



Announcements

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

Applications from the eligible scholars are invited for the Award of the year 2010. [Click here](#) to download the prescribed format along with the terms and conditions.

Apeejay Education Society 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 offers a diverse catalogue of technical, scientific, management and liberal arts courses for the academic session 2010-11. Applicants for admission 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 recognize a number of examination scores to establish academic excellence, including AIEEE, GMAT, SAT, and SAT II.

For more, visit: 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.

Editor

Dr. Mithilesh Kumar Singh

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ASPECT**Why is Tata Funding a Harvard?**

Ratan Tata's handsome gift of \$50 million to Harvard Business School is sure to have bowled the Americans over. In the American system of higher education, private donations and endowments are the norm. These donations help the institution create a corpus, which then enables them to provide better facilities and create intellectual capital.

But even by the standards of American philanthropy, the Tata donation is significant. And he isn't the only Indian to be pouring money into Harvard. In May this year, the family of Infosys founder NR Narayana Murthy decided to give US\$5.2 million for creating the Murthy Classical Library of India, which will, among other things, have 100 books from Indian languages translated into English. The Mahindra Group has donated \$10 million to the Harvard Humanities Centre.

The Tatas, the Murthys and the Mahindras have favoured Harvard in different ways and for different reasons, but this raises a question: why are they more favourably inclined to a Harvard than, say, an IIM. One answer is that they have been associated with these institutions in some way. But, equally, it seems that they are less sure about how useful their contributions to Indian institutions would be. The Harvards of the world emphasise excellence over every other ideal. The same cannot be said for our babu-controlled institutions.

The problem is clear. In India, most of the higher education institutions are state-funded, and hence, to that extent, compromised. Not only are these institutions not autonomous, they are also subject to undue interference and political pressures. Academic excellence is not their *raison d'être*. In such circumstances, it is quite understandable why a Tata or a Murthy is more interested in funding a Harvard than an IIM — though they have done that, too. This is the tragedy of Indian academe. If things are to change, there is only one solution: government needs to move away from running our best institutions and instead induct independent professional and private philanthropists to enter the picture with a broader vision. If this happens, maybe Tata would be happy to finance more institutions than before.

Source: October 2010 DNA India.com/

NEWS**Expenditure of Rs.3000 crore during XI Plan Period approved for establishment of 16 Central Universities**

The Union Cabinet today approved the proposal for incurring an expenditure not exceeding Rs.3,000 crore during the 11th Plan Period for setting up of 13 new Central Universities and taking over and conversion of three State Universities into Central Universities.

16 Central Universities were established in the various States by the Central Universities Act, 2009. While 13 of them are new Central Universities, three have been established by conversion of the erstwhile State Universities into Central Universities. This will increase access and enhance quality of higher education in the country.

Source: Tuesday, October 05, 2010 PIB

Haryana gears up to be education hub

Having attracted a lot of industrial investment in the last three decades, Haryana is charting a new course for itself - as an education hub that can boast of an Indian Institute of Management (IIM) and an All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) among other institutes.

'We want Haryana to become number one in education too. Haryana will become a hub of education not only for the country but of the world,' a proud Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda told IANS here.

'The day is not far when students from countries like America (the US), England and Germany will come here for higher education. The opening up of these educational institutions will help youth from Haryana to opt for better careers.'

With four major projects - an Indian Institute of Management (IIM) near Rohtak, an All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS-II) in Jhajjar district, a Defence University in Gurgaon and a Central University in Mahendergarh district - the state is surely headed towards realising its target.

The projects have been sanctioned by the central government in recent months. The foundation stone of the newest IIM was laid by union Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister Kapil Sibal at Garnawathi village near Rohtak last week.

The Haryana government has given over 200 acres of land at Garnawathi for the IIM-Rohtak campus. Classes for the 50 seats of the prestigious management course have already started from a temporary accommodation at the Maharishi Dayanand University (MDU) campus in Rohtak.

Most projects are coming to districts like Gurgaon, Rohtak and Sonapat - all in the vicinity of the national capital region (NCR) area of New Delhi.

The Defence University sanctioned for Haryana and to be located in Gurgaon was being sought aggressively by neighbouring Punjab but the central government decided, at the last moment, to give it to Haryana. Punjab has been upset over the decision.

These four institutes are not the only ones the state has got.

The Hooda government is going ahead with an ambitious project to set up the Rajiv Gandhi Education City near

Sonipat town, where a number of leading foreign and Indian universities and institutes have applied to set up base.

'Several top universities and institutes have put up their proposals before the government. The Education City will be a good success. Twenty-five percent seats in the institutions will be reserved for Haryana students,' Hooda added.

It may be a state that has a dismal sex ratio - about 860 females per 1,000 males, but the Haryana government has already set up an all-women university in Sonipat district. The Bhagat Phool Singh Mahila (women) University in Khanpur Kalan village of Sonipat district has started functioning.

'The all-women university will encourage more girls to opt for higher education and excel in professional and vocational streams,' educationist Charanjit Chawla.

The central Ministry of Defence has also sanctioned the second Sainik (Military) School for the state to be opened in Rewari district. Haryana already has one of the oldest Sainik schools in the country located at Kunjpura near Karnal.

The institution, where Hooda himself has studied and of which former army chief Deepak Kapoor is an alumnus, recently celebrated its golden jubilee.

One of the biggest projects that Haryana has got from the centre is AIIMS-II to be set up in Badhsa village in the remote Jhajjar district. The AIIMS-New Delhi is the biggest medical and health institution of the country.

The Hooda government has also announced the setting up of three medical colleges in Karnal, Faridabad and Mewat. The medical college at Karnal is in memory of the first woman astronaut of Indian origin, Kalpana Chawla, who hailed from Karnal town.

Four private universities are also being established in the state.

Source: Chandigarh, (IANS) 4 Oct, 2010 Sify.com

Health wins study war with HRD

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has declared that the health ministry will soon introduce a draft bill for a health education regulator, signaling an end to a tug of war between the health and human resource development ministries.

In a convocation address at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here on Friday, Singh said the health ministry after extensive consultations had prepared a draft bill for a national council for human resources in health, which would soon be introduced in Parliament.

"The bill will seek to create an enabling environment that will address issues of quality, quantity and equitable distribution of medical education resources," Singh said.

The health ministry had proposed a new overarching agency to regulate human resources in health, while the HRD ministry had been pursuing a national unified commission for all higher education fields, a concept pitched by two independent expert panels.

The moves towards a new body emerged amid criticism of existing bodies, such as the Medical Council of India, for poor functioning and concerns that they had been unable to address acute shortages and uneven distribution of human resources in health education.

However, the HRD ministry led by minister Kapil Sibal had been seeking a unified commission for higher education that would, through several subcommittees, cover all disciplines, including engineering and health education.

The idea of a national commission for higher education and research had emerged two years ago as a recommendation of a panel led by the former UGC chairman, Professor Yash Pal.

The Yash Pal committee had pointed out that India had 13 educational councils governing various areas — from teacher education to medicine, dentistry and nursing to law. The proposed commission was intended to function with greater academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

The health ministry and sections of the medical community had opposed the concept of giving up an oversight on health education.

"The commission for higher education would compress a large number of diverse and unrelated, but specialised, areas under a single body," said a doctor who had advised the health ministry against the proposal. "Health education cannot be taken away from the main stakeholders — also, this is a concurrent subject, and there were also concerns that states would not agree to such a commission."

The proposed national council for human resources in health is expected to have smaller panels of experts that will regulate different health sectors — medicine, dentistry, nursing and physiotherapy.

In his address, Singh also said AIIMS and other similar institutions should prepare learning resources that could be easily accessed across India. "Many of our medical colleges are deficient in the resources needed to train specialists. High quality faculty is in short supply," he said calling for development of distance learning programmes.

Source: Oct. 3, 2010, Telegraph India.com

Hughes Partners with Venera for Easy & Affordable Education Delivery Throughout India

Venera Technologies, the leading provider of digital multimedia solutions, and Hughes, the global leader in providing broadband satellite networks announced an alliance that will allow Venera to offer its Virtual Classroom platform IeraTM for delivering online education using VSAT and Internet in Tier B and C cities through HughesNet

Fusion centers in the country. Hughes's usage of Iera will allow aspirants from small towns in India to have access to professional education from premium institutes without migrating to big cities.

"Venera has always been in the forefront for providing innovative, easy to use and effective solutions to the global market. We are delighted to be working with Hughes as this furthers our objective of facilitating cost-effective education with innovative use of technology. Venera will work with Hughes to ensure that large population has access to a viable education solution, which is not yet available", said Vikas Singhal, Director – Business Development, Venera Technologies.

"Our alliance with Venera for their education focused solution Iera, will allow us to offer an easy to use, effective education system at reasonable cost to our franchisees and partners", shared Dharmendra Singh, Director – Business Development & Technology, HughesNet Fusion. "The Iera™ platform will continuously evolve Hughes education solution and offer cutting edge features to our customers while reducing the entry level cost", he added.

"Partnering with Hughes is a key development for Venera. India is a diverse market with multiple languages, limited infrastructure and huge variation in economical status. With focus on local requirements, simple interface and bandwidth efficient engine, Iera™ is set to evolve as the solution of choice for mass deployment of virtual classrooms in India." said Sourav Choudhury, CTO, Venera Technologies.

Source: 6 Oct, 2010/ Satprnews.com

Edify Education to invest Rs 500 cr in 5 yrs

Edify Education, a part of DRS Group, has said it will invest Rs 500 crore to open a network of around 300 schools across India, as part of its expansion plans in the next five years.

"Edify Education is planning to have 50 Franchise Edify Schools, 250 Franchise Edify Kids pre-schools and 10 company-owned International Schools by 2015, with the investment of around Rs 250 crore and expecting Rs 250 crore through private equity," said Kavitha Jain, Vice President of Edify Education.

Agarwal Packers and Movers promoter DRS Group's education arm said it expected Rs 150 crore from the proposed investment. It claimed that it would make use of the cost-effective technology and systematic operations, coupled with phase-wise investment in order to make the proposed project profitable.

Edify Education aims to provide international schooling education at affordable prices across India and is mulling to spend the major chunk of its total investment in the smaller cities.

"In smaller cities not many schools provide quality education along with overall development of the child. Vision of Edify is to make quality education reachable across India. The project is feasible because of low setup and operational cost in these areas," Jain added.

Source: New Delhi/4 Oct, 2010 Economic Times

Advertising guidelines for education sector soon

During the first half of 2010, the sector topped the chart in print advertising.

The education sector, which topped the charts in print advertising this year, will have to follow certain advertising guidelines from October 2010. The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) will shortly release the guidelines approved by the ASCI board.

According to TAM data, the education sector, during the first half of 2010, topped the chart in print advertising by pipping traditional gainers, like FMCG, telecom and the auto sectors.

Lovely Professional University, Maharana Pratap Group of Institutions, Manav Rachna International University and Aakash Institute are among those that have advertised regularly over the said period.

