion on higher education.

Kerala, like other Indian States, is grappling with the rapid and largely unregulated expansion of private colleges and specialised post-secondary institutions. There is a need for greater access, which the new colleges provide. But many of them are of dubious quality and meant to earn profit. They serve high-demand fields such as management, information technology and related technical fields. A few are medical colleges. A good deal of grumbling about these institutions has taken place, but there has been little action to regulate them.

Although there has been an increase in the number of higher educational institutions and student enrolment over the last two decades, inequalities based on the quality of primary and secondary schooling have been on the rise. One of the most observable effects of this change is in the correlation between the type of school attended and admission to professional colleges. This is evident in the outcome of the medical-engineering entrance examinations conducted by the government annually. Entry to medical and engineering colleges is largely based on the examination. Students from schools affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education and the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations have a better chance to bag the top ranks in this examination.

The majority of the rank holders are from the middle and upper strata of society. Their parents have the financial capacity to send them to coaching centres. Students and parents these days are quite conscious about the link between academic choice and careers. The emergence of a new middle class in Kerala has accentuated this phenomenon.

### **Way forward**

Kerala has quietly provided acceptable-quality higher education, by Indian standards, to a remarkably large part of its population. It has implemented meaningful reforms in recent years, and higher education remains an issue of concern for the government and the public at large. A few policy initiatives may be useful to further improve the system.

The State's higher educational institutions are largely similar in terms of quality, focus and funding. With the few exceptions noted here, none of them stand out either

within the State or nationally. A mass higher education system needs to be differentiated — with institutions serving different missions, patterns of funding, and quality. Kerala needs at least one “world-class” university that can attract the best students, be recognised among the top universities in India, and gain visibility abroad. This will not be easy since Kerala has a strong tradition of egalitarianism, but it is essential if the State is to fully participate in the global knowledge society of the 21st century. It is likely that the University of Kerala, perhaps merged with several high-profile scientific institutions located in the capital city, will be the logical choice, probably along with CUSAT. This does not mean that the other universities can be neglected. Some will focus largely on teaching and serve specific regions, while a few, perhaps those focussing on science and technology, retain a research mission.

As in all the regions of India, the large number of colleges affiliated to universities need to be appropriately supervised but at the same time permitted the leeway to start innovative programmes and have a degree of autonomy. A special problem concerns the growing number of new private “unaided” colleges, a majority of which are for-profit. Perhaps an effective accreditation system, supervised by the Higher Education Council or some other government body, could provide a basic standard of quality for colleges and remove some of the burden from the universities.

Kerala's universities have the potential to jump-start the State's move into the knowledge era. They can provide the training needed for a new generation of professionals ready to work in information technology and other knowledge industries. Kerala has the disadvantage of having started late.

The giant info-tech superpower of Bangalore, for example, is far ahead — even though the first “Technopark” in India was established in Thiruvananthapuram. But Kerala has a well-educated workforce, a tradition of hard work, and an ability to collaborate with people from different backgrounds.

An important step would be to immediately improve the quality of engineering education. The info-tech companies estimate that only one-fifth of the new engineering graduates can be immediately put to work; the rest need additional training.

If Kerala can provide engineering education that can produce engineers who can be put to work straightway without expensive further education or training, it will improve its prospects of attracting high technology. Moreover, these graduates will be quite competitive in the international job market.

The State's higher education future is complex but practical. Expansion will continue, although the pressures may be less than in other parts of India because of Kerala's impressive access rates. Careful attention needs to be given to the organisation of the higher education system. Additional funds are required to transform at least one

university into a research-intensive institution, while at the same time supporting a better-defined differentiated higher education system.

**Source:** Thiruvananthapuram [thehindu.com/](http://thehindu.com/)1 September 2010

### Promoting quality education in India

Education in India isn't something a new concept. It was always an integral part of the very foundation of the Indian society. With modern India, education too has taken a giant leap which has captured global attention not because of the number of illiterates the country has but the quality of education system it has evolved. The Indian economy has observed an immense growth in the recent past as an effect of the flourishing literacy rate in the country. With the history stretched back to the times of *Vedas, Puranas, Ayurveda, Yoga, Arthasahtra...extending from formal education under the Gurukul system to the modern new age eLearning concept, India has for sure has travelled an exhaustive journey crossing each milestone.*

*It would be extremely interesting to understand and analyze the present and future developments of the educational scenario in India.*

### Education in India

The present statistics states that primary education has crossed the mark of approximately two-third of the total population. Out of which, 40% of the population is illiterate and only 20% of the students go to schools. Since time immemorial, discrimination based on caste and gender has always been a major deterrent when healthy development of the society is in question. So to avoid such prejudice, the Indian Constitution has made elementary education a fundamental right for every child falling between the age group of 6 to 14 years. According to the 2001 census, the sum total of literacy rate in India is 65.38% where the female literacy rate is only of 54.16%. With the fact that only 59.4% of rural population is literate compared to 80.3% of the urban population, there is a humongous gap between rural and urban literacy rate.

University Grants Commission (UGC) has been established by the Indian government to accelerate higher education system in the country. The chief role of UGC lies in controlling and co-coordinating the standards of higher education in the country.

### Current Scenario

With a view to promote elementary education in the country, the Indian government has also prohibited child labor to protect children from working under unhygienic conditions. However, both free education and ban on child labor are difficult to be enforced simultaneously due to poor economic disparity and social conditions. Moreover, shortage of adequate resources and lack of political support are some of the reasons due to which the system has been adversely affected by the gaps that include high teacher-student ratio, poor infrastructure and insufficient teacher training. In fact, professionals from established

institutes are often called to support vocational training for these kids.

The government has initiated *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)* in 2001 with a view to provide instigate the education system and make its reach wider and more accessible to every child. The program focuses specially on girls and children with challenged social or financial backgrounds. In order to aid children firmer their grip in the computer sector as well, special schools are being set up in the rural areas.

### Education for the Marginalized in India

Apart from *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*, the government has also introduced reservation system where 7.5% seats in the higher educational institutes are reserved for the Schedule Tribes (ST), 15% for the Scheduled Castes (SC) and 27% for the non creamy layers of the Other Backward Classes (OBCs). Efforts are also being made to improve the education accessibility for the women section. The growing acknowledgment of concepts like eLearning and distance education courses along with expansion of the Open University system is also contributing a lot in standardizing education in India.

However, in spite of constant efforts being put forth to develop qualitative education system in India, there are still some major loopholes and widespread prejudices. With renewed emphasis laid on the education sector in the 11th five year plan and increased expenditure in both primary and secondary education, this can eventually act as an analgesic for the chronic Indian educational system.

**Source:** [ezinearticles.com/](http://ezinearticles.com/)3 September 2010

### State heading for teacher-less universities, courtesy HRD

If the state HRD department has its way, the state will soon have teacher-less universities. The posts of teachers sanctioned in the colleges and universities in the past are being drastically reduced in the name of so-called rationalisation and no effort is being made up to fill up the vacant posts.

Not a single post has been sanctioned in most of the higher education institutions by the state government since 1975 even as the number of students as well as courses in different universities have increased manifold during the period.

No fresh appointment of lecturer has been made since 2003 and all the superior posts of readers and professors are lying vacant since 1986. Teachers are retiring every month and the posts remain vacant causing great dislocation of teaching work. The state government is yet to announce its decision on the age of superannuation of university teachers in the light of the UGC recommendations.

The government seems to be in a hurry to close teaching in some faculties and abolish posts from a large number of colleges in the state though more than 4,000 posts are lying vacant.

The state HRD department, in its recent notification on pay revision of university teachers, has clearly stated that the new appointments shall not be made in any college or university till the process of rationalisation of teaching posts is completed.

It has pointed out that many a department of different colleges do not have sufficient number of students. As many as 1,600 departments of 250 constituent colleges do not have even 10 students on their roll.

The HRD department wants that the non-viable departments of a college be merged with other institutions to achieve the desired teacher-student ratio.

Furthermore, the government also wants to complete the process of bifurcating intermediate posts from degree colleges before initiating the process of recruitment of teachers.

But all these exercises will take a long time and the teaching institutions would be completely devoid of teachers by then.

Ironically, while the existing colleges are facing an acute dearth of teachers, the state government is contemplating to open 19 new degree colleges at the sub-divisional level soon. But where these colleges will get students from when the existing institutions fail to attract students?

Patna University Teachers Association general secretary Randhir Kumar Singh says the colleges would attract a good number of students from within and outside the state only if they were provided with all the infrastructural facilities along with a sufficient number of competent and qualified teachers.

**Source:** Patna [/times of India](http://timesofindia.com)/3 September 2010

### A neglected lot?

A teacher, working as she is against pressures from multiple fronts, can make or break a child. Yet, why is teacher training such a low priority?

As Veena waits outside her son's school gate, she witnesses widespread disenchantment with teachers. "My son does not know his tables and he's in the fourth. Why can't his teacher insist that he learns them?"

"Mala's teacher corrects very unfairly. She cuts marks for small mistakes." "Dev was scolded by his teacher, who everyone says is mean. The poor kid is feeling so bad."

Being a high-school teacher of 15 years, Veena maintains a stoic silence. She knows the stresses and struggles her job entails. Bombarded by pressure on all fronts — from unreasonably high parental expectations to student misbehaviour, from the management exhorting teachers to achieve 100 per cent results in board exams to students griping about marks — the travails of a teacher's job makes her sigh.

And, the most hurtful part is that her efforts are not recognised, let alone lauded, by anyone.

### Status in society

Krishna Kumar, the former director of NCERT, aptly writes, "In our society, education is not regarded as a serious profession. Teaching, which comprises the heart of education, has a poor status, especially if you teach children as opposed to youth... But it is not just the teacher of young children who has low professional status; those who train teachers fare no better. Indeed, teacher training can be accurately described as the centre of India's educational depression."

Right after completing her B.Ed., Veena remembers her trepidation as she faced her first batch of 60 adolescents. Unlike a medical degree, which requires students to intern under an experienced doctor for a year, Veena was simply thrust into a classroom and expected to perform right from day one. Without any mentoring or guidance from more experienced colleagues, Veena learnt the ropes on the job.

The short-term workshops offered by various consultants and experts at the end of every academic year at her school provided only stray tidbits of advice; even today, after 15 years of teaching, when Veena feels unsure of a student, she has to steer her own boat. Her B.Ed. did not prepare her sufficiently on how to motivate failing students, deal with inattention and open defiance, cater to children with learning difficulties, address parental anxieties or create a classroom of lifelong readers. Given the inadequacy of her training, Veena does her best to deliver effective lessons.

As children traverse the academic ladder from kindergarten to college, all parents hope that their wards are blessed with good teachers. While we look back on our own student days, most of us have memories of good and poor teachers. But the outstanding teacher who inspired passion and creativity and instilled trust and confidence was usually the exception.

While we intuitively accept that a teacher can indeed "make or break" a child, why then do we invest so little in creating excellent teachers? Why teachers in India are not accorded the status that the profession rightly deserves? Instead of engaging in unproductive teacher bashing, which does not serve anyone's interests, least of all our children, we need to upgrade teacher education programmes and elevate the status of teachers so that more children fall under the magnetic spell of master teachers. On par with IITs and IIMs, teacher training in India needs to be rejuvenated by oases of excellence that attract bright and talented youth to be champion teachers.

But what constitutes outstanding teaching? To most of us, excellent teaching is an elusive quality that a teacher does/ doesn't possess. Like great works of art, its characteristics cannot be pinned down.

However, a recent study by educationist Doug Lemov suggests that inspiring teaching is a craft that can be mastered by acquiring and honing skills. While Lemov accedes that great teaching is an art, he emphasises that every artist has to first learn and master the tools of the

craft before producing masterpieces. Can ordinary teachers then be trained to perform better and achieve extraordinary results?

Lemov suggests they can. He tracked teachers who had succeeded in producing high-achieving students despite having the odds of poverty, truancy and broken homes stacked against their students. These teachers were the outliers who defied predictions and produced high-performers. Right from the moment they entered class to their leave-taking, Lemov noted what these teachers did differently. Rather than spinning lofty educational theories, Lemov offers “concrete, specific, actionable” techniques that any teacher can adopt to refine her teaching style.

In a technique called No Opt Out, a teacher returns to a student who fails to answer a question the first time. For example, Ms. Jamal asks, “What is a prime number, Jaya?” The child falters, “Miss, 1, 3, 5, 7, 9...” “Those are odd numbers Jaya. Samir, tell Jaya why 9 is not a prime number?” “Because it has 3 as a factor.”

The teacher then persists, “Now, Jaya, can you tell me what a prime number is?” By not accepting that a child cannot answer a question, the teacher subtly conveys that everyone can succeed. While Jaya gets it right on the third try, Ms. Jamal has communicated that all children in her class are capable of learning. This also gives Jaya the confidence to persist despite getting an answer wrong. No child in Ms. Jamal's class can get away with a “Don't know.”

Outstanding teachers also set high expectations for students by not accepting anything but an answer that is 100 per cent accurate. They insist that children respond in complete sentences and stretch them by asking questions even after an answer is given.

So when Mr. Jacob asks the class, “What is a peninsula?” and Arati responds by saying ‘India’, he says, “That's an example. Give me a definition.” When Arati ventures, “A piece of land that projects into water,” he persists, “Can you expand on that definition? How is it different from an island?” The child says, “Connected to the mainland,” and the teacher continues, “Good. Now tell me what a peninsula is in a complete sentence.” After Arati gives the correct answer, he further challenges the class, “What is the difference between a peninsula and a gulf?”

### **Crucial component**

Planning is an integral component of remarkable teaching. Visionary teachers spell out measurable teaching goals before drawing up lesson plans. Great teachers also pay attention to details. Activities like distributing papers, collecting homework etc. are practised and perfected to a high degree of efficiency so that only around 10 seconds of precious class time are wasted. Likewise, they use positive framing to instill discipline, usually preempting misbehaviour.

Lemov's claim that the craft of teaching can be mastered echoes the findings of a report published by McKinsey and

Company in 2007. While India was not a part of the study, the findings suggest how we might overhaul teacher education. McKinsey analysed school systems in 25 countries including top performers on international assessments like Belgium, Finland, Netherlands and Singapore. While countries differed greatly on dimensions of culture, politics and school systems, high-performing nations have three common features.

Talented graduates with strong communication and interpersonal skills and a deep-seated desire to teach are selected for competitive teacher education programmes. Furthermore, even on the job, teachers are provided with intensive training and support. During the formative years of their careers, young teachers are mentored by more experienced colleagues. Finally, children with difficulties receive intervention so that they can catch up on lagging skills.

As we pay tribute to educators across the country on Teacher's Day, we may consider investing more heavily in teacher training and mentoring programmes. Historian and educator Henry Adams succinctly captures the enormous scope and potential of this age-old profession: “A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.”

Source: [thehindu.com/](http://thehindu.com/)4 September 2010

### **Let vocational education drive India's future**

An otherwise mundane conversation about 20 years ago with some rural youth from a remote taluka has remained unforgettable.

When asked what they were studying, some of them replied BA with subjects like psychology and sociology. It was as clear as daylight on that dusty, hot afternoon that their future was dark and they were wasting time. Their BA might have got them a degree and the “status” of graduates. A job, too, only if they were really lucky. Because their job, most likely, would have come not due to their core education.

This was the same time when school dropouts in the drought-prone Pabal village of Pune district were successfully learning skills to become welders, fabricators and simple scooter, motorcycle and pump-set mechanics. They were part of the novel “Pabal experiment” in vocational education. Without degrees, they seemed better equipped to become self-employed in a rural setting and lead successful lives.

Almost in parallel to the BA story, the situation was no different in a university with a decent reputation. While filling admission forms for post-graduate courses, some students were contemplating “defence and strategic studies”. They had heard that it was easy to sail through this course and this became their main criteria.

It is a fact that the most basic degrees right up to the doctoral level is worthless in many universities across the country because of the poor quality of education. There is at least one well-known example of a politician in

Maharashtra who got someone to write his doctoral thesis all because he fancied prefixing "Dr" before his name. This politician runs a roaring side-business of a deemed university.

It is not for nothing that India has an entire army of the educated unemployed and the unemployable. They are the victims of a system which has forced them to spend their crucial formative years in getting a degree to become graduates. Often, after that a post-graduate, if there's still no job and time to kill.

Traditionally, if the highest ambition and achievement was to become a doctor or an engineer, the least that was considered necessary was a "graduate" degree. Anything less was a stigma.

The "graduate" tag is also important for the middle classes because a young man without it feels inferior to his graduate wife. Even if other eligibility criteria match, prospective alliances fall through because the woman is "over-qualified".

Post-liberalisation, the Indian mindset has begun to change. The hospitality industry is an attractive destination for the youth today and many academically bright youngsters won't mind pursuing a diploma in catering to follow their heart's calling. They will begin their careers in various capacities in hotels, restaurants and resorts and be proud of it. In the past, family and friends would dissuade such career choices and ask, "Why do you want to become a waiter?"

Career opportunities that were non-existent then have become a reality for today's youth. Thus, there are a variety of courses in the animation industry, television production, entertainment industry, event management, food processing, telecom, the retail sector and scores of other areas. The scope has also widened for the truly academically inclined in the pure sciences, humanities or professional degree courses.

It is no longer necessary for the youthful masses to run after degrees.

Blessed with the power of youth and a robust economy that's continuing to open up, India's future lies in unleashing a revolution in vocational education. Courses, that will give India young men and women by the thousands, equipped with a variety of skills that will add value to the economy and not draw from it.

The Maharashtra government's recent announcement to start the nation's first university for vocational courses is therefore very encouraging.

Union HRD minister Kapil Sibal's efforts to reform the educational system are perhaps the best thing that has happened to India in a long time. Just one among his many initiatives was to crack down on the private deemed universities racket that had prospered under his predecessor Arjun Singh.

In this age of information technology, knowledge economy and cyber warfare, it is only appropriate that education

should get the second highest priority in India after defence. Like China, India needs to start looking inwards, and at least for one five year plan, focus on fixing education. The benefits will be incalculable.

Source: [dnaindia.com/](http://dnaindia.com/) 4 September 2010

#### **Chetan Bhagat talks about mistakes in education system**

Chetan Bhagat belongs to the funny, sensible and no nonsense breed. He can laugh at himself, at the system and still come through as someone who cares enough to want things to change and knows that they will, someday.