"Private universities have mushroomed over the last few years and in a bid to establish credibility and expand student base in lesser time, they are spending heavily on advertising. Thus, having a code in place becomes mandatory," said Dhananjay Keskar, director of IBS Pune and the former Chairman of ASCI. Keskar, who is heading the committee, said, the education industry in general is in agreement with draft guidelines and ASCI would approve the same this month.

The proposed guidelines for education institutions, among other things, prohibit institutions from claiming that enrolment in the institution or programme will provide the student a temporary or permanent job, job promotions or salary increase, etc, unless the advertiser is able to substantiate and also assume full responsibility of the advertisement.

Also, advertisements shall not make claims regarding extent of the batch placed, highest or average compensation of the students placed, admissions of students to renowned educational institutes, and affiliation with a foreign institution, etc, unless they are substantiated with evidence.

"Many times the advertisements claim to have the largest campus when the images are computer generated. Many institutes talk about international placements when students are placed domestically. ASCI's aim is to curb such misleading advertising," added Keskar.

ASCI said the feedback from the education industry has been positive and in affirmation to the guidelines. Around

30 academicians have responded to the guidelines and come up with new ones suggestions.

"We have suggested that use of words like free laptops and free study tours should be prohibited. Also, institutes should mention if they are a franchise centre or study centre. Claims about foreign faculty on board should also be substantiated," said an academician, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, till the guidelines are made public.

As per the proposed guidelines, an advertisement will not state or lead the public to believe that an institution or course or programme is recognised, authorised or accredited, unless the advertiser is able to substantiate with evidence. In case the advertised institution or programme is not accredited or approved by a mandatory authority, but is affiliated to another accredited institution, the full name and location of the said affiliated institution shall also be stated in the advertisement.

Guidelines also suggested that the name and logo, if any, of the affiliated institution, shall be in the same font size as that of the advertised institution or programme in visual media, such as print, internet, hoarding, leaflet, prospectus, etc, including television. In audio media, such as radio or TV, the name of the affiliated institution must be stated.

Source: 4 Oct, 2010/ [Business-standard](#)

Britain keen to work with India for rural development

Evincing keen interest in working with India in the area of rural development, a British delegation today called on Rural Development Minister C P Joshi and sought co-operation in furthering Indo-British ties in the sector.

The delegation, led by All Party Indo-British Parliamentary Group chairman and Labour Member of Parliament for Ealing Southall Virendra Sharma sought the co-operation of the Ministry in furthering Indo-British ties in poverty alleviation, education, skill development and empowerment of rural masses, a statement of the ministry said.

"The delegation evinced keen interest in working together in areas like rural housing, design of solar power plants, education of girl child, building schools and livelihood works," it added. The delegation, which included former British MP John Barrett, had representatives from NGO India 800 Foundation.

Joshi said that raising the awareness of people, their empowerment, skill development and training are among the key areas where the learning and sharing of experiences would be of great help to both the countries. Ministry officials briefed the visiting delegates about the success of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment guarantee Act, the initiative to alleviate poverty by National Rural Livelihood Mission and the role of technology to

introduce transparency and accountability in the implementation of MGNREGA.

Source: New Delhi, Oct 5 (PTI) [ibnlive.in.com](#)

In Sanskritis, 25% seats for poor

According to the HRD ministry, the new set of Sanskriti schools across the country being planned by the department of personnel & training (DoPT) will have to give 25% reservation to children of economically weaker sections as per the Right to Education Act.

Earlier, DoPT had sought the opinion of the HRD ministry on the proposed Sanskriti schools. The ministry has urged DoPT to spell out if Sanskriti schools are specified category schools like Navodayas or Kendriya Vidyalayas.

As per the draft proposal — prepared by DoPT — the new Sanskriti schools will give reservation to only 15% of poor children. It will have 55% reservation for children of officers belonging to all India services/central services, 15% for kids of state government employees and 15% for general public. Sources said there is an ambiguity about the nature of the proposed Sanskriti schools: whether they will be under the category of aided or unaided schools.

DoPT proposal says the Central government will provide an one-time financial assistance for capital expenditure that is required for setting up of these schools.

"It is not clear if one-time grant be given under the category of aided schools. Under the RTE Act, aided schools will not charge fee from 25% children from economically-weaker sections and unaided schools will have to give 25% reservation to poor children from neighbourhood," a source said, adding it will be impossible for proposed Sanskriti Schools to escape reservation. The first of Sanskriti school — outside Delhi — is being planned in Shillong.

As per the draft guidelines, the proposal to set them up should come from state government or association of All India Services/Central Civil Services Officers in consultation with Central Government Employees' Coordination Committee justifying the need for these institutions. State should provide free land in lieu of which 15% seats will be reserved for children of its employees.

The guideline also stipulates that fee structure should be such that these schools are able to meet all recurring expenditures.

Source: New Delhi/ Oct 7, 2010/ [The Times of India](#)

Indian education firm Career Point soars on listing

Shares of a top Indian tutorial services provider soared over 100 percent Wednesday as the firm made its stock exchange debut with investors betting on robust growth in the education sector.

Career Point, headquartered in the small town of Kota in Rajasthan, raised 1.15 billion rupees (26 million dollars)

through its initial public offer (IPO) which was oversubscribed 48 times.

Career Point Infosystems's stock jumped by as much as 117 percent to a day's high of 674 before retracing to close at 632.35 rupees, up 104 percent over the initial public offer (IPO) price of 310.

Investors see huge potential in India's expanding education sector. Career Point trains students to appear for entrance tests to join the elite Indian Institute of Technology and other premier educational institutions.

Analysts said Career's sharp first-day listing gain was "natural."

Career, founded by Pramod Maheshwari, a graduate of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi, plans to use the funds to expand operations, which includes building a residential campus in Kota.

The firm provides tutorial services for engineering, medical and other courses.

In recent years, India has seen the mushrooming of private education firms, where entrepreneurs set up tutorial classes and mid-sized schools, with private equity support.

"India has a large young population, seeking primary, higher school education, private tutorial and specialised education," said Pramod Gubbi, director of British-based investment bank Execution Noble.

"It's a cash generative business," Gubbi said.

Few private education firms have an all-India presence and several find it challenging to find well-trained and qualified teachers across India's towns and cities.

In fiscal year 2010, Career Point posted a profit of 199 million rupees on revenues of 678 million rupees.

Source: MUMBAI/ 6/10/2010 [hosted news/](#)

Siting India and China, Obama condemns plan to cut education aid

U.S. President Barack Obama speaks during the White House Summit on Community Colleges in Washington on Tuesday.

Weeks ahead of his trip to India, U.S. President Barack Obama has said America is in fight for future with countries like India and China who are spending massively on education, while his country has been cutting its budget on the sector.

"Think about it. China isn't slashing education by 20 per cent right now. India is not slashing education by 20 per cent. We are in a fight for the future — a fight that depends on education," Mr. Obama said in his remarks at a White House Summit on Community Colleges.

"Cutting aid for 8 million students or scaling back our commitment to community colleges, that's like unilaterally

disarming our troops' right as they head to the frontlines," he said.

Mr. Obama said he strongly disagrees with the economic plan that was released last week by the Republican leaders in Congress, which would actually cut education by 20 per cent.

"It would reduce or eliminate financial aid for 8 million college students. And it would leave community colleges without the resources they need to meet the goals we've talked about today," he argued.

"Instead, this money would help pay for a USD 700 billion tax cut that only 2 per cent of the wealthiest Americans would ever see — an average of USD 100,000 for every millionaire and billionaire in the country. And that just doesn't make sense — not for students, not for our economy," he observed.

"We can't accept less investment in our young people if our country is going to move forward. It would mean giving up on the promise of so many people who might not be able to pursue an education, like the millions of students at community colleges across this country," Mr. Obama said.

The U.S. President announced that the Gates Foundation is starting a new five-year initiative to raise community college graduation rates.

"This is critically important because more than half of those who enter community colleges fail to either earn a two-year degree or transfer to a earn a four-year degree. So we want to thank Melinda Gates for that terrific contribution," he said.

"The Aspen Institute and several leading foundations are launching a competitive prize for community college excellence. It's going to shine a spotlight on community colleges delivering truly exceptional results — places that often don't get a lot of attention, but make a tremendous difference in their students' lives," Mr. Obama said.

"So we're investing in community colleges. We're making college more affordable. We're bringing together businesses, non-profits and schools to train folks for the jobs of a new century. Now, all of this will help ensure that we continue to lead the global economy — but only if we maintain this commitment to education that's always been central to our success," he said.

Source: PTI Oct 5, 2010/ AP/ [The Hindu](#)

MBA, tech courses in distance mode are invalid

The All India Council for Technical Education made it clear that the engineering and management degrees offered by certain universities like Sikkim Manipal University and Punjab Technical University through the distance education mode are "invalid" and will not be recognised for employment under the Central government.

In a press release, it said, "Any approval of these courses by the Distance Education Council, will have to be processed jointly by the tripartite committee of UGC, AICTE and DEC."

AICTE noticed that several institutions and universities in the country are offering various programmes such as BE, B.Tech, MBA, MCA, Hotel Management etc. through distance education mode without the approval of UGC and AICTE.

"Such degrees and diplomas that do not have the approval shall not be recognised for employment under Central government," the release added.

Source: October 7th, 2010/ [Deccan Chronicle](#)

More dubious Navratnas

The human resource development ministry's idea, creating a network of elite Indian universities modelled on the Ivy League in the US, could not have been more far-fetched.

There is a curious mismatch between India's economic prowess and its woeful underperformance in higher education. No Indian university features in any list of top 100 universities. Now the government plans to "do something" about the problem by, of all things, copying a foreign model of excellence.

As reported in *Mint* on Monday, the human resource development (HRD) ministry plans to create a network of elite universities modelled on the pattern of the so-called Ivy League in the US. There could not have been a more far-fetched idea.

These *navratna* universities will be selected from the 504 universities across India based on a set of three different parameters. These three variables are university-related (for example, excellence in research in terms of publications, infrastructure, ability to attract foreign students, etc), student-related (quality of teaching, flexibility in academic programmes, quality of students, and so on) and faculty-related (faculty profile measured in terms of international visibility, election to national and international academies, civilian awards, etc).

The issue here is one of putting the cart before the horse: Should the government seek an improvement in the variables listed above or should it, based on them, liberalize the functioning of universities? Clearly, HRD ministry mandarins have got the sequence wrong.

In all top universities globally, there is a tight fit between research excellence and the quality of education imparted to students. This, in turn, is dependent on the ability of universities to attract the best academic talent by offering salaries comparable to what the best private sector job has on offer. All this is topped with the availability of bright students and an environment conducive to research.