In Hotel Courtyard by Marriott for an interaction with members of Essence Organisation on Friday, the author of bestselling Indian novels such as 'Five Point Someone' and the recent 'Two States' spoke about the pitfalls and lacunae in the education system in India. "Indian education focusses on filtering over learning, remembering over thinking, and exhibits a lack of sync with the globalised world," he said.

He compared the education system in the country, which uses cut-off marks, to a process that requires 50 children on a bicycle for the first time in their lives to get to the other side. Most of them fall down, two or three make it and they are declared as the only ones fit to be in the system, which does not have a place or provide options for the rest.

"Delhi University has 97% as the cut-off for some courses. This means a class filled with children who never make mistakes. This shows that the system insists that children be focussed on one thing only and so are afraid to try out anything else because they are not rewarded. Children are brought up thinking that there's no place for mistakes, and that experimentations are not worth the risk. A child should be allowed to make mistakes to find his place in life," Bhagat said. Every child needs English, money or an understanding of how it works communication and marketing to do well in life. But, none of this is part of the syllabus. "Maybe a couple of these issues are touched upon in post-graduation, but none in school. But everybody needs to acquire these skills to make a living and to reach their potential," he said.

Bhagat may be an idealist, but he is also realistic. Responding to a question from the audience as to whether he believes that any change will take place, he said, " 'Five Point Someone' was rejected nine times before somebody published it. But now I see how far it has come. In the same way, it may take 30 to 40 years for such changes to come about pan India, but it will happen. My efforts are aimed at keeping the issue in the forefront in every way I can."

Source: Chennai [/times of India/](http://timesofindia.com/) 4 September 2010

#### **PM's address on the eve of teachers' day**

The Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, addressed the Awardee Teachers on the eve of Teachers' Day in New Delhi today. Following is the text of the Prime Minister's address on the occasion:

“I am indeed very happy to be with you today, on the eve of Teachers’ Day. We celebrate 5th September, the birth anniversary of Dr Radhakrishnan, our former President, as Teachers’ Day all over the country to honour and to express our nation’s gratitude to all teachers for their dedicated service to the nation. Teachers’ Day is the ideal day of telling our teachers that we feel blessed because of their presence in our lives. I join you in remembering Dr Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, the great scholar, the great philosopher, the great teacher and above all a great educationist.

Teaching has always been considered a noble profession. My own years as a teacher have been the most satisfying and fulfilling in my life. Through teachers flow the values and culture of a nation and its people. Teachers’ own value system, their character and their behaviour directly influence our children. But, misinformation and limited learning behaviours, those children sometimes internalize can also be traced back to teachers’ lack of knowledge, poor understanding, or biases. We must guard against these negative features.

Teachers are invariably seen as front-line participants in educational reform, critical to successful quality schooling in our country. But, sadly, teachers are often excluded from policy-making, governance and management of our educational system as also from day-to-day instructional strategies and decision making. In our endeavour for educational reforms we must, therefore, emphasize the empowerment of teachers and that includes real opportunity for them to share policy perspectives and decision-making in pursuit of educational development and reforms. It is my belief that all teachers are creative, talented people; teachers respond remarkably when they are respected and included in the decision-making integral to their work in the classroom. They gain a sense of ownership over their work and their classrooms, when they are involved in the development of the curriculum, designing of the syllabus, making and selecting of teaching materials and in training programmes leading to their own intellectual and professional development.

One critical area that all teachers must reflect upon is equality and inclusiveness of our educational system. Numerous programmes have been initiated in our country that focus on equality and inclusiveness paying particular attention to the girl child, or children from the scheduled caste or scheduled tribe or minority communities, or for differently-abled children with special needs and problems. Such programmes will result in an empowered youth and citizenship, only if their teachers are empowered supporters of equality and inclusiveness. If efforts to increase student access, learning and retention in elementary and secondary education are to succeed and make headway, relevant and empowering teacher education is of critical importance. This is particularly true of women teachers who must serve as positive role models for our society at large.

Our Government is committed to provide quality education to all. The Right to Education Act was passed by the Parliament last year. The Right to Education Act and Article 21-A of our Constitution guaranteeing elementary education as a Fundamental Right, have now become operational with effect from 1st April 2010. I compliment and pay tribute to my colleague Shri Kapil Sibal for the zeal, dedication and enthusiasm that he has brought to bear on the work of this most important ministry of Union Government, that Human Resource Development Ministry is. I had on that occasion addressed the nation and recounted my own childhood experience of studying in extremely difficult and adverse circumstances. Time has come for all of us to change this situation and ensure that every child in this country of ours has the opportunity to exercise his or her right to an education of equitable quality, and thereby making the Right to Education a grand national movement. Today, you have both challenge and opportunity to provide good quality education to all our children. Through you, our nation aspires to build in our children a commitment to the values of democracy, and the values of equality, justice, freedom, secularism, respect for human dignity and human rights. I urge you to develop in our children independence of thought, action and capacity of carefully considered, decision making which is based on reason and understanding. Through you, our children must develop sensitivity to others’ well-being and feelings. Through you, our children must develop the ability to work and participate in economic and social processes and in processes of social change.

These aspirations for our children necessarily mean that the school environment should be free from fear, trauma and anxiety. No child, irrespective of caste, gender or community to which he or she belongs should dread the thought of going to school. The RTE Act bans corporal punishment and mental harassment. It also bans detention and expulsion. These provisions have led many teachers to question how discipline will be maintained in the classroom. The answer to this important issue was given by the well known philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti: “Discipline is an easy way to control a child, but it does not help him to understand the problems involved in living... If the teacher can give full attention to each child, observing and helping him, then compulsion or domination or discipline in any form may be unnecessary”.

The educational system in our country is at a very critical juncture. We have to maintain the fine balance between tradition and continuity, between tradition and modernity on the one hand, and innovation and change on the other. As teachers, you are the most important nation builders, you constitute our nation’s most precious national resource, and we look to you to guide our children in their quest for knowledge, truth and in their capacity to lead a life of dignity and self respect.

With these words, I congratulate each one of you – the distinguished Teacher Awardees - on winning this very prestigious national award. It is a small token of our nation’s

gratitude to the great fraternity of teachers in our country. On the occasion of the Teachers Day I extend my heartfelt warm greetings to all members of the teaching community and wish each one of you success and fulfillment in your personal life and vocation.”

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

### **President's address on the occasion of teachers' day**

President Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil addressed the teachers honoured with National Awards for the year 2009 here today on the occasion of Teachers' Day. Following is the text of the speech of President on this occasion:

“On Teachers' Day, I am indeed very happy to be with all of you. On this day, we celebrate the work being done by teachers all across the nation, as well as remember the life of a great educationists and our former President Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, whose birth anniversary falls today. I extend my warm greetings and felicitations to all the teachers, particularly those have been recognized through the National Awards for their meritorious service.

Last year on this occasion I was not with you, as I was in Russia on a State Visit. Yet, my thoughts were with you, as on this day, I was in the city of St. Petersburg, at a Russian School established on the 10th anniversary of India's Independence. I was greatly impressed with the interest amongst the students and teachers of this school in a foreign country about our culture. I believe that an appreciation of the diversity that exists in our world invariably broadens horizons and promotes understanding between peoples. Today, in a globalized world, it is all the more necessary that our children understand these inter-linkages, as also the human values of love, respect and tolerance, which are essential for a peaceful world. It is, therefore, vital that teachers emphasize the importance of these values, which are a part of our country's ancient civilizational heritage. Students should be made to think in terms of the welfare of humankind and progress of the nation. I am sure all teachers, whether they teach social sciences, environmental studies, science or mathematics, subjects very important in themselves, would also inculcate in their students a sense of pride in our cultural heritage.

Teachers have always been given a special place and respect in our society, as they prepare children to be active and responsible participants in society. This profession is noble as it involves imparting the precious gift of knowledge to the youth. The question may arise that in an age where there is so much information available in books, on television and the myriads of vehicles of electronic transmission, what is the role of a teacher? In this environment their role has only expanded. They have to interpret the vast information, often guiding children in distinguishing between what is relevant and what is not. This is important so that children are not submerged in a barrage of information, but instead develop an understanding of events and happenings around them by

analyzing them. Moreover, teachers must inculcate in their students the approaches and principles that constitute civilized human behaviour. Even the best of technology of today cannot do this. That is why teachers have been called Acharyas in our ancient texts, as they teach the norms of conduct to the next generation. Thus, for teachers the Vichar or thought and knowledge that is transmitted by them to their students, should be as important as the Achar or conduct that their students are grounded in. This is crucial today, as our nation is passing through a period of economic transformation. In such phases, the anchor is usually found in values such as tolerance, understanding and respect for different opinions. We are a large, multi-ethnic, multi-religious and pluralistic society. The youth therefore, must develop an attitude that embraces all and which unites rather than divides. They must be responsible citizens. If our teachers do this well, then, along with prosperity, we shall have a society which is caring and compassionate. As Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan said, "The aim of education is not the acquisition of information, although important, or acquisition of technical skills, though essential in modern society, but the development of that bent of mind, that attitude of reason, that spirit of democracy which will make us responsible citizens." Indeed, a comprehensive education system would help shape the younger generation into one that has a sound ethical base and a strong sense of social responsibility.

Today, one sees the disturbing trend of ragging in our institutions of higher education. I have often said that this practice is not healthy, as it is a manifestation of intolerance on the part of senior students towards their juniors, who are new to the campus. It must be strongly condemned and should not take place in any institution of the country. You have a role in preventing it.

Schools are the basic units of an educational system, where children spend the formative years of their lives. It is here, that the process of learning begins, and the opportunity is given to children to acquire skills and values necessary for their growth as confident and self-assured adults. The coming into force of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act is a historic milestone. It places greater responsibility on all stakeholders. The challenge before teachers is to ensure that children actively participate in school activities. They particularly in rural and distant areas should hold classes regularly and ask students to attend school every day. They should remain in contact with parents and pay personal attention to the difficulties that their students may face.

Good teaching is a long term investment. It is said, that in the teaching profession the fruit is often invisible for a long time. The results can be seen only when their students begin to bear the responsibilities of their families, society and the nation. Gurudev Tagore, who started the well known Shantiniketan, wanted teachers to help young children to grow on their own, as a gardener helps young plants to grow. In Gurudev Tagore's view, the higher aim of



education was the same as that of a person's life, that is, to achieve fulfillment and completeness.

Students should be made aware of the many hues of life, and the reality that along with opportunities, there will invariably be obstacles and difficulties. Challenges are a daily occurrence, we should not get intimidated by them, but rather learn to surmount them. As self discipline is that one quality which can help tide over many difficulties, due emphasis must be placed on this aspect.

If our youth, are to be utilized for building up a new country, a new India, a new society, the beginning must come from the teachers themselves. You must not only be a teacher, but more. You must be a facilitator, friend, philosopher and guide to those whose lives you mould. I am sure that our teachers, by the dint of their hard work and their passion, whether in schools in our cities or in our remotest villages, will strive to achieve high levels of professional work. You must constantly upgrade your teaching methodologies so that children get quality education. Use new techniques to make lessons more interactive and effective. Moreover, in-service teachers' training is an important aspect of a good education system. It enables teachers to renew their teaching skills.

With these words, I once again convey my best wishes to all the teachers assembled here and in the country, and wish you all the very best in your careers."

**Source:** New Delhi [/pib.nic.in/](http://pib.nic.in/) 5 September 2010

### Spreading the message of sharing and learning

It was a rather special celebration of 'Teachers' Day' here on Sunday, when actor Kamal Haasan placed a few books he had brought on the 'Aviva Great Wall of Education' presented by The Hindu. It marked the formal launch of a large book collection drive to support children from underprivileged sections.

"I am not wondering why I am here this morning. I am a high school drop-out. Thanks to books and my extramural teachers who taught me a lot, I am here today. They were also kind enough to lend me books," the actor said.

Emphasising the role of books in shaping individuals and giving them access to knowledge, Mr. Haasan said the drive might look simple, but was a great one. "I feel honoured to be here."

The 'Aviva Great Wall of Education', presented by The Hindu in Chennai, is an initiative of Aviva Life Insurance to involve the community and collect books that would later be distributed to students of disadvantaged sections, with the support of the State's Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan wing, and non-governmental organisations Save The Children and Vidyardambam Trust.

Speaking at the launch, T.R. Ramachandran, CEO and MD, Aviva India, said the initiative was grounded in the belief that education is insurance for a better future. "We envisage an educated, stronger India," he said, adding that

the drive was part of the 'Street to School' campaign taken up by Aviva.

In other cities, the response to the initiative was heartening. In New Delhi, over 1.20 lakh books were collected last year and in Kolkata, too, where the drive was carried out in the last few days, the response was overwhelming. Mr. Ramachandran urged the residents of Chennai to come and generously contribute to the cause.

### What books?

Organisers said contributions could come as activity books for children in primary classes, colouring books, alphabet books or story books in Tamil or English. Other books – old magazines or novels – were also welcome. They would be recycled into notebooks or drawing books and distributed to children, they said.

Nirmala Lakshman, Joint Editor, The Hindu said several public-private partnerships had been initiated in support of social and economic causes.

"This drive seeks to build an infrastructure of the mind, through books," she said. Appealing to residents to donate books, she said the drive sought to invest in the younger generation by giving them access to knowledge. The Hindu's library has donated over 1,500 books in English and Tamil.

A message board was placed at the venue, the Express Avenue Mall, Royapettah. Kamal Haasan's message read 'Love to learn'.

"Give a child a book and give her a life..." read Ms. Lakshman's message. "Give a child a book everyday. Keep the children near us," another participant, Seshachalam Gopalakrishnan had written.

Ten-year-old V. Nishanthini was smiling even as she was parting with some of her fairy tale books and Panchatantra story books on the 'wall'. "These are lovely stories," she said. On why she chose to donate them if she loved them so much, the little girl said: "I have many books. I just wanted to share."

**Source:** Chennai [/thehindu.com/](http://thehindu.com/) 5 September 2010

### To sir with love, etc.

"Why not whip the teacher when the pupil misbehaves?" asked Greek philosopher Diogenes some 2400 years ago. Diogenes was always ahead of his time, so the Greeks ignored him. But in 2010, India, the only country in the world to dedicate one whole day of the year to teachers, seems inclined to Diogenes' view. The teacher-pupil relationship is being turned on its head and new challenges loom for these new times.

Time was, when the teacher was a god-like figure. He had only to enter the classroom, for a hush to fall. He could ask tough questions in a gruff voice. It was enough to concentrate the mind. No longer. Today, it's the teacher who faces the "class test". Now, the teacher has to field a barrage of questions from articulate, sometimes

aggressive, young men and women who have access to all kind of information on the Internet. For today's students, the textbook or the teacher's lecture is not the last word.

India can be many countries at the same time, which is why it has many different kinds of schools. In the international school sector, which is growing at breakneck speed and caters to high-income families, teachers are in constant competition with the Internet. Nitin Padte, who teaches economics at Mumbai's Ecole Mondiale World School, says most of his students "have already got information on their subjects from the Internet. Therefore, the onus is on me to update my knowledge. I have involved myself with several online forums, and I also attend workshops around the world".

Today's teachers increasingly feel the "pressures" of their jobs, which are becoming more demanding. Nilanjana Roy, who taught English for four years at Delhi Public School, Kolkata, says, "The job profile is completely different now. Today, children are so much smarter and need so much more from us than just boring theoretical lectures." Roy, who recently quit, adds that "compared to other professionals, our working hours are much longer because we are doing not just teaching but a host of other coordination activities. We also end up doing more homework than we can assign to students".

Ironically, some of the steps Union human resource Minister Kapil Sibal has taken to "de-stress" academics are adding to the pressure on teachers. Reform of the Central Board of Secondary Education includes replacing marks with grades. This squarely puts teachers in the dock. "Parents whose children don't get good grades will accuse us of favouritism," says a teacher from Aadharshila Vidyapeeth.

Besides, teachers are also disgruntled due to the Right to Education Act. Many of them feel that their "powers have been clipped" because as the Act clearly states, they can't take any action against misbehaving children, not even against those who neglect their studies.

The Act also puts the onus on the teacher to take up measures in order to help new students catch up with the existing ones. "This puts us tremendous stress and many of my colleagues in public schools are considering switching careers," says Dinakaran Ramachandran, who teaches in a CBSE school in Bangalore. "While nobody can deny the noble intention behind these reforms, all this makes the teacher's role completely insignificant. It's high time we are given due respect and power," he adds.

Many teachers say they worry about growing corporatization of the education system. Big business is setting up international schools and teachers say the corporate culture and its 'hire and fire' policy doesn't chime well with the incremental progress meant to be achieved in school. Most schools don't allow teachers to talk to the press, so most of those we spoke to insisted it be off the record. "We are sandwiched between parents and the school management. Disciplining students gets mighty

tough when both parents and the management want us to treat children with kid gloves," says a Chennai teacher.

Small towns may not have changed so much but teachers in big cities say the 'new rich' are turning schools into shop fronts, complete with clients and salesmen. "When parents are paying a hefty tuition fee to school, schools start viewing students as 'clients'. There is the vague management diktat of not upsetting students emotionally or physically," says a teacher at an international school in Mumbai.

It has changed the so-called "guru-shishya" relationship forever. Twenty years ago, teachers were not considered ordinary beings. Nirmala Devi, 63, recalls thinking "of teachers as extraordinary beings with extra-terrestrial intelligence. I remember once I was shocked to bump into one of my teachers at a local grocery store. I had never imagined my teacher to be as ordinary a woman as my mother, buying vegetables!"

The upside is that the teacher may now give off friendly vibes, to the extent of sending 'friends' requests to students on social networking sites. Many say the modern classroom — and its challenges — are better; teachers are neither feared nor revered but treated as equals. Anita Mane, a teacher at SM Shetty International School in Mumbai, says it's not that students don't respect their teachers any more, "they now look at us as friends".

Dr Shyama Chona, who has been at the helm of DPS schools for 35 years, says "a teacher has become more important in a student's life than ever before. Her role as a knowledge-giver may have become redundant, but now she is the mother of all the children she teaches."

Source: [/times of India/](#)5 September 2010

### Discover new nuances

Foreign language courses continue to be a favourite with students as they give them an international edge over their peers. Having working knowledge of any one international language sets a candidate apart in the job market as well. And while most of these courses like French, German, Spanish, Japanese, and so on draw a large number of students, there are quite a few exotic and equally enchanting courses on offer at the Department of Slavonic and Finno-Ugrian Studies in Delhi University. These languages — Russian, Czech, Slovak, Bulgarian, Polish (bracketed under Slavic) Hungarian and Finnish (belonging to Finno-Ugrian) — belong to eastern Europe and are being taught through courses which are part-time, certificate, diploma and advanced stages.