This is missing in Indian universities. The big question is: How will the mere relabelling of existing institutions help

them. Blatant interference in academic appointments and promotions, putting affirmative action before excellence and extensive inbreeding of faculty, among other factors, has crippled the system. What the ministry has proposed amounts to little more than a refurbished rating system, something that other agencies already do. Even then it is unclear to what extent the government will permit autonomy, for instance, in selecting the faculty and students. It's inconceivable that any university can do as it pleases and not attract the charge of being elitist. If, however, universities are permitted this freedom, they will in the long-run, attain excellence that eludes them now. There is little reason to doubt that our universities can compete with the best in the world, if only the government were to step aside.

Source: Oct 5 2010 [Livemint.com/](#)

No takers for 22,000 Engg seats in Maharashtra

Has supply outstripped demand in the professional education field? Or have students suddenly become choosy about the colleges they sign up at? As admissions for the academic year 2010-11 closed last week, Maharashtra saw 22,280 engineering seats go abegging, a low point the state has never touched before.

Last year, close to 2,000 seats were left unfilled in engineering colleges across the state, but these were mostly in streams like instrumentation which are not really known to be popular with students. This year, the situation appears to be far more critical.

"Almost 100 colleges outside the cities of Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur have not been able to fill up all their seats," said a senior officer from the Directorate of Technical Education (DTE), the state body that oversees admissions to professional technical courses. "Also, our analysis reveals that the several new colleges that opened this year were given a wide berth by candidates."

What makes the scenario bleaker is the fact that the state government has never set any minimum qualifying marks in the engineering entrance exam (a student needs a minimum score of 50% to qualify for a health science course like MBBS or dentistry or nursing).

Candidates with single-digit and rock-bottom marks have routinely got into engineering colleges, as they did this year as well. In fact, rules in Maharashtra even allow colleges to admit students on the basis of the Class XII scores in case engineering institutes fail to find enough candidates who have taken the entrance test. Given this liberalism, the fact of so many engineering seats lying vacant assumes startling proportions.

In the case of the MBA course too, a whopping 6,351 seats remain untaken despite the state government throwing all entry norms out of the window, and allowing students who did not take the common entrance test to get into the Masters programme. "Initially there were 11,000 vacancies

and then the government opened the gates to everyone. Despite that, thousands of seats are lying unfilled. Annually, the MBA programme never has more than a few hundred seats going vacant," said a DTE officer. In all, there are 24,995 seats in Maharashtra's 366 management colleges.

The state's decision was also criticised by the All India Council for Technical Education, the country's top body for professional technical education. DTE officials said, "It was a political decision to allow all graduates to sign up for the MBA course. But what made the entire process unfair was that there were several students who had taken the exam but were later disqualified for not scoring the minimum marks. On the other hand, the doors were opened to those who did not even sit for the entrance test."

Maharashtra is among the five Indian states (the others being Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala) that collectively account for almost 69% of the country's engineers. With entry norms being stripped to the bare minimum, and seats going unfilled, the state will have perhaps to keep a check on its expansion plans.

Source: Oct 7, 2010 [Times of India](#).

Proposal to Select Universities to Offer B Ed with Graduation Approved

The Vice Chancellors of numerous universities have given their approval to a proposal of selecting universities to offer Bachelor of Education (B Ed) course along with graduation. The approval was given in a meeting chaired by Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister Kapil Sibal. As per sources, the B Ed course will be offered with graduation under 3+1 pattern. The proposal aims at providing more trained teachers in a short span of time for the quicker growth of school education.

V N Rajasekharan Pillai, Vice Chancellor, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) said that the vice chancellors had agreed to the proposal during the meeting and it will be introduced in July 2011, once the academic councils of select universities give it the go ahead. Further, he informed that the four year integrated course is available to students from Science or Arts stream and not to students from Commerce stream.

Moreover, Pillai said that students in three-year graduation courses would be able to choose to study another academic year, so that they can get a Bachelor's degree in education. Several regional colleges in India are already following this system. In order to give recommendations to the HRD Ministry, a committee has been formed, which is headed by V N Rajasekharan Pillai, Vice Chancellor, IGNOU.

Further, Pillai informed that seven extra teachers for B Ed are required in every college for the syllabus to be implemented. The Vice Chancellors had agreed to swap teachers between colleges. They had also agreed to have

Navratna, a group of central universities that strictly follows the guidelines and educational standards.

Source: Oct4, 2010 <http://updates.Higher Education India.com/>

Upgradation of Bengal Engineering and Science University (BESU), Shibpur to an Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology (IEST), Shibpur at Howrah, West Bengal

The Union Cabinet today approved the proposal for taking over of Bengal Engineering and Science University (BESU), Shibpur and converting it to Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology (IEST), with a total five years' project cost of Rs.592.20 crore (Rs. 300.30 Crore as non-recurring cost towards capital expenditure and Rs.291.90 Crore as recurring expenditure).

BESU will be converted to IEST by suitably amending the NIT Act, with special clauses, which should reflect its exclusive character. IEST will be an 'Institute of National Importance' covered under NIT Act and its organizational and governing structure will be on the lines of National Institutes of Technology (NITs).

IEST will integrate under-graduate education, post graduate education and research in engineering and science under the same umbrella. IEST will be an Institution of international standard and will produce quality manpower for the strategic sector of the country, research laboratories and quality teachers for the institutions of engineering and science education.

Background:

The Government had constituted an Expert Committee in 2005 to evaluate and suggest a plan of action for upgrading seven Institutes, including BESU, which had earlier been identified by Prof. S K Joshi Committee. The Expert Committee recommended the establishment of a new system of 'Indian Institutes of Engineering Science and Technology (IESTs) as Institutes of National Importance through an Act of Parliament. The Committee recommended upgradation of five Institutes including BESU, to become an IEST.

The admissions to IEST will be through national level entrance exam namely, All India Engineering Entrance Examination (AIEEE).

Source: Tuesday, October 12, 2010/ [PIB](#)

Corporates may run tech colleges

The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) might allow the corporate sector to start engineering and other technical colleges, a top council official said.

"Companies formed under Section 25 of the Companies Act may be considered for this purpose. It may take one or two years to finalise the guidelines and modalities for

implementation of this proposal," AICTE chairman SS Mantha said here.

Welcoming the move, Anshu Kataria, chairman of the Aryans Business School, said that it would help the engineering and technical education sector. He is also the convener of the education sub-committee of the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

"This will not only attract big corporate houses to invest in education sector but would also attract foreign direct investment (FDI)," Kataria told IANS. So far, only government, semi-government organisations, societies and trusts are permitted to start educational projects.

"All the stakeholders should work together for the education system to improve," Mantha said. The AICTE chairman said the council did not recognise distance education, though it has allowed double shift in the educational institutes. He said the aim should be to get more and more eligible people into higher education.

Source: CHANDIGARH/ANS/ Oct 11, 2010 [The Times of India](#)

IIMs Can Now Open Centres Within the Country and Outside Shri Kapil Sibal Holds Meeting with Chairpersons and Directors of IIMS

A meeting was held today under the Chairmanship of Human Resources Minister, Shri Kapil Sibal with the Chairpersons and Directors of IIMS on the future vision of the IIMs and the necessary steps to be taken to achieve them. Shri Sibal informed the members that in the last one and half year a number of steps have been taken by the Ministry to provide autonomy to the IIMs. Some of these include full powers to the Boards of IIMs to create posts within the approved norms, freedom to open centres in India and abroad, amend Rules of the IIM within the framework of Memorandum of Association and Rules, power to acquire and dispose property not fully or partially funded by the Ministry of HRD, powers to approve their own Budget, and also to manage the funds generated by the IIMs on their own. However, he said that autonomy should go hand in hand with accountability; in that the faculty, the director and the Board should take steps to prepare annual action plans and key performance indicators at each level and be fully accountable and transparent.

The meeting considered the reports of Committees constituted in the last meeting in Bangalore on certain key issues. Discussions were held on the report of the Committee constituted to recommend a new Governance Structure for IIMs (chaired by Shri R.C. Bhargav, Chairman BOG- IIM, Ranchi). It was decided that the number of Board Members of IIMs would be reduced to 14. It also discussed the composition and selection of the Boards of governors with adequate membership to the Society of the IIM, the government, the faculty and the

alumni. It was also decided that the IIM societies should have long term members who take continuous interest in the running of the IIMs. It was also decided, in principle, that Directors of IIMs will now be appointed through a process wherein the Board of Governors of the IIMs suggests three names to the Government from which the Government chooses one.

On the second report of the Committee on Faculty and Research at the IIMs, chaired by Shri Ajit Balakrishnan, Chairman, IIM, Calcutta. It was decided that the IIMs can top up the salaries of their Directors also in addition to the Faculty from the funds generated by them on their own. It was also decided that the Faculty members would give individual work plans at the start of the year. The recommendations of the Committee regarding use of technology in IIMs were accepted and the Minister directed that old and new IIMs sit together to streamline the use of technology for class scheduling, attendance, mark compilation etc.

On the recommendations of the Committee on Fund Raising by IIMs (chaired by Shri Hari S. Bhatia, Chairman of IIM, Raipur), it was decided that the IIMs have a development office especially for the purpose, each IIM have a fund raising policy and thereafter to have road shows. A two-day workshop will be conducted on the subject of collecting endowments for institutes.

Source: Wednesday, October 13, 2010/ [PIB](#)

LSE, Reliance Foundation to set up universities in India

The London School of Economics will collaborate with Reliance Foundation, run by the promoters of India's largest corporate house, for setting up world-class universities in the South-Asian nation.

Reliance Foundation is the philanthropy arm of Indian billionaire industrialist Mukesh Ambani-led [Reliance Industries](#) group, while the LSE is one of the world's most reputed business schools.

The LSE would collaborate with the Reliance Foundation in setting up world class Universities in India, LSE's Professor Lord Nicholas Stern said here last night.

The comments from Stern, the Director of the India Observatory and Chairman of the Asia Research Centre at the LSE, came in the backdrop of a lecture delivered at LSE by Nita Ambani, Reliance Foundation's Chairperson and Mukesh Ambani's wife.

She said that the Foundation has taken up the challenge to set up a world class university in India to put India on the global education map.

"The University will break new grounds in the use of technology and it will be a university that looks global with Indian soul," she added.

Noting that India faced the challenge of equity and expansion in education and healthcare, she said the Dhirubhai Ambani International School in Mumbai had produced some of the top talents in the country and some of the students are currently studying at the LSE.

Nita Ambani is also the Chairperson of Dhirubhai Ambani International School.

She also suggested that India should introduce many far reaching reforms in its education system and give prominence to music, dance, painting, art and craft.

After arriving here with Mukesh Ambani yesterday afternoon in their special chartered flight, Reliance I, the couple also attended a dinner hosted by Professor Lord Nicholas Stern.

Source: LONDON: 16 Oct, 2010/ [Economic Times](#)

Private universities reject education reform bills

The government might be getting ready to have its higher education reform bills cleared in the winter session of parliament, but private universities have strongly opposed the ministry of human resource development's (MHRD) endeavour.