"While languages like German, Italian, French belong to what is known as 'modern European languages' find favour with most students, those who come to study Slavic and Finno-Ugrian language courses, study them to broaden their horizons and for the different perspective these courses offer about the western world," says RK Nagpal, the head of the department who teaches Russian. "Of all

the languages we offer, Russian language has the largest number of takers. That is because knowledge of Russian language gives students an undeniable advantage even since the Russian economy has been bolstered by President Vladimir Putin," he says. That is not to say that the remaining languages don't offer employment opportunities. "Knowing any of these languages can help you get a job in translation work and even jobs in embassies," he says.

Neha Prasad, who is doing her diploma in Bulgarian says, "It is one of the lesser known languages of Europe and I have always been fascinated by its richness. With even a smattering of the language I always tend to stand out in a crowd and it also looks attractive on my CV."

Referring to the richness that these languages offer, Nagpal says, "A large number of books that today are considered classics like War and Peace, Crime and Punishment, Anna Karenina were written in Russian, so the richness of literary merit that these languages have to offer is beyond question. However, it is our constant endeavour to make these languages not only aesthetically pleasing but also functionally beneficial."

SK Vij, dean of students' welfare at Delhi University who teaches Bulgarian points out that for a large number of people in today's generation, the understanding of the western world comes from Hollywood and MTV. "This monochromatic view is shattered when one learns any of these east European languages. People from these countries are a lot like Indians in their approach to life; they have strong family values and adhere strongly to tradition. Like Indians, they tend to think more from their hearts unlike Western Europe where logic and rationality are paramount. These countries even have a different script (Cyrillic), and not the Latin script followed in Western Europe," he says.

Quite a few of the teachers teaching here are part of the cultural exchange programme. "We have teachers coming from Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to teach here. In exchange, we send our teachers to teach Hindi and Sanskrit to these countries," says Nagpal.

**Source:** New Delhi [/times of India/](#)6 September 2010

### Teaching sans research

*Despite Bangalore's stature as a dynamic technology and R & D hub, the quality of teaching in its myriad colleges suffers a huge research deficit. Here's a closer look at the problem on Teachers Day.*

In the labyrinthine maze of Bangalore's education landscape, colleges and universities of "quality" are a definite rarity. If these institutions had been centres of innovation, the City would've definitely benefited in every field, the urban planners would not have had to look elsewhere to carve out a better Bangalore. But will this

change at all, if "research" remains in the backseat. Perhaps, the teachers hold the answer.

One look at Bangalore University, for instance, and you know the state of research is not exactly rosy. Every academician would agree that better the research, superior the teaching and vice-versa. Yet, if plagiarism, duplication and ghost-writing are time-tested techniques to dish out quick-fix doctorate degrees, will change happen at all?

Research activities at undergraduate colleges are often restricted to classroom learning and lab activities. This is clearly brought out in a report submitted by the State Knowledge Commission. For several new undergraduate courses offered by the City colleges, the teachers are often unfit to train students. Now, that's a shocking revelation by the Commission.

So, where lies the solution? The Commission's Secretary, MK Sridhar stresses on the need to integrate innovation and research at the micro level. The emphasis should be on elementary teacher resource institutions such as the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) block resource centres and cluster resource centres to strengthen the teachers. "Strengthening and innovation of teacher education should start from the grass root level," says Sridhar.

Some efforts are underway for sure. "We have several best learning practices in the state like Nali Kali, a child centered and activity based learning technique. But, it has not been added as a part of the curriculum," Sridhar observes.

### Role of NCTE, NCERT

Grooming teachers to become competent researchers is a challenge for the National Council for Teacher Education, National Council for Education Research and Training and state level research organisations. "Research is an integral element of a learning activity. Pursuing research can strengthen the skill sets of teachers and can in turn improve the quality of teaching," asserts a NCERT official. The Council often conducts workshops and training sessions for teachers. But educationists expect more. The emphasis, according to them, should be on designing need-based teacher training courses, consulting state education departments.

Yet, unless teacher recruitment processes insist on competence, educators might just not feel the need for such quality enhancements. "Is securing high marks in their post graduate course and a PhD the only criteria to become a good teacher?" wonders MS Thimmappa, former vice chancellor, Bangalore University.

The Right To Education (RTE), meant to bring much-needed reforms, provides some hope. But many teachers aren't impressed by the proposals. The RTE Act, for instance, calls for teachers to participate in training programmes, design and development of curriculum, syllabi, and text books development without interfering with regular teaching. The Act also puts teachers and schools responsible for low performance of the students.

Clauses such as maintaining cumulative records for every student, remedial teachings for poor performers have sparked debates among teachers. Teachers who don't innovate are hardly the answer to change an examination-centric education system. Says Thimmappa: "We need a student centered education system. Teachers should introduce students to real life problems. These hands-on sessions will motivate students to come up with solutions."

On their part, the teachers contend that the examination-oriented system leaves them little time for research activities. Without performance based incentives and other perks and support from the Government, teachers say they are bound to find the provisions tough to implement.

Service conditions of teachers obviously leave much to be desired. Two-thirds of teachers who work in unaided colleges get remuneration that is abysmally low. "How can a teacher carry out good research in such conditions? Hence, what they produce is nothing but gibberish." This remark by a University professor tellingly illustrates the problem, and shows just how distant a solution is.

**Source:** [deccanherald.com](http://deccanherald.com)/6 September 2010

#### **National legislation on private schools a must: AGUSPA**

The issue of commercialization of education and exploitation of parents by unaided recognized private schools in the state has once again come to the fore.

Irked by the situation, the all-Goa unaided schools parents' association (AGUSPA) on Monday sought a national legislation to govern the functioning and administration of private unaided schools.

At a recently convened meeting of the executive committee members of AGUSPA, chairman Nisser Dias stated that provisions in the Maharashtra Education Act are different from that of Goa Education Act.

He explained, "Unlike the Maharashtra Education Act, the Goa School Education Act has several provisions protecting the interests of parents. For instance, section 19(3) of the Goa School Education Act, 1984 which is similar to the Delhi Education Act stipulates that private unaided schools in the state need to file their fee structure with the director of education (DoE) for approval before the ensuing academic year. It also states that the manager of the school which violates this provision is liable for imprisonment for a period of six months and fine amounting to `50,000."

"As per the provisions of the Goa School Education Act, recognized private unaided schools have to file their audited accounts statements before the DoE, which in turn has to further audit these statements. Private schools have violated the provisions of the Goa Schools Education Act with impunity for years now and the DoE has been a silent spectator, thereby allowing the managements of these schools to exploit the parents," Dias alleged.

"Even the Tamil Nadu government went ahead and enacted a special legislation in November last year to

regulate fees charged by private unaided schools. It was upheld by the Tamil Nadu high court," he pointed out.

Further, Dias submitted documentary evidence indicating that private schools transfer huge sums of money collected from parents to the concerned society, mandal or trust, in complete and blatant violation of the provisions of the Goa School Education Act.

Ashok Agarwal, president of the all-India parents' association (AIPA) and senior Supreme Court (SC) lawyer, stated that since laws vary in different states, there are various verdicts from high courts of respective states. Agarwal, who represented the parents in the Modern School case in which a landmark judgment in favor of the parents was delivered in 2004, said, "National legislation on the lines of the Tamil Nadu Act will bring uniformity in this matter".

While disclosing that the AIPA will soon launch a nationwide campaign to stress the need of having a national legislation on private unaided schools, Agarwal stated that the association has already intimated the union government about the need of such legislation in order to bring uniformity in the educational system throughout the country.

**Source:** Margoa [/times of India](http://timesofindia.com)/7 September 2010

#### **Quota for poor kids in private schools mandatory: Sibal**

Reserving 25 per cent of seats for children of poor families in private schools would be mandatory and its violation would be punishable, human resource development minister Kapil Sibal said on Monday.

"We will not budge an inch from this mandatory provision in the Right to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act 2009, as we want to give opportunity to all poor children to study in private schools," Sibal told reporters here.

The government enforced the RTE Act April 1, 2010 to ensure free and compulsory education to all children between six and 14 years, including those below poverty line.

Though several private schools expressed concerns over the quota, failure to implement the provision in the next three years will be punishable once the amendment bill to the Act is passed by lawmakers in Parliament.

"If private schools do not comply with the provision, they will not be allowed to function, as it will be difficult to achieve the goal of inclusive education otherwise," Sibal said on the margins of a function here.

The national commission for protection of child rights has been mandated to monitor the implementation of the act, while a special division will undertake the task.

"All private schools will have to apply for recognition, failing which they will be penalised up to Rs 100,000. If they still continue to function without paying penalty, they will be liable to pay Rs 10,000 per day as fine," Sibal said.

The commission will also set up a toll free helpline to register complaints against schools violating the provisions of the RTE Act.

To push elementary education to higher standards, Sibal said his ministry laid out plans to create "neighbourhood schools" where the school will mostly be managed by the residents (75 per cent of the managing committee) of which 50 per cent will be the mothers of the children.

"This way, we can reach out to children from lower economic status, minority groups, migrating and streets and bring them to schools thus fulfilling our goal of ensuring education to all," Sibal added.

Sibal was in this tech hub to deliver the Vithal Chandavarkar memorial lecture at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc).

Chandavarkar was an industrialist, who served as Mayor of Bombay (now Mumbai) and also vice-chancellor of the University of Mumbai.

**Source:** Bangalore [/times of India/](#)7 September 2010

### **Set up university safety panels: UGC committee**

With a view to ensuring that the guidelines of the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) and the Hazardous Wastes (Management and Handling) Rules are strictly implemented, a UGC expert committee has suggested the setting up of university committees to review safety in handling radioactive and other hazardous materials used by the institutions.

The University Safety Committee (USC) will ensure that the AERB Regulations and Hazardous Wastes (Management and Handling) Rules are strictly implemented, according to the panel that was constituted following the mishandling of Cobalt-60 isotope by Delhi University in April this year that led to the death of one person and injuries to 10 others.

The expert committee, which has presented its interim report to the University Grants Commission, has recommended the formation of an apex committee at the UGC level that would monitor safety committees at the university level. This committee will have experts from the fields of radiation safety, radioactive waste management and hazardous material management. The universities will have to send their annual reports on safety to the apex committee.

The UGC will also encourage the universities to promote refresher courses for staff members and students. The syllabus for new entrants must include such safety courses also, it has said. Depending on the usage of radio isotopes, hazardous chemicals and materials, the laboratories should prepare standard operating procedures (SOPs) which will have to be displayed prominently in English and vernacular languages in laboratories.

The UGC has been asked to ensure that reports in the prescribed format are obtained from every university and

institution and are duly signed by the Vice-Chancellor or the head of the institution.

The expert committee has said that though it sought information on storage and handling of radioactive and hazardous substances used by students from 500 universities and institutions, only 21 bothered to respond. When its team visited three of the universities, much of the information they gave in the prescribed pro forma was inadequate. At one site, no information was provided about a laboratory irradiator that had not been used for more than 20 years. When the committee inspected this particular facility, it was inaccessible.

The medical use of radioactive substances and X-rays for diagnosis and treatment is extensive and fairly well established. However, in universities and other institutions of higher education and research, awareness of and adherence to regulations seems to be lacking, as has been observed in the recent casual disposal of Cobalt-60 isotope, says the report.

Chaired by Professor G.K. Rath, head of the Department of Radiation Oncology at the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences, the committee inspected the laboratories using radioactive and other hazardous materials in the Pune University, the University of Hyderabad and Osmania University, where it detected serious lacunae in storage and handling.

**Source:** New Delhi [/thehindu.com/](#)8 September 2010

### **Learning can be made inclusive**

*After Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan aims to address the educational needs of urban as well as rural children, says Shabnam Sinha*

#### **How can foundation of innovation in education be laid at the primary level?**

Education at the primary level deals with children who are in their formative years. They need a school environment that is supportive, warm and sensitive. It is very important that the entire school learning experience at the primary level provides room for innovative methodologies to ensure that students find the atmosphere engaging and inviting. The World Bank along with other development partners has been partnering with the Government of India in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), and we are glad to share that the innovations and experimental ideas that the program has generated has made the school space very vibrant. SSA, which aimed at bridging gender and social gaps and providing quality education until at least grade eight to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), has done remarkably well on basic parameters. Universal access is almost achieved, with 99% of habitations now having physical access to a primary school and 93% to an upper primary school, the gender gap continues to shrink, with 94 girls enrolled for every 100 boys in primary school in 2009, compared to 90 in the early 2000s. Such successes could be achieved through a conscious effort of

generating interesting community owned and home grown ideas. Under SSA, there is a norm for innovations that encourages out-of-the-box thinking and strategies for hard to reach groups. It also emphasises use of computer aided learning. Our last challenge is to ensure that quality of education is addressed and learning levels of children go up. For this, newer ways of teaching, learning, teacher development and assessment systems are needed, where the focus is on children and their needs. The National Curriculum Framework (2005) of India has strongly brought these ideas to the forefront of the educational discourse. Its effective integration in the system is happening and should address this issue substantively.

***Fund, faculty, or infrastructure—what needs more emphasis to make the present learning process more inclusive?***

All of the above are critical determinants of the educational experience of the child. With good financial and program management systems under SSA, fund shortage does not seem to be an issue. Learning can be made inclusive through creation of a school infrastructure that is child friendly, having teachers who understand the needs of a child and become facilitative agents of change by evolving a teaching system that enhances educational experience of a child.

***Will the ambitious Right to Education Bill 2010, contribute in improving Gross Enrolment Ratio at secondary and senior secondary level of education?***

RTE emphasises that each child in the country will have access to quality elementary education. As each child is expected to complete a cycle of elementary education, it is very natural to assume that it will improve the GER at the secondary level too.

***How can focus of higher education be shifted from urban to rural areas?***

The GOI has launched its ambitious program for universalisation of secondary education called the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, which will address the educational needs of urban as well as rural children. This will automatically shift focus to the rural areas.

Source: New Delhi [/epaper.timesofindia/9](#) September 2010

**Skills do make careers**

*Vocational education should not be considered as the last option for under performers, but as mainstream career opportunity*

My grand dad was a plumber, with no educational qualifications. He was just the person everybody turned to when the tap leaked, the gutter rotted and the drains backed up. And my dad, wasn't just a plumber; he was a master plumber, time served, the best sweated joints in Liverpool. My big brother, he is not just a plumber, time served, but he has studied and become a heating and ventilation engineer (and a multi millionaire as all plumbers

are these days in UK). His education in the vocation not only helped him be successful but also master the skill and do well for himself.

The skills agenda in India is one of mammoth proportions requiring much convergence and alignment. India with its unique demographic opportunities & economic possibilities finds itself uniquely placed as compared to the other growing nations. My engagement with the Indian policy making in the so many years has demonstrated certain facts clearly: the Indian Government's seriousness to reap the demographic dividend is evident from its ambitious 500 million skilled work forces by 2022 target. An array of policy initiatives like the National Rural Livelihood Mission demonstrates the desire to address both quality and quantity. The Indian Industry, on its part, has shown great leadership and taken responsibility of training youth on global benchmarks either through own initiatives or organisations.

Sadly, we have been noticing that large numbers in India have no access to training or education while a considerably large number have access but no quality in vocational skills. This makes it all the more important to have a system that ensures equitable balance between skills and education.

As an economy treading towards services not only for domestic, but also global markets, redefining some key elements of education is an absolute necessity. An opportunity to enter the work force needs to be made available to students via the vocational education route. Models that address the education needs for school drop outs, differently abled, special categories need to be merged with vocational training elements to allow them find respectable work opportunities and an individual growth path. For the students pursuing higher education compulsory skill programs shall ensure employability. Vocational education should not be considered as the last option or for school drop outs, under performers but as mainstream career opportunity. Fact is that India is a growing service economy and not everyone can be and should be a doctor or engineer. Hence the need for such training.

The biggest challenge that a student faces in the selection of the career, is often an inability to select a vocation of choice due to lack of proper entry level aptitude assessments. Vocational skills 'taster programs' at the time of entry into an institute could ensure they do not fall into the trap of a wrong choice which they have to then pursue lifelong.

Dual degree programs which are emerging from the marriage of vocational qualification and higher education, with a modular training approach are a great solution for the Indian market.

The pedagogy of training—making it more practical and less theory—dashed with industry project work will go a long way in making the candidates' job ready. Amongst this all, another critical need which needs immediate solution is

a lack of trained teachers and trainers. This needs to be looked into on an urgent basis.

The UK-India partnership is covering a lot of ground around these areas to ensure the quality of input is enhanced and learner benefited for life.

**Source:** New Delhi /[epaper. Times of India](#)/9 September 2010

### Teachers, you gotta inspire!

*Teaching is not a profession. It is a vocation...a calling...a mission. The most admired teachers are not those who fill up the empty minds, but those who stimulate thinking, inspire and ignite a spark for learning*

The core, the base, the substratum of all transformation and progress is unquestionably education, which empowers and liberates an individual. And, teachers are the most important factor in this process. A great teacher can make the life of a child and a bad one can mar it.

Imagine 50 faces looking at you, some intelligent, alert and inquisitive and others with mischief writ large on their faces, some giggling, a few indifferent, some feeling drowsy while others are thinking of the final day of Indian Idol or otherwise day-dreaming. Your attention is a little diverted and a paper missile flies across the classroom. At times Mrs. Chips becomes a counsellor and at other times a crime investigator, without any clue. Why have you, Mrs. Chips, then become a teacher, a job, with multiple roles, highly demanding and a strain on your time and energy?

Unlike other professionals, it is privilege to be a teacher. Mrs. Chips can touch the lives of children who in turn make the nation, nay, the mankind and affect eternity. If she is a true teacher, she must have felt a tingling sensation on the progress and growth of her students. But this feeling is unlikely to be realized if she is a grumbler and is like those teachers who often say "This is a terrible place, I am stuck here, why you have joined this institution?" Such persons are in the wrong profession.