A group of private universities — Indian Council of Universities (ICU) — met the chairman of parliamentary standing committee on HRD, Oscar Fernandes, and expressed their apprehension that the central government was overstepping on state government's rights.

It said that the government's reform bills —The Educational Tribunals Bill, 2010; The Prohibition of Unfair Practices in Technical Educational Institutions, Medical Educational Institution and Universities Bill, 2010; The National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for Higher Educational Institutions Bill, 2010; The Foreign Educational Institutions (regulation of entry and operations) Bill, 2010 and Higher Education and Research Bill, 2010 — were not constitutionally valid.

Therefore, all the new bills needed to be referred to the solicitor general or a committee headed by a Supreme Court judge to check the validity of these laws in view of constitutional provisions distributing the legislative powers related to higher education among states and union government.

The ICU had representations of chancellors/ vice-chancellors representing mainly private and deemed universities.

The council objected that the constitution categorically prohibits parliament from regulating higher education while empowering states to do so.

"Parliament can only coordinate and determine the standards of higher education but cannot regulate it. Parliament is even not permitted to incorporate and wind up universities," ICU chairman Surjit Singh Pabla said.

Fernandes is learnt to have told the organisation to make their point before the standing committee when it examines these bills.

Source: New Delhi /Monday, Oct 18, 2010/ [DNA India](#)

Shri Kapil Sibal Moots a Neighbourhood Book Policy Chairs Round Table on Draft New National Book Promotion Policy

Shri Kapil Sibal, Union Minister of Human Resource Development has mooted that there be a neighborhood book policy in the country. The aim should be that in the manner of neighborhood schools, there should be neighborhood libraries and reading rooms. He gave this suggestion to the Task Force that has prepared the Draft National Book Promotion Policy while speaking at a Round Table held to discuss the policy, here today. He added that the model of libraries/reading rooms being followed in Tamil Nadu (pointed out and praised by some members of the round table) could be looked at by the Task Force to be incorporated in their report. He also said that state governments would have to be involved for this.

Shri Sibal was speaking at the conclusion of a robust discussion where a number of suggestions were made regarding the draft policy. He asked the Task Force to rework on the draft policy accordingly and also asked the task force to hold meetings with students and parents who are also stakeholders, subsequent to a suggestion in this regard by a participant in the Round Table.

The minister also suggested to the Task Force to look at preparing a pricing policy for books, which would be advisory and not mandatory, consistent with international norms, in their report. He also asked the Task Force to take a fresh look at the publishing of school text books and whether greater private sector involvement could be looked at here. He also pointed out to the publishing industry that a huge opportunity awaits them in the publishing of e-books, especially for children's books that can be illustrated. He also pointed out the vast scope of translations of books in India from one language to the other.

Shri Sibal stated that as the Task Force also look at incorporating the suggestion from a round table member that the publishers make available electronic manuscripts of books to Braille book publishers so that the effort of retyping a book can be avoided. He also asked the Task Force to look at how the electronic media can be asked to participate in the popularization of reading. He also talked about the requirement of creative writing modules and of at least one hour every week being dedicated to reading in schools.

Shri Sibal underlined the need of a policy framework to reach out to potential authors, especially in small places, who find it very difficult to find publishers. The minister asked the Task Force that an idea that could be looked at was the setting up of a national level website, connected to the states and to the districts, so that those who seek to

author books can reach out to a committee/committees consisting of government and non-government members. This would be a forum to enable a person to access publishers, which is otherwise extremely difficult for an ordinary person. The Task Force could work at the details and the sifting mechanism.

The Round Table was attended by stakeholders including publishers, authors, academicians and representatives from the Ministries of I&B and Culture, among others. Views expressed by members included greater access to libraries for all, including those in the rural areas and in slums; books in electronic format being made available to libraries and to publishers of Braille books; setting up of creative writing centres; private publishers being allowed greater access to publishing of school textbooks; bringing down the cost of books, the possibility of development funds earmarked for rural areas being used for purchase of books and of the preparation of a policy to encourage writing.

Source: Saturday, October 16, 2010/[PIB](#)

Indian philanthropy in education: U.S. benefits more

"The real power of money is the power to give it away". This quote has been preached once and again by our industry leaders, however, when it comes to putting it into practice, there's always a missing link - contribution for a real need. Philanthropic donations may fill pages of records of social responsiveness, for instance the recent activities of Anand Mahindra and Ratan Tata, the titans of Mahindra and Tata groups, threw light on their affinity towards their alma-mater Harvard. Mahindra donated \$10 million, and Tata within a fraction of a month realized to dot the same line doling out a whopping \$50 million for Harvard. As an alma-mater a biased affection can be understood, yet is it justified considering the lethargic funding scenario in Indian institutes?

The apathy of private funding in Indian institutes is quite visible from the fact that there has been no significant generosity bestowed upon them since years. The most prominent fundings were the \$5 million and \$1 million donation to IIT Delhi and IIT Mumbai by Vinod Khosla, the co-founder of Sun Microsystems and Avi Nash, Advisory Director of Goldman Sachs back in 2003. It is Infosys Chief Narayana Murthy, one of the noted alumni of IITs whose continuous contribution towards his alma mater has till date resulted in around \$8 million contribution.

It was Murthy, who had once pointed out in IIT's CBS journal the high standards of the Indian institutes, whereby he acknowledged that merit is the only core factor to get admitted in them, unlike in many top notch schools of the West. "My son Rohan Murty wanted to do Computer Science at IIT. To do CS at IIT, you have to be in top 200 - he couldn't do that - so he went to Cornell instead. I do know cases where students who couldn't get into CS at IITs, but they have got scholarships at MIT, at Princeton,

at Caltech," he reveals, which clearly pinpoints that institutes in India have a sole merit purpose. They are not guided by notions like "donate and get admissions reserved" - a trend which prevents them from being the family education hub of the elite class. Hence could this be the deterring factor for private donations, as top notch institutes of U.S. offer better degree options to a donor's family?

Scanning the pages of dole-outs by Indians reveal institutes like Harvard, Cornell being beneficiaries of these acts of gratitude earlier too. What everyone conveniently tends to forget is the importance of the home-grown universities which have maintained their high education standards amidst financial crisis. HRD Minister Kapil Sibal pointed out that the government continues to be the principal provider of funds for institutions that turn out elite cadres of engineers and management experts. This means that the IITs and IIMs are essentially driven by fee income from undergraduate students. For most comparable institutions anywhere in the world, fee income forms a small part of the funding pattern. For most of the part, it's non-fee income that drives the funding or in other words it's the generous private funding that builds them up.

There is hardly a rational contribution made by Indians towards the Western institutes. A deeper probe into Mahindra's donation shows his intent to make the humanities section of Harvard university more prominent, while at the same time he maintains that the support is in the honor of his mother, Indira Mahindra, a well known Indian author. Now, this turns on confusion as Indira Mahindra did not have any Harvard humanities background, hence, a better utilization may have been by funding the humanities department of an India based university. A grant of \$10 million would have also helped in turning around the common apathy that people in India have towards a career in humanities. "This is a very sad, yet a true fact. People in India do frown upon people who take up further studies in social sciences and humanities as they don't see the value in it," says an Indian student in his blog post. Tata's contribution to support the broad range of executive education at Harvard, though is less ambiguous, yet fails to make an impact for a real purpose as Harvard stands among the top three institutes for management programs. Hence, a \$50 million building with better facilities is just another addition to their campus with the Tata's name tagged on.

Source: Bangalore/Monday, 18 October 2010/[Siliconindia.com](#)

Rural India: English medium schools mushrooming across villages

Ten-year-old Maanav Grewal is up at the crack of dawn every day. He has to get ready for school 24 km away from his home in Tahliwala Jattan village in Ferozpur, Punjab. The fourth-grader's school in the district's main city, Fazilka, starts at 8 am, but he has to be up two hours

earlier to catch the only jeep that ferries students from his village.

There are other schools closer home, but Maanav's parents, who are well-to-do farmers, were set on this one. "Any school would not do," especially if the medium of instruction was more Punjabi than English. They chose an English-medium school, which gave Maanav a "better education".

Never mind that it costs a significant Rs 520 a month. From Punjab to Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala, English-medium schools are sprouting in India's villages to meet the growing demand. Small farmers, factory workers and labourers are sending their children to English-medium schools, even if it pinches the pocket.

There are no official or documented numbers available, and most private schools are unrecognised, but anecdotal evidence points to this growing trend. In Andhra, nearly half the Urdu schools in Kurnool and about a third each in Hyderabad and Nizamabad have been replaced by an equal number of English-medium schools in the past 2-3 years, says Parveen Sayyed, national Urdu coordinator of Hyderabad-based Pratham Education Foundation, an NGO working in school education.

English medium advantages

In Maharashtra, 2,500 new English-medium schools have sprung up since 2006, but not a single Marathi-medium school. In the past five years, an average of 100 English-medium schools have been added every year in the Panchkula region, comprising Haryana, Chandigarh, Punjab, J&K and Himachal Pradesh, since 2005.

Kerala has a network of 12,800 government and private schools. Traditionally, the medium of instruction in these schools has been Malayalam. However, over the years, there has been a marked shift. The number of English-medium schools has increased to 750, according to the latest economic review of the state.

As prosperity grows in rural India, the urge to walk in the brown sahib's shoes gets stronger. Nearly every family in Punjab's villages has relatives in the UK, Canada or Australia. Parents feel only English-medium schools can give their children the edge to survive there. Labourers too send their children to private or English-medium schools, despite monthly fees of Rs 300-500, which equals two or three days' wages.

Source: PUNE/CHANDIGARH/ 16 Oct, 2010/[Economic Times](#)

UGC rolls out blueprint to train teachers as efficient managers

With the change in the socio-economic and political structure of the society and in the student profile, teachers in higher education in India are under tremendous pressure. Quality of education has taken a toll as teachers, besides performing primary task of teaching and research,

are also discharging duties as deans, proctors, provosts, exam controllers, principals, department heads etc.

Now with an aim to bring professionalism in the management of universities and colleges, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has issued guidelines on 'training and development of academic administrators in higher education'.

At present, the higher education institutions are managed by teachers and clerical staff. The existing arrangement, as per the UGC, is inadequate to face the changing realities. The guidelines direct institutions across the country to develop training models to equip the existing staff with modern managerial tools.

"The training will be done through workshops, orientation programmes, diploma courses and training programmes abroad. From vice-chancellor to librarian, there will be capacity-building training programmes for everyone. But instead of handling it through a national-level body, the objective will be achieved by using existing education and training institutions both within the university and outside in a decentralised manner. The training providers will be institutes like IIMs, academic staff colleges etc," said a senior UGC official.

The major gaps identified by the UGC in the existing set up are lack of awareness of basic planning concepts, inability to convert plan into action, prioritisation etc. Five groups will be formed for the training purpose. If vice-chancellors and pro-vice-chancellors will be in one group, the other one will comprise deans and registrars. The training will focus on the leadership development, use of information technology, strategic thinking, team and conflict management, identifying right human resources, communication skills etc.

"It's a good initiative but the UGC will have to oversee that the training programmes do not reduce to just a ritual as it has been in the case of refresher courses for teachers," said Moulindu Mishra, president, Lucknow University Associated College Teachers' Association. Director, UGC's Academic Staff College, Nishi Pandey said, "It will prepare good administrators out of teachers. A teacher as an administrator instead of an IAS/PCS is more effective in varsity administration as he is aware of the academic necessities."

The teachers also pointed out that the major administrative concerns in the state universities and colleges is of law and order, followed by free and fair examinations and finance management. "The law and order situation could be gauged from the fact that police had to open an outpost in Lucknow University when rowdiness due to student politics was rampant. It was the administrative capability of former vice-chancellor R P Singh and his team that got rid of the criminals working in the garb of students," said a professor.

The students also welcome the idea as they said that they feel more comfortable in communicating with a teacher on the administrative post instead of any bureaucrat or police official.

Shruti Shukla, a research scholar, said that a fine example of a bureaucratic decision turning disastrous for the academics is the joint entrance examination for the Bachelor of Education (BEd) course in all state universities. "The academic session is midway but admissions are still underway. It shows administrative incapability of teachers managing the affairs," she added.

Source: Lucknow/ Oct 17, 2010/[The Times of India](#)

Maharashtra schools up ante against right to education norms

The Maharashtra School Managements' Association has decided not to follow certain clauses under the Right to Education Act unless amendments are introduced in it.

Representatives of schools from across the state met to discuss the issue last Thursday and Friday. Devi Singh Shekhawat, President Pratibha Patil's husband, heads the association in the state, but was absent from the meeting.

The association will request the Centre to give 100% grants to aided schools and is also demanding autonomous status for some schools.

According to the school managements, the RTE Act has laid down certain unfeasible clauses. "School managements were not consulted. The RTE Act needs teachers from primary schools to spend 45 hours teaching. Most schools have morning and afternoon sessions. It is not possible to have just one session in the day due to shortage of infrastructure," said Avinash Tambe, trustee of Chembur Education Society and also the secretary of the association.

Tambe added, "We will educate stakeholders about the shortcomings and will suggest amendments to the centre."

The managements also oppose setting up the school management committee (SMCs) with 75% members from the parents' community. PM Raut, vice-president of the association, said, "We have invested in the school building, how can an outsider run the school? Parents often politicise issues. We cannot allow our schools to be vandalised."

The association will also demand autonomous status for some schools which are running without any issues. "If the managements run the school successfully, the government need not interfere in their affairs," said Tambe. Other clauses opposed by managements include admission of students in age-appropriate classes.

"How is it possible to admit a 10-year-old in class V, when he has not had completed his elementary education?" asked Tambe.

Source: Sunday, Oct 17, 2010. [DNA INDIA.com](#)

ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

'What does AIIMS aspire to become in the year 2025?'

Over the years, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) has functioned in a complex working environment with multiple and growing demands on its resources. It is called upon to educate top quality health professionals, serve as a hub of biomedical research, provide extensive hospital services and increasingly provide leadership in the area of public health. Despite the enormous challenges, the institute has established itself as the country's pre-eminent medical institution, attracting the best and the brightest young in the country.

In meeting its onerous mandates, the institute has grown considerably – both physically and in terms of what it is doing. But can one say that the growth has been organic or faithful to a central purpose or mission? What does AIIMS aspire to become in the year 2025? What relationship should it have with the government and with its other stakeholders?

As all of you are aware, the Veliathan Committee reflected on some of these issues and produced, I believe, a very good report. I suggested to Health Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad last year that we should have an ambitious and befitting vision of what this great institution should aspire to become and that we should, therefore, work on a far-reaching agenda of reform. I compliment Ghulam Nabi Azad and his colleagues in the Health Ministry for the efforts they have made to improve internal governance and management of the institute.

I understand that a high-powered group is looking into changes in the statute, rules and regulations governing AIIMS that are considered critical for the institute to function effectively in an environment that nurtures innovation, talent and excellence. The government will consider the recommendations expeditiously and do what is in the best interest of the institute. We should aim at nothing less than making AIIMS one of the ten best medical universities in the world by the year 2020. This is not going to be easy. But it can be done.

In recent years, the government has adopted a more inclusive and holistic approach towards providing health security in our country, emphasising therein the importance of improved sanitation, nutrition and clean drinking water. The challenges are particularly acute in our rural areas. We have tried to address the critical lacunae of inadequate public provisioning for critical health services. The Eleventh Five Year Plan envisaged an increase in public expenditure on health to at least two per cent of GDP. This percentage was one per cent of our GDP at the start of the Eleventh Plan and has increased to only 1.1 per cent in 2009-10 according to the Mid-Term Appraisal of the Planning Commission.

There is clearly much more to do and a large effort will be required in the Twelfth Plan period to achieve the goal of taking the total allocation for the health sector to two-three per cent of our GDP. Since most of the expenditure on health is in state Budgets, the state governments will also have to substantially increase their expenditures.

In India and globally as well, there is a growing sense that medical education needs a revamp to adapt it to contemporary needs and realities. The need of the hour is to produce professionals who address health not only from the perspective of the individual patient but as part of a team integrated into the larger health system.

India needs many more health professionals, of different categories, to fill the huge shortfall in the health workforce. Many of our medical colleges are deficient in the learning resources needed to train specialists. High-quality faculty is in short supply. AIIMS, and similar institutions which are leaders in medical education, have to show the way ahead.

Source: (Excerpts from Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's address at the convocation, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, in New Delhi on October 1)

PM backs health ministry on medical education

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh Friday said the health ministry's proposed bill for a separate council to look after medical education in India will be introduced in parliament soon, putting an end to its turf war with the human resource development ministry.

'National Council for Human Resource in Health will be formed soon,' the prime minister said while addressing the 38th Convocation of All India Institute of Medical Sciences in the national capital.

Health Secretary Sujatha Rao said: 'Health education will remain with the health ministry, and the consultations for the bill are on.'

The turf war started when the HRD ministry proposed that the medical education be brought under the ambit of its National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) while the health ministry proposed a separate National Council for Human Resource in Health (NCHRH).

At this the health ministry voiced its concerns, maintaining that medical education needed to remain with it since it is a specialised field.

While the health ministry looked enthused over the prime minister's backing, a deadline for bringing the bill was not given.

'It is as per the president's address to the joint session. The prime minister also announced it on Independence Day. We are now working on the bill and it will be ready soon,' Rao said.

According to sources, the prime minister has been backing a separate council for health education since the

beginning. The issue was first mentioned by Manmohan Singh in his Independence Day speech when he announced separate councils for higher education and health.

Source: New Delhi, Oct 1 (IANS) Sify.com

Sibal says foreign universities upbeat on India

The three centres of excellence - the Centre for Critical, Technical and Advanced Science, the Virginia Bio Informatics Centre and the Virginia Transport and Technical Institute - would be set up with an Indian partner. Experts seem to be taking in the information with a pinch of salt.

But others doubt claims, effectiveness of India campuses BY Nafisa Ali New Delhi A day after his return from the US, Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister Kapil Sibal is satisfied with his relationship-building exercise with foreign universities. He said some US universities have shown keen interest in the innovation universities, or institutions for vocational training, that are to be set up in India. According to the minister, University of California, Berkeley and Columbia University "are excited about our innovation university and are awaiting the passage of the foreign universities bill." Others have also extended academic and financial support. "The Wadhvani Foundation in the west coast of the US is also willing to invest \$20 million in vocational education in the country," Sibal added. But educationists are sceptical. "How can foreign universities help with the curriculum that needs to be India-specific, especially for vocational courses? We have enough resources here.

These sound good but have no practical usefulness," said Tabrez Khan, professor, Jamia Milia Islamia University. In his week-long stay in the US, Sibal visited Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University popularly known as Virginia Tech. Sibal said that it "has decided to open three centres of excellence in Chennai dedicated to carrying out high-end research activities and producing sector-specific talents. The three centres of excellence - the Centre for Critical, Technical and Advanced Science, the Virginia Bio Informatics Centre and the Virginia Transport and Technical Institute - would be set up with an Indian partner. Experts seem to be taking in the information with a pinch of salt.

That is because last year the HRD minister had claimed that education providers like Harvard, Yale and Oxford had shown "keen interest" in setting up campuses in India. However, all three denied any such plans. "The institutes that will come eventually will just be education shops. They will not be the Ivy League (institutions) and that will adversely affect the quality of Indian education. The West is always not right," said Aditya Misra, president, Federation of Central Universities Teachers' Associations. The Foreign Education Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations) Bill, 2010, or the foreign universities bill as it is popularly

referred to, is still pending in Parliament. The bill, which was to be taken up during the monsoon session, would now be debated in the winter session of Parliament. Until some clarity surfaces, such claims by the minister will have to pass the litmus test.

Source: Oct4, 2010, *Tehelka* sourced by HT Media Ltd/Indiainfoline.com

India, China Neck-To-Neck In Race To U.S. Management Schools

Bangalore, India (AHN) - The battle for one-upmanship between South Asian economic giants India and China has entered the arena of higher education, as China recently overtook its neighbor in terms of sending more students to management schools in the United States.

For many years now, Indian students led the number of foreigners enrolling for the Graduate Management Admission Test to U.S. B-schools. However, propelled by fast economic growth, China has overtaken India in the numbers – as many as 80,000 Chinese students applied to U.S. management schools this year against 65,361 Indian students.

Both countries are emerging economies raring to find a foothold on the global stage. While India has, for long, been outperforming China in clinching senior executive positions in leading multinational corporations, the Chinese, known to be hard workers, are doing everything they can to catch up.

From bridging the gap in using English more prominently, overcoming the inability to work with outsiders, being more tolerant of change, the Chinese are making sure that they outperform India soon in the sphere of business.

Experts suggest that “India’s edge in English language and sound management education helps Indians in snatching more senior executive positions than Chinese, but the latter, being fast learners, are expected to catch up soon.”

However, there might be other reasons behind China gaining ground slowly. Indian business schools, such as the Indian Institutes of Management (IIM) and Indian School of Business (ISB), are rising fast as “competitive business schools” globally. As a result, more and more Indian students prefer to take up management studies at home instead of going abroad.

Moreover, unlike overseas business schools, Indian higher education institutions are more difficult to get into, as observed by Infosys co-founder N.R. Narayana Murthy, who recounted in a recent television interview how his son Rohan could not get admission into Indian Institute of Technology and had to opt for Cornell University instead.

Source: October 4, 2010 [All Headline News.com](http://AllHeadlineNews.com)

Ahluwalia urges agricultural universities to strengthen research

Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia today urged agricultural universities in the country to adopt innovative approaches to strengthen agricultural research and education in India.

Speaking at a meeting of Vice-Chancellors of agricultural universities here, Mr Ahluwalia said these institutions could play an important role in this area by providing research-based projects with the help of industry.