In reality, the accent should be on the examination of life. The role of a teacher demands from Mrs. Chips, a certain code of conduct, certain attitudes towards children and their learning. A true teacher has a five-fold commitment to fulfill:

- (i) To the pupil: She should understand the psyche of each student.
- (ii) To her subject: She should be able to arouse interest and communicate it effectively.
- (iii) To the society: She should act in a manner which ensures the greater good of all.
- (iv) To the noble profession of teaching: To sustain the pre-eminent position of this calling.
- (v) To herself: Inspired teaching can come only from inspired persons. We teach who we are!

In fact, teaching is not a profession; it is a vocation, a calling, a mission. The most admired teachers are not those who fill up the empty minds but those who stimulate thinking, mould attitude and behaviour, quicken and quench the thirst for knowledge, inspire and ignite a spark for learning. One school teacher is worth a thousand priests! Her inner core inevitably impinges on the personality of the child. It is our duty as teachers to make the students understand that human beings can change their programming which other species cannot. A teacher should gradually engrave in the mind of a child that ultimately he is responsible for his own life.

Students should get a feeling that the man or woman at the blackboard is their partner in possibilities. A good teacher etches in the mind of the child that he should not be deterred by temporary setbacks. Resilience, the ability to bounce back when unfavourable things happen, is what separates the kids who flourish from those who flounder any stressful situation whether it is dealing with a bad grade or rejection in an interview or denial of promotion in favour of a less competent person.

Children with teachers, who set fair rules, give clear reasons for those rules and consistently enforce them, end up with higher motivation, better social skills and great self reliance. An inspiring teacher makes the students realize that education metamorphoses the very personality of human beings. Through it they will understand better the wider ramifications of their own relationships to people and the world around them. It will enlarge their mental horizon and sharpen the comprehension of their own goal.

If you, Mrs. Chips, want more freedom to work, more creativity, higher position, then be more responsible, more helpful and act with more initiative and be a more contributing employee. If you want to be trusted, be trustworthy, your attitude should be "why not me?" Instead of "why me?" If all the time you are looking for external incentives like money and praise then after sometime you will be motivated only by more money and greater praise.

If you are working with fear of authority, you will need a bigger whip for continuing the work. Therefore, the best thing is to be internally driven towards the welfare of students with commitment to the pursuit of excellence. You cannot find happiness if you are doing your job as drudgery, a painful duty expected of you. You find happiness, like a misplaced key, when you are not looking for it. You get it when you are engaged in the challenging task of moulding the lives of students as an exemplar. To enable Mrs. Chips to take on this daunting work, the management should give her fair amount of autonomy to act and experiment with freedom. She, in turn, should allow the child a lot of independence to think, reflect and be creative. If the teacher has enabled the child to arrange the atoms properly he becomes a diamond, which is sought after not for its glitter but for its inner toughness. Mrs. Chips, a sea of possibilities lies ahead - the achievement lies in the will!

Source: New Delhi [/epaper. Times of India](#)/9 September 2010

### The power of research is supreme

*To achieve long-term growth and leadership in a knowledge economy, it is very important to support new knowledge creation. This can be achieved by scaling up research output of all educational institutions*

India's research output is woefully small and if we consider only the engineering disciplines, it does not even compare favourably with small Asian technology happening countries like Taiwan or Korea. Typically research output comparisons between countries (or even institutions) are based on quantum of publications in quality journals and conferences as well as number of patents filed. There is one more measure that is significant and in some sense captures both the amount of ongoing research activities as well as potential for research in future and that is the output of PhDs in a given discipline. This is because the world over almost all serious research today is carried out by PhDs. This is true for universities, government research laboratories as well as industrial R&D labs.

Some steps are required to scale up the number of PhDs produced. To reiterate, there are multiple objectives linked to this effort...

- Support new knowledge creation for sustaining long-term growth and leadership
- Generate manpower for industry to enable them to move up the value chain
- To produce better trained faculty that is necessary for the growth of quality education.

The last objective has a multiplicative effect as any increase in qualified faculty would generate better trained students at all levels. Currently only a handful of institutions produce any significant number of PhDs in engineering and this does not add up to even 500 per year. For any scaling up effort to be successful, it has to expand the number of institutions engaged in research as well as the student pool from which to draw talent for PhDs. There are three specific steps to promote expansion of PhD research:

**Identify and support PhD students directly:** The world over, PhD research in universities is supported by the public bodies. This support, available through a competitive mechanism, includes grants for student scholarships as well as research equipment and operating expenditure. We see the same approach being adopted in India. Unfortunately, this approach cannot expand the base of institutions engaged in research as very few institutions have the faculty with expertise to participate in this process.

An alternate approach to kickstart PhD research in newer institutions would be to identify a large number of meritorious students through a common examination (say GATE) and provide them an attractive scholarship as well

as a research grant. Allow host institutions to top up their scholarship against limited participation in their teaching activities.

**Support PhD students from abroad:** Major success of US higher education has been its ability to attract quality foreign students for PhD. Today an opportunity exists for India to reach out and get talented students from the developing world. This is possible only if we can support their tuition and living expenses and perhaps a work permit for five years after their graduation. Our top institutions already have the infrastructure and visibility to attract students from the developing world and this should be tapped to increase the pool of students.

**Promote employment of PhD graduates:** Finally, a sustainable growth in PhD enrolment is possible only if the PhD applicants see attractive career opportunities on graduation. With few openings in industry and teaching careers in most of the institutions not being attractive, PhD in India has always been a poor choice for graduates with other options. On the positive side, industry scene is changing both due to entry of multinationals as well as Indian industry moving up the value chain. This is a good time to publicise and promote the career opportunities that are emerging for PhD graduates. Two specific incentives by the government can help. Any PhD graduate making a decision to teach in one of the newer institutions can be provided a substantial research grant to initiate research.

**Conclusion:** Proactive steps can create the right environment for scaling the number of PhDs.

Source: New Delhi [/epaper. Times of India](#)/9 September 2010

### Think out of the box

*At a recent forum—Innovation in Education—organised by Education Times, academicians, industry leaders and policy-makers came together to share their views on why innovation is the need of the hour*

In countries like India that are interspersed with diversity in the socio-political and economic front, education has to take a micro-view while adopting a macro-focus. While it is necessary to align states and regions with the larger national vision, it is equally important to understand the special needs, unique strengths and discrepancies of each region. Academicians, policy-makers and industry experts agree that the Indian education sector has taken significant steps particularly in the last 15 years. While India is setting sights on internationalising its education system, it is still struggling with problems of inclusion and quality even at the primary school level.

This is where innovation can play a major role and help produce customised solutions to the wide and varied challenges in the education sector. "Innovation can be instrumental in ironing out the discrepancies and ushering in a level ground in the education sector. And this level ground is imperative if India as a nation wants to realise the goal of a knowledge economy," said RP Agrawal, chairman



of board of governors, IIT, Delhi. Agrawal was speaking at a forum 'Innovation in Education', recently organised by Education Times. The event was presented by the 'Institute of Management Technology' in association with 'images bazaar' and supported by 'A4E' and 'Peerpower.com'.

The forum saw the participation of academics, industry leaders, policy-makers, corporations and research and funding organisations. Some of the pertinent issues that were addressed in the course of the day-long forum included speeding up cutting-edge research and development initiatives, vocationalisation of education, bridging the digital divide and internationalisation of higher education.

One of the most visible aspects of a knowledge economy is its research. "Not just the volume, but the quality and relevance," observed Sanjay Kallapur, senior associate dean, Indian School of Business. Quality research has to be undertaken in the area of fundamental and basic research as well as incremental and advanced research. "There is urgency towards establishing world-class innovation universities that have a pronounced mandate on large-scale research initiatives. This is especially because at present sophisticated and high-end research facilities are mainly confined to the IITs, IIMs and AIIMS (All India Institute of Medical Sciences)," stressed M Balakrishnan, deputy director (faculty), IIT Delhi. "Our innovation universities, among other things, should help in nurturing people who can develop intellectual properties like patents," he added. Besides, as far as research is concerned, the industry-academia connect has to be strengthened. "Industry should throw challenges encountered in the actual work space as research assignments for university and college students. In fact, the government can also play a role in this respect by identifying research opportunities of national interest and by orienting the industry and academic fraternity to these challenges," shared Deepak Pental, vice-chancellor, Delhi University.

Another critical area where industry-academia relations have to be strengthened is the area of entrepreneurship. "Our country needs entrepreneurs and visionaries who can propose sustainable and innovative solutions. And for this to happen, our education system has to be geared in a manner so that students can identify real-world opportunities and understand the nuances of real time business environments. This is clearly one area where the industry can guide academia," said Manish Gupta, director, IBM Research India and chief technologist IBM India /South Asia.

Academicians and industry leaders are in broad consensus that while India explores innovation, it is important to understand that innovation cannot be predetermined. "The attempt should be to encourage freshness in ideas and concepts that have scalability and can contribute significantly in generating quality, innovation, expansion, excellence and inclusion within the

education system. Hence, it is necessary to remove regulatory roadblocks and psychological reservations that are impediments towards fostering a climate of innovation," opined RP Agrawal.

Roy Newey, group board director, A4E India, pointed out that vocational education could be one of the solutions. "In countries like UK, vocational education is regarded at par with mainstream education. Every country requires skilled manpower not just in the tier one segment of industry but in the tier two and tier three segments as well—a need that can be actualised through the vocational system of education. For vocational education to become a success, the parameters of entry, assessment and employability have to be clearly ascertained," shared Newey.