Appreciating the role played by the National Agricultural Research System in India, Mr Ahluwalia urged the scientists working in agricultural research institutes to re-orient themselves in the 12th Plan period (2012-17) to help the country face the challenges of food security and climate change.

Referring to the gap in agricultural growth rate and land productivity between China and India, he emphasized the need for more research on these two issues.

“Four per cent agricultural growth will be needed for a growing economy like India. It would require more investment in knowledge management, institutional support and diversification in agriculture. The government is also willing to fund such projects,” he said.

Mr Ahluwalia also suggested a new mechanism to fund research projects instead of funding universities.

Dr. S. Ayyappan, Secretary, Department of Agricultural Research and Education and Director General, Indian Council of Agricultural Research and Education (ICAR), highlighted the role and contribution of the ICAR institutes and agricultural universities in developing new technology and seeds for Indian farmers.

He expressed the hope that some institutes could be converted into the centres of excellence.

“Institutional support, better infrastructure and faculty development can help them to emerge at international level,” he added.

The meeting was convened to discuss the challenges before agricultural research and education.

Source: October 4, 2010/ Netindian.in/news

Don’t think India can afford not to study the liberal arts’

Anand Mahindra, vice-chairman and MD of Mahindra and Mahindra, has offered his alma mater, Harvard University, a \$10- million endowment for its humanities centre. Mahindra, who graduated from the university with a degree in visual and environmental studies in 1977 and later from the Harvard Business School, told HT that in India, too, the focus of his philanthropy will to bolster the study of liberal arts.

**Why did you decide on this endowment for Harvard?
And why now?**

I have always been looking for a way to give back to the university. When I went as an undergraduate, I was not permitted any foreign exchange by the RBI so Harvard gave me a full scholarship. I have never forgotten that. To me, the undergraduate liberal arts degree was perhaps the most important part of my education.

My mother passed away last year, and I was looking for some way to respect her memory. She was the quintessential Renaissance woman. I feel everyone needs a grounding in the humanities.

What does the centre plan to do with the grant?

One way of giving is to be very focused on a specific India-related cause. However, I have intentionally chosen to contribute to a field that is universal, and which all students, regardless of their area of study, will benefit from. I would therefore hope that this gift will help show that India is not just concerned with parochial issues, but can give back, globally.

Why is a liberal arts education important?

The humanities encompass a spectrum of disciplines. What it does is teach you not a particular skill or technology but to think and question. Conflict resolution and creating a better world do not come from an improved piece of software or a better engine or technology but from people who can break free from their rigid points of view.

Can a developing country like India afford to invest in the liberal arts over, say, vocational or job-oriented courses?

I don't think India can afford not to study the liberal arts. My greatest fear is that we will get carried away by India's economic success and focus on those disciplines that have immediate financial returns. That's why I'm glad there are benefactors planning to put up liberal arts universities. That is going to be the focus of my personal giving in India in the future: to bolster the study of liberal arts.

Some might say that instead of this kind of high-profile grant you could contribute to strengthening primary education in India.

The Mahindra family and companies have given far more than this to education in India. I personally funded the Nanhi Kali programme when I came back to India, which has been giving for the underprivileged girl child for years now and has become one of our strongest CSI programmes. We also created United World College in India, and other private schools. So we do give in India.

Second, why do people believe you can't do both?

Nobody asked, why did you buy companies abroad instead of investing only in India? Doesn't it seem terribly parochial to ask that question today? You do both. If India wants to take its place on the global stage a good cause is

a good cause whether it's here or in Cambridge Massachusetts.

Source: October 05, 2010/ <http://www.HindustanTimes.com/>

Exiting the stimulus - strategy for India: M Govinda Rao

Indian policy makers will have to evolve an exit strategy that maintains high growth with price stability

It is very well admitted that the economic crisis witnessed in the aftermath of the Lehman episode is the worst since the Great Depression of 1929. Since 2007, global output has contracted by 0.6 per cent and the decline in advanced economies has been as much as 3.2 per cent. Though the world economy has moved into a positive growth territory, thanks to large stimulus packages, fears of a double-dip recession remain. Though some countries, particularly the emerging market economies, have shown a faster revival, market sentiment in most advanced economies continues to be pessimistic.

There were considerable variations in the size as well as the composition of stimulus packages depending upon the intensity of the crisis, prevailing economic environment and the scope available for providing the stimulus. The average stimulus provided by the G20 countries in 2009 alone was \$692 billion or 1.4 per cent of their gross domestic product (GDP). Just three countries, the US (39 per cent), China (13 per cent) and Japan (10 per cent), contributed two-thirds of the stimulus provided by G20 countries. In general, one-third of the stimulus measures have been in tax cuts and two-thirds in expenditure increases.

The consequence of these large stimulus packages has been to sharply increase their deficits and debt. The gross debt-to-GDP ratio of the G20 economies increased from 61.3 per cent in 2007 to 76.8 per cent in 2010. In the advanced countries, the increase was from 77.9 per cent to 104.4 per cent and in the emerging economies, it was from 32.3 per cent to 37 per cent. The average primary deficit in the advanced G20 countries in 2010 is estimated at 7 per cent of GDP and in the emerging market economies, 1.8 per cent. It is close to or more than 10 per cent in the US, the UK, Spain and Japan. These have brought to the fore the fiscal sustainability question.

Surely, most economies have shown definite signs of a turnaround and with growing concern about fiscal sustainability, governments and central banks need to work out strategies to unwind the stimulus. However, a simultaneous withdrawal of the stimulus, particularly by the advanced countries, could cause a double-dip recession and, therefore, the withdrawal has to be calibrated carefully. The countries where the revival has been faster, those with high debt-to-GDP ratios, and those with a looming threat of inflation, should initiate the process faster than the countries that are still vulnerable with private sector revival yet to take firm roots.

A coordinated stimulus withdrawal requires both internal and international rebalancing. Internal rebalancing is

necessary to ensure that the withdrawal does not result in a decline in the overall demand. It is also necessary to adopt a strategy that employs a combination of tax increases and spending cuts. Credible commitment to cut expenditures is important. International rebalancing is even more daunting, for even as the developed countries start initiating their exit, others will have to fill the space and offsetting demand decline from advanced countries is most difficult. Prospects of persuading countries like China to increase their consumption to offset the US demand shortfall, for example, do not look very bright. Furthermore, increased external imbalance has persuaded many developed countries to resort to protectionist policy in one form or another, and China continues with a "mercantilist"-type exchange rate policy.

Among the emerging market economies, India is the right candidate for initiating the exit from expansionary fiscal and accommodating monetary policies. The Indian economy has revived to record an estimated 7.4 per cent growth in 2009-10 and in the current financial year, it is estimated at 8.5 per cent. Interestingly, India embarked on fiscal expansion much before the global financial crisis and this has helped the economy land softly during the crisis. The plan for large increases in public expenditures for pay revision, loan waiver and food and fertiliser subsidies was put forth in February 2008, much before the Lehman episode unfolded in September 2008. Besides, large election-related spending also resulted in a stimulus.

Exiting from the stimulus to phase out large volume of deficits and debt is, however, painful and Indian policy makers will have to evolve an exit strategy that maintains high growth with price stability. India's consolidated fiscal deficit in 2010-11 is estimated at about 8 per cent which, although lower than the 10.2 per cent recorded in the previous year, is much larger than any other emerging market economy. India's debt-to-GDP ratio is also very high at about 80 per cent and though an overwhelming proportion of this is internal, it is a cause for worry. Also, expanding expenditures on education from the present level of 3.2 per cent of GDP to 6 per cent and healthcare spend from the present level of 1.4 per cent to 3 per cent in the medium term as indicated in the National Common Minimum Programme in addition to meeting large commitments on food security will make the task of fiscal consolidation really daunting.

The exit strategy will have to take into account these ground realities and will have to proceed on the lines indicated by the fiscal consolidation path laid down by the Finance Commission. This would require that the debt-to-GDP ratio is brought down to 68 per cent by 2014-15 and fiscal deficit is compressed to about 5 per cent. This implies that it is necessary to phase out/target subsidies on the lines indicated in the Economic Survey. On the tax side, the implementation of Direct Taxes Code (DTC) may not bring in large gains in the short term and it appears both DTC and Goods and Services Tax (GST) will be implemented only from April 2012. Nevertheless, the

success of the exit strategy crucially hinges on a significant increase in the buoyancy in tax revenues. It was the successful application of the Tax Information Network that helped augment tax ratio by almost 3 percentage points since 2003-04, and the success of GST implementation will crucially depend on the adoption of technology in ensuring accurate and swift credit, clearance of inter-state transactions and refunds (zero-rating of exports). Hopefully, both the Centre and states will ensure this.

The author is director, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy. The views are personal. mgr@nipfp.org.in

Source: October 05, 2010/ Business-Standard.com

Anupam Kher's new role as Pratham goodwill Ambassador

Anupam Kher whose career spans nearly 400 films and over 100 plays, has been appointed the goodwill ambassador of the Pratham Education Foundation, which strives to improve children's education in India.

The actor claims that the new role is tailor-made for him as he has always been drawn to the cause of children's education, which was what led him to found his own School of Life Programme.

Kher, who has been travelling across the United States for the past few weeks and has already visited New Jersey, Dallas, Houston, Chicago, Raleigh, North Carolina, Charleston, South Carolina, Boston, Washington DC and New York, said, "I am certain a lot of synergy will be unleashed in being appointed goodwill ambassador for Pratham and in leveraging my media image. By becoming Pratham's public face, I hope to augment in its fund-raising, capacity enhancement and other initiatives dedicated to the cause of children's education."

Madhav Chavan, CEO of the Pratham Education Foundation, in announcing Kher's appointment, said, "While Anupam's accomplishments as an actor are well known, it is his determination to use his eminence to help India's children go to school and learn well, that has led to his appointment as the Pratham Goodwill Ambassador. I hope he can help spotlight the key issues concerning education and help Pratham achieve its mission of 'every child in school and learning well.'"

He added that Kher would also be hosting Pratham's informative television programme called *Angrezi OK Please*.

Kher took over Pratham's envoy from Waheeda Rahman, who was Pratham's Goodwill Ambassador for two years. And it was she who persuaded him to take over 'this labour of love' from her.

"I have been working with children for the last 15 years and have even been a teacher for mentally challenged children in special schools. I had attended some fund-raising events for Pratham too when Waheedaji was the brand

ambassador," Kher said. "I think when they asked Waheedaji who should take over she had suggested my name because she was familiar with my work with children and had interacted with me in this work and knew my passion for it."

Kher said that *Angrezi OK Please* was a TV series to "teach slum children, or the poor and unprivileged children a basic knowledge of speaking in English. It's got a game show kind of format and it's a very interesting concept, where kids learn to speak basic English while playing a game. We feature children along with their parents -- who are basically working class parents."

The show, Kher says, is ready to go on air. Thirteen episodes have been shot, and it's waiting for a channel to pick it up and telecast it weekly.

"There a lot of people -- and I don't hold anything against them -- who are brand ambassadors of expensive watches, cars, suitings, and get millions of rupees for doing that, which is very fine and okay with me," Kher said. "But I believe it's a great service if I am a brand ambassador where I won't get paid anything but at least through me, I get to help in the education of children. For me, it's the greatest reward I can ask for because in some small way, I am making a difference in the lives of these children, and in the process making a difference in my life."

He said his work for Pratham is not for any fixed period of time, but open-ended, as long as they need him. "They have not told me any terms and neither do I worry about that. I will continue to work with them even if I am not the ambassador and I'll also be working to develop my own foundation. But as long as we are doing the similar kind of work that is going to benefit children, whether you are an ambassador or not doesn't make a difference," he says.

Kher hopes to visit the US regularly on behalf of Pratham on fund-raising tours.

Describing what he has been doing thus far in his role as goodwill ambassador, he said, "Basically it's interacting with people because since my association is cinema, they recognise me. So my face helps in bringing awareness. It's a face, which sort of people listen to and because I speak with compassion and speak what I believe in, it becomes easier for me to change the mind-set of people and encourage those who are already involved to do even more.

"I am not like a serious person who has come to make serious speeches and lecture them about the abject poverty of India or how India is illiterate and things like that," he added. "Sometimes people feel uncomfortable if you lecture them. They want to give but with joy, and without feeling guilty. They want to give with a sense of spontaneity and I believe I bring that in them.

"So I motivate them because I am a motivational speaker. I've been speaking at the Kellogg School of Business on

this trip, the Illinois Institute of Management, University of Maryland, Cambridge in England and at the IIT's in India," he added.

"While speaking on a motivational level, I bring Pratham in and why it is important that they help in alleviating the lot of these underprivileged children and why contributing to the cause is important. Unlike the branding of watches or whatever for commercial purposes like some people do, here I am dealing with emotions and not products. Everybody has those emotions, I just need to tap them."

Kher said he would also travel across India on behalf of Pratham and work in concert with his own foundation, "But right now I don't want to eat into the money that we will raise for Pratham. I will have plenty of time for my organisation since it's only two years old."

He added that he had a two-acre plot of land in Karjat, near Mumbai, which he had bought several years ago to build himself a weekend retreat. But he had never gotten around to building it. "Now I will use that land to build a home for the homeless children," he said.

Pratham was founded in the slums of Mumbai in 1994, with UNICEF support. Today, Pratham's urban programmes, including pre-schools, community libraries and remedial learning programmes reach hundreds of thousands of children every year.

In 2007, with the support of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Pratham launched the Read India campaign -- an innovative, low-cost effort to reach more than 100 million children who cannot read, write or do basic mathematics. With the continued support of the Hewlett Foundation in 2010, the Read India campaign has now entered its second phase, focusing its attention at the village level and teaching more advanced learning skills.

Pratham's Annual Status of Education Report evaluates India's status of education through direct testing of over 700,000 children in 16,000 villages across India. ASER is the only annual measurement of basic literacy and numeracy conducted at scale in India today and its widespread dissemination has helped focus government attention on the issue of learning. To support newly literate children across India, Pratham books has developed and published over 130 titles and printed over three million children's books in local Indian languages.

Over the years, Pratham's programmes -- which operate with an annual budget of less than \$15 million -- have been recognised internationally for their innovation and impact. Recently, Pratham won the CNN-IBN Indian of the Year Award in the public service category and the Henry R Kravis Leadership Prize. Pratham USA, has a four-star rating -- the highest possible, from Charity Navigator.

Source: October 06, 2010 <http://movies.rediff.com>

Incredible India, Indeed!

While coming to office today morning, I got a glimpse of where our country is heading. It is heading nowhere or at best to a disaster. While waiting at a busy traffic intersection for the lights to turn green, I felt a tap on my left window. A kid not more than seven years old was seen waving the morning newspaper at me with a hope in his eyes that I would buy a copy from him. When other kids like him would be preparing for their schools, this lad is running around a busy traffic intersection to earn his living. I got this jerk – it is not only the kid who is in some physical danger amidst the chaotic traffic but also our future and our boasting images of India Rising or world's second fastest growing economy and nonsense like those are in some serious danger. Now someone shouldn't turn up and tell me that world's second fastest growing economy can't ensure basic education to its next generation. Shameful is an understatement.

Where are all those NGOs who siphon a lot of money in the name of fighting for a social cause? Where were those *Babus* and *Mantris* who were talking big when Right-to-education bill was passed? I always had a feeling that our government (of anytime) is best at lip service only and more I see these kind of display of our achievements even after 60 years of independence, I feel vindicated. On granular level – it is not only about small kids or providing basic education. In every field we have made a habit of not giving individuals their due or worse we go through the recipient's economical stature before doing justice to their unspoken demands. All were charged up, including few HRD ministry sleuths and state education board when students of a certain posh *Dehradoon* school complained of getting stale soup for last three days. But I am sure, the same chaps would turn blind when they will see a small kid begging on the streets. Come-on. When there are kids selling news paper on streets, doing *Phatka* on car wind screens (forget any education) so that they can live another day, HRD ministry shouldn't be too bothered about some stale soups supplied to kids getting down from *Mercedes-Benz* back doors. Why this selective amnesia? Is it because the kids at the *Dehradoon* School have their fathers posted at high position or an industrialist coughing out considerable amount to support *Mantriji's* election expense? Or are the kids at *Dehradoon* school are different or superior than the kid I saw selling news paper today morning? Or the kids of millionaires are the only set of kids left in this country who will build our nation tomorrow?

The more I question myself, the closer I get to an answer. It has got nothing to do with who is suffering or are we doing justice to our responsibilities. It is all about the weight of the wallet. You will only be heard and pampered if you carry a thick wallet or else get to the side and keep your mouth shut or find a way yourself. This precise attitude is what driving millions of our kids rather being in school seen selling News papers on streets or begging. Is this the Raising India we are boasting about?

The other day my friend sent across few pictures of the CWG opening ceremony. What struck me are few of those pictures which were depicting our hypocrisy. While rascals like *Kalmadi* and *Bhanot* were cordially allowed and welcomed by smiling females, poor chaps were seen getting pushed out by policemen. Let me assure you - the pictures were disconcerting. The guys who slogged for years to build the stadia were pushed out inhumanly while clowns who made sure that dirt and shit is thrown at our face are welcomed with garlands. Yes I am talking about those thousands of nameless and faceless daily wage laborers who slogged without any reward or recognition. I am talking about the same chaps who stayed for months in snake infected Yamuna bank to make sure that the athletes get a fabulous place to hang around. If anyone who deserves a front row during opening ceremony are these foot soldiers that sweat day-in and day-out so that we can cheer with full throat. But irony – we don't recognize the true contributors but appease all the scoundrels. If it is not money which drives our response, then I don't know what it is.

I hope we will change and change for good. I hope we will treat our fellow citizens as humans, irrespective of their wallet size. Hope we will care balls for dialogues – '*Jaanta hai mera baap kaun hai*'. Sorry it's not a question which will fetch me a crore in *Kaun Banega Karod Pati*. Thank you very much. I hope the day will come when we will see all our children going to school than running around traffic junctions to earn a living. Hope we will stop touting and be constructive in our approach all the while respecting the true value of – Equality To All. Amen!!

Source: October 06, 2010/ desicritics.org

Point-Counterpoint: Liberal Arts Education

It was about two years ago, and I was a terrified freshman, along with roughly 1,600 classmates. We had just come to college, and already our professors, our parents and the *New York Times* were telling us that we should not be looking forward to getting a job immediately after graduation.

The students who looked the most scared, I noticed, were the business students. Wearing black suits more appropriate for funerals, they went to job fairs that looked more desolate than Manhattan in *I Am Legend*. Suddenly, their dreams of BMWs and corporate expense accounts had dropped out from under them.

Without criticizing the motives of then-CBA undergrads, the economic climate of the past few years has made me realize how valuable a liberal arts education truly is. When you think about it, every good job requires the same skill set: an ability to read, write and use logic. This is what, at its very core, a liberal arts education is about.

Think about it. Can any college class give you specialized training for a career without limiting you to that same career? Can any job really train you in critical thinking and

communication? No! Each has their place. One who majored in business with a focus in finance could probably be a good accountant or stockbroker. Those are two careers. One who majored in English and graduated with the ability to think and explain is, when you really think about it, infinitely more marketable.

In fact, it is well-known that the average college graduate today can expect to change careers several times in his or her lifetime. Why should one, then, pay hundreds of thousands of dollars to limit oneself to one or two careers?

I hate to toot my own horn, and I probably will end up as a stereotypical broke writer traveling the country in a '98 VW, but I believe in my choice of major, theology. It is a subject that best suits the fact that I, along with probably many 20-year olds, do not really know what I want to do with my life, and would like to be educated in a way that will give me the most potential. This, of course, has led to some strange looks from my relatives and acquaintances, asking me what on earth I plan to do with my major. Their instant assumptions, of course, are entering academia (relatively unlikely) or the priesthood (not entirely out of the question). However, I have heard this question enough times to have a quick response at hand, which goes something like this: "I am a theology major because the subject focuses entirely on comprehending and synthesizing arguments, which is a skill I can use in several careers I am considering."

You do not have to believe me. Take the advice of one of my theology professors who explained the benefits of his subject that should make everyone take notice. His wife, he explains, works for a major software company whose policy is to lay off and then outsource 10 percent of their workforce. People in China, India or a myriad of other countries will work for much less money than those in the Western developed world. He explained that the only reason his wife is able to hold onto her job and good salary is that she has a firm grasp of the English language.

This is the world in to which we will graduate. Major companies that we have dreamt of working for are outsourcing everything from stock trading to research and development. We cannot market ourselves on the basis of the career-specific skills we learned here. Someone overseas solely can present that same resume and ask for a 10th of what we would expect. Something has to set us apart.

Not only does the job market recognize the need for skills beyond whatever one specific career requires. According to a *New York Times* article from January of this year ["Multicultural Critical Theory. At a Business School?"], more and more MBA programs are realizing that these same ideas; thinking critically and synthesizing arguments to solve problems, ought be an essential part of the curriculum. The Stanford MBA program, for example, has a mandatory first-year course called "Critical and Analytical Thinking."

So remember this idea when you are sitting in your Composition and Rhetoric class, your Intro to the New Testament class or your English Literature class. There are reasons that Fordham has mandated them, and we're not alone. The idea comes from the Ancient Greeks and led to the development of several disciplines that took the name "liberal arts;" grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy. Philosophy and theology were subjects encompassed in the first three studies, known as the *Trivium*. Ben Franklin took those ideals in the 18th century and established the Academy and Charitable School of the Province of Pennsylvania. This became a small, unremarkable school called the University of Pennsylvania.