Shabnam Sinha, senior education specialist, The World Bank, stressed on the role of technology in terms of augmenting quality in education. "Technology, particularly the use of multimedia, can play a pivotal role in facilitating personalised learning," she stated. However, it is not sufficient to make available only the infrastructure to schools and colleges. In-service training programmes have to be regularly conducted for upgrading the skills of teachers, she stressed.

Talking about the subject of internationalisation of higher education—a subject that is being mulled widely in academic and policy-making circles, Dilip K Bandopadhyay, vice-chancellor, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, said, "Internationalisation is not a question of strategic choice for India. It is an obvious choice, given the fact that in today's globalised world, compartmentalisation of education is an unreal concept. Entry of foreign universities is welcome on Indian soil because while on one hand they will infuse innovative teaching methodologies and educational concepts, on the other hand they will automatically unleash a spirit of healthy competition among Indian universities," he stated.

**Source:** New Delhi [epaper. Times of India](http://epaper.TimesofIndia/)/9 September 2010

### **Demystifying education: Something that could improve people's lives**

When Sanjit "Bunker" Roy was in college, and then in a job that allowed him a comfortable lifestyle, he had never thought about becoming a social entrepreneur. But the job itself, which involved mining and deep wells, led him to it. "I lived with very poor people under the stars and heard the simple stories they had to tell—stories of their knowledge and wisdom that only life can teach."

Such was the impact that his motivation shifted from just having a comfortable life back home, to improving that of the poor. Since 1972, his Barefoot College in Rajasthan has trained more than 3 million rural women from poor agricultural communities as midwives, hand-pump mechanics, solar engineers, artisans, weavers, crèche teachers, parabolic solar cooker engineers, FM radio

operators, dentists, masons, and day and night school teachers.

“I wanted to demystify education—where it is not about books and degrees, but something that could improve lives,” says Roy. The most remarkable aspect is this was how to teach people who have never even seen a single component before to assemble machines? How do you teach them to speak English terminologies who have never gone to school before?

This has been the most fascinating journey of Mr Roy. “For the first few days they wondered what they are here for,” says Roy of his students, all of who are villagers from some of the most remote places one can imagine. He gives an example. An illiterate woman, Sita, was totally clueless when she joined. Within a fortnight, she had learnt the colour and number codes of the basic components of a radio, like diodes. That code made it unnecessary to learn English terms like “blue” or “circular.” Everything was given a number. After that the teacher would just call out the relevant numbers, and show how to assemble a machine.

Today, people like Sita have become trainers themselves. “They now train women from other states and even from Africa,” says Roy. Again, some of the African women do not speak any Indian words, but by doing away with words altogether, fixing codes and showing everything practically, they are also able to work as trained weavers, architects, and even solar power engineers.

Living conditions are the bare minimum as befits a college in a remote area. “While working here, everyone sits on the floor, and makes a living wage,” says Roy. Work relationships are based on mutual trust, camaraderie and faith, and not on hierarchies. So there is no concept of a market wage. “You earn as much as you need to live well and be safe.”

This of course has also addressed the issue of migration into already choked cities. “When they can be close to their families and cultures, and be empowered right here, why go to a city?” points out Roy. Indeed there is no proof that you have studied in Barefoot College. Except your skill.

Alumni of this college are now the lifeline of villages as solar engineers, teachers, midwives, weavers, doctors and administrators at local levels. Thousands of people have benefited from dental care, help delivering and caring for new babies, fresh water from improved wells and electric power from solar technology, all of which sound like a dream for many rural areas where such facilities are absent.

With this abiding compassion for the rural poor in his native India, Roy, 64, has nurtured a grass-roots social entrepreneurship that has redefined the Indian government’s fight against poverty. Barefoot College has now grown to include twenty other locations around India and many more in other developing nations such as Africa, Bolivia and Afghanistan, and often known as the “barefoot

model”. All centres have a legal identity of their own, their sources of funds, and governance,” explains Mr Bunker. This arrangement is to provide them the freedom to create programs that will meet their own specific communities’ needs.

“I do not expect any thanks. I did it for myself. I found myself in this big crowded world.” says Roy. Honoured all over the world, he just takes home a Rs 4,000-salary. For him, after all, money was never the objective.

**Source:** [/economic times/](#)12 September 2010

### Slipping Behind

The latest QS World University Rankings offer more evidence of the worrisome stagnation that higher education in India is facing. That IIT Bombay is the only institute to figure in the top 200 is indicative of the desperate need for education reforms.

Compared to this China has as many as six universities that are ranked higher than 200, with four in the top 50. Having a clear advantage in manufacturing, it appears that China is now determined to outstrip India in the knowledge sector as well. To respond to this challenge, India needs to cast aside its bureaucratic approach to higher education and start thinking out of the box.

Indian universities are over-regulated, born out of the desire to keep elitism at bay. However, this approach has paid little dividends, stifling the potential of universities to grow and leading to a shortage in quality institutions of higher learning.

The few institutions that have enjoyed autonomy, such as the IITs and IIMs, have turned out to be institutes of excellence.

There is a case not only for having many more autonomous institutions but also giving a significant degree of autonomy to the existing central and state universities. In doing so the latter will have the freedom to chart their own course and many will become more competitive, leading to a rise in quality.

The fundamental problem in the education sector is lack of choice. Although moves such as the IITs’ recent decision to offer interdisciplinary courses in medicine are welcome, it is clear that our education infrastructure is insufficient to ensure a steady supply of high-skilled talent to the knowledge-driven sectors of the economy.

To remedy the situation, a conducive environment needs to be created to facilitate greater private and foreign investment in education. Vocational education too needs to be boosted. Implementing policies that make the education sector more market-oriented is our best bet to inject vibrancy into our universities.

The problem of access can be resolved through greater availability of educational loans and scholarships.

Our legislators need to think big and go beyond the usual politics of education. But if that proves impossible, a way out could be the creation of special educational zones exempted from the current licence-permit raj in higher education, which would serve as education and skill development hubs.

These could help establish education townships along the lines of Oxford and Cambridge and even reverse the brain drain. Freeing up the higher education sector by encouraging greater autonomy, competition and private sector participation must be the mantra.

Source: [/times of India/](#)13 September 2010

## RESOURCE

### Missing teachers are India's weakest link

Bihar has symbolized the Bimaru states for so long it gets blamed for everything that's wrong with India. This week, during a heated Rajya Sabha debate on teacher shortage in schools, MPs took pot shots at Bihar. They blamed it for India's skewed teacher-student ratio. Union human resources development minister Kapil Sibal stepped in to put the problem in perspective. "Shortage of teachers is a national issue not just of Bihar."

Sibal was right. India is short of 1.2 million teachers; 42 million children aged between 6 and 14 do not go to school; roughly 16% of all villages do not have primary schooling facilities and 17% schools have just one teacher. UP doesn't have a single teacher in more than 1,000 primary schools and roughly 15% teaching posts lie vacant in schools across Maharashtra. This figure rises to 42% in Jharkhand. Only Kerala, with an average of six teachers per primary school, is the exception to the rule.

The big picture is bleak. India's average student to teacher ratio is 1:42, a high figure by international standards.

In Bihar, the ratio is as high as 1:83. Though student enrolment has gone up in recent years, the dropout rate has kept pace. In 2005, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said that he was pained to note that "only 47 out of 100 children enrolled in class I reach class VIII, putting the dropout rate at 52.79 %." He blamed the "unacceptably high" rate on "lack of adequate facilities and large-scale absenteeism of teachers." In five years, this hasn't changed. The reason — lack of qualified teachers — remains unchanged as well.

But, some experts are hopeful of change. "The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has supported recruitment of more than 12 lakh teachers in the states. Out of those more than 10.5 lakh teachers have already been recruited. However, due to inadequate rationalisation of teachers, many teachers prefer to work in urban areas. Hence there is a shortage of teachers in rural areas," says Urmila Sarkar, chief of education, UNICEF.

There are other problems too. "The pupil-teacher ratio remains high in rural areas. This becomes acute in far flung areas where the basic facilities are not available for the teachers to stay in with families. Also there are issues related to absenteeism of teachers which affects the quality of teaching learning processes. However with the notification of the Right of Education Act RTE), the scenario is expected to change in a good way in the rural areas," says the UNICEF expert.

But, India's missing teachers are a problem considering the government faces the challenge of implementing the RTE Act, "Across the world, the best minds opt for teaching profession but this is not happening in India. So we need to give them more incentives," says the minister.

Missing teachers are a a big problem. But poorly-trained teachers could be an even bigger one. At a recent Technology, Entertainment and Design global conference, Microsoft founder Bill Gates emphasized the importance of a good teacher. "How much variation is there between teachers, the very best and the bottom quartile? How much variation is there within a school or between schools? And the answer is that these variations are absolutely unbelievable. A top quartile teacher will increase the performance of their class — based on test scores — by 10% in a single year," he said.

Gates was, of course, speaking of the US. But there are lessons for India. The government has just begun the process of filling 1.2 million teaching vacancies and promised it will spend Rs 2,31,000 crore on education in the next five years. It may be a while before any of this shows results. Till then, its missing teachers may be the weakest link in emerging India's unfolding story.

Source: [/times of India/](#)5 September 2010

## Contribute

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

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

Please email your contributions to [aserf@apeejay.edu](mailto:aserf@apeejay.edu)

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