The value of a liberal arts education has been demonstrated over thousands of years. In our fast-paced age, it may seem like it is time to throw it all out and replace it with vocational training in order to prepare this generation for the careers of tomorrow. But some skills never disappear: the ones that Fordham and other liberal arts colleges teach us so well. I am proud to say that the value of my education will not dry up until the benefits of good communication and problem solving do.

Source: October 6, 2010/ [The ram on line.com](#)

Look East Policy — millennia apart

File photo of a Nalanda Mentor Group meeting in New Delhi. The East Asia Summit in Hanoi offers a chance to consider ideas for enabling a modern-day land link between the Indo-China region and India, with the proposed Nalanda University as a backdrop, for intensified people-to-people contact.

It is time to take our Look East Policy to a new level. The continuous meeting and intermingling of people from diverse social backgrounds will help in crafting a liberal and cosmopolitan attitude to life.

The year 2010 marks the 1000th anniversary of the founding of Hanoi as a capital by Emperor Ly Thai To, whose statue adorns the centre of the city. The year and the attendant celebrations would be a proud recollection for the people of Vietnam, and Hanoi in particular. At the end of this month, Hanoi will host a summit of the Association of Southeast Asia Nations and the East Asia Summit. India will participate in both meetings.

We have come a long way since the first India-ASEAN summit held in 2002 in Phnom Penh. We are now on course to host the 10th such summit in 2012, presumably in New Delhi. In this backdrop, we can assess what can be done in the overall context of our Look East policy in general, keeping the Nalanda University project as a focus.

In January 2007, at the Cebu meeting of the EAS, the member-states reached an understanding on strengthening regional educational cooperation. As part of this, they welcomed the initiative for the revival of Nalanda University. This was the culmination of an idea conceived by the Bihar

government and given shape later by Singapore. In March 2006, President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam addressed the joint session of the Bihar Assembly and exhorted it to revive the ancient seat of learning in Nalanda where science, philosophy, spirituality and social sciences could be blended. The Bihar government introduced a Bill in the Assembly in 2007 and cleared it to establish this great university. The Nalanda project became the face of an emerging Bihar.

In the middle of 2006, a proposal was received from the Singapore government called "The Nalanda Proposal." According to this, Nalanda would be the ideal site for establishing a 21st century learning institution linking South and East Asia. The idea envisaged simultaneous upgrading of the infrastructure to promote tourism, and establishing a university at Nalanda to offer higher education facilities, thereby enabling all-inclusive economic development of the entire region.

In order to carry forward the proposals, a Nalanda Mentor Group (NMG), under the chairmanship of Professor Amartya Sen, was established by the Government of India in 2007. The group examined the framework of international cooperation and the structure of partnership, which would govern the establishment of the university. It also made proposals for the revival of Nalanda and the governance structure of the university, and other aspects covering finance, areas of study, etc. The NMG's recommendations were to be endorsed by the EAS leaders through a declaration to take the process forward. However, owing to unforeseen developments in Thailand in 2008 and early 2009, the fourth EAS was delayed. At the last EAS, held in Hua Hin in Thailand in October 2009, the leaders endorsed and extended their support for the establishment of Nalanda University.

The NMG completed its work in the first half of this year. In the recent monsoon session, Parliament passed the Nalanda University Bill, thereby making available a legal basis for going ahead with the implementation of the project. Thus the forthcoming fifth EAS is uniquely important for India. It would give us an opportunity to share the approach to be adopted for the construction of the university. It would also give us an occasion to maintain and intensify interest in the project among the participating countries. Given that civil construction projects in India have an inertial impetus of their own, it is necessary for us to keep the idea alive. It is important that facilities and opportunities be provided to the academic community, including students in EAS countries, to keep itself aware of what is happening on the Nalanda front.

The Hanoi EAS offers us a chance to consider ideas for enabling a modern-day land link between the Indo-China region and India, with the proposed university as a backdrop, for intensified people-to-people contact. Initially, we could focus on each of the five countries in the Indo-China region that abuts India — , Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and Myanmar — which also have a

strong Buddhist tradition. This land link could be projected as a means of access and exposure for students, academics, pilgrims and tourists as a special feature of our relations with Southeast Asia in general and the countries mentioned above in particular.

To buttress or land links with the ASEAN region and beyond, we could consider introducing a monthly bus service for about 100 pilgrims who, for reasons of economy, health, etc., may prefer, or be induced, to undertake surface travel. We can utilise the recently opened Asian Highway (AH16) from Da Nang in central Vietnam to Mae Sot on the Thailand-Myanmar border.

After traversing Yangon and Mandalay, and collecting pilgrims in Myanmar, the bus could enter India and come to Gaya. They could visit Nalanda, Rajgir and Sarnath and other places of Buddhist studies in Ladakh, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. If Bangladesh is convinced to allow passage for these visitors, they can reach Kolkata much faster before going on a pilgrimage and to academic centres across India. It may not be too difficult for India to convince Myanmar authorities to join the initiative. After all, General Than Shwe himself visited Gaya and its environs recently. The ordinary pilgrim's travel would be a very symbolic representation of people-to-people cooperation.

India could even consider donating some modern, long haul buses and have the flagging off of a bus convoy in Hue, cultural capital of Vietnam, so that it can reach Gaya or Nalanda after collecting academics and pilgrims *en route*. It could be scheduled to arrive in the week of the India-ASEAN Summit in 2012.

With Nalanda University acting as a beacon, regular visits by academics, pilgrims, students and tourists would compel us to focus not only on sticking to a schedule but also maintaining interest in all sides in the revival of the university project. The suggested land link will give it a historic and spiritual character.

One thousand years ago when Hanoi was being established, the Chola dynasty in peninsular India reached its pinnacle. One of its most powerful symbols, the Brihadeeshwara Temple in Thanjavur, also observed its 1000th anniversary this year. The Chola dynasty is the principal among those that consolidated and benefited by the original and proactive Look East Policy. The Cholas established strong maritime and commercial connections with countries and kingdoms to the southeast and east of India. Nagapattinam was the port from where all trade and other links were serviced with the kingdoms all the way up to, and including, China. As Professor K.A. Nilakanta Sastri states in his work, *The Cholas*: "At no time had Indian merchants ever ceased to frequent the shores of the Malay Peninsula and the islands of the archipelago, even Indochina and China ... Towards the ninth century A.D. the countries of Southern Asia had developed an extensive maritime and commercial activity, and attained a prosperity unequalled in history."

It is perhaps time to take our Look East Policy to a new dimension. The continuous meeting and intermingling of people from diverse social backgrounds helps in crafting a liberal and cosmopolitan attitude to life. An overland connection to Nalanda, just as Nagapattinam thrived on an aqueous connection, could be the first step in our journey of the next thousand years. India is ideally placed to spur a movement catalysed by spirituality, to reach an ancient destination in the new millennium — a place that set ancient India apart as a pioneer in higher education.

(The writer is a former Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs. He was India's Ambassador to Vietnam between 2004 and 2006.)

Source: October 7, 2010 [The Hindu](#)

India needs focus on basic schooling

Sir, Regarding India's education conundrum, Amy Kazmin ("[Labour to unlock](#)", Analysis, October 5) presents a good analysis of a complex problem in one broadsheet page. However, like many other analyses, the article focuses too much on post-secondary education while skimming the surface of the main problem: lack of government commitment to creating a uniform curriculum at the primary and secondary stages of schooling, creating enough capacity and making it available at low or no cost across schools, while dealing with India's complex federated structure of governance.

The absence of robust primary and secondary schooling makes the competition at Indian Institutes of Technology and Indian Institutes of Management entrance and the cost of coaching a nice story, but it is not much use in furthering the debate or seeking workable solutions. In the absence of such basic schooling, the pipeline of trainable persons is poor in both quality and quantity, leaving both skills training institutions and employers high and dry. City and Guilds of the UK has long had an active presence in India and its experience will confirm this.

The other missing strand in the story is the increased corporatisation of education in India. Big corporate houses, perhaps long fed up with the pipeline's poor quality and facing the war for talent, are creating schools and training infrastructure for their future and current employees. It helps solve the problem a bit but leaves the government yet again unaccountable for its failures.

Education, skills and training is a key area of co-operation agreed between UK prime minister David Cameron and Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh in the former's recent visit to India. As we in the UK struggle with our own "K-12" education challenges, academies, free schools and tele-tuition in maths in north London from Ludhiana, perhaps it is an opportunity for education strategists in both countries to collaborate to solve each country's peculiar problems.

Source: October 7 2010 [The Financial Times Limited 2010](#)

Release the Stranglehold

Higher education in India has, by and large, come to be governed by political compulsions. Instead of building capacity, the focus has been on who gets a bigger piece of the pie. This in turn has stunted the growth and development of our institutes, as reflected in their poor standing in global rankings. Universities are over-regulated, preventing out-of-the-box thinking in curriculum and functioning. In that context the move by the HRD ministry to allow IIMs the freedom to set up branches anywhere in the world, pay salaries that are globally competitive and have a significant degree of autonomy in their functioning needs to be welcomed.

There is a massive dearth of quality higher education institutions in the country. This has contributed to years of brain drain. Even institutes of excellence such as the IITs and the IIMs have had to adhere to strict government norms. It is because Indian universities are kept on such a tight leash that they are unable to compete with the best in the world. There is a case here to go beyond our socialist approach to higher education and initiate market-oriented reforms. By deregulating and giving universities the freedom to chart their own course, we would not only be creating a competitive platform that would force them to become more efficient but also provide greater incentives for investment. This in turn will help channel funds towards creating world-class research facilities, a key ingredient of quality educational institutions.

At present, the government plans to select 'navratna universities' which would then be accorded the benefits of financial aid and academic autonomy. Rahul Gandhi has called for freeing up the IITs as well, a move that in his view could make them competitive with the Harvards and Oxfords. That could well be the case, but shouldn't other Indian institutions be allowed to be competitive with the IITs as well? And wouldn't that be the best antidote to the brutal competition for an IIT seat, leading to most applicants being rejected? Pre-selecting universities for special treatment would not only be unequal to the wider reforms that are desperately needed, they would be unfair to those on whom such benefits aren't conferred.

However, autonomy should not mean throwing accountability to the wind. Institutes must be made to adhere to the highest standards of transparency, to ensure that they don't mislead students. The aim should be to strike the right balance so that universities have the flexibility to chart their own course while responding to student demand. Only then can we have Indian Harvards and Oxfords

Source: [Oct 15, 2010/ The Times of India](#)

There is an 'education arms race' on from India to China – Obama

Washington: US President Barack Obama has warned that cutting America's education budget would amount to

"unilateral disarmament" in an "education arms race" from India and China to Germany to lead the global economy.

"Nothing would be more shortsighted," Obama said at the White House on Wednesday noting "the nation that educates its children the best will be the nation that leads the global economy in the 21st century."

"There's an educational arms race taking place around the world right now -- from China to Germany, to India to South Korea. Cutting back on education would amount to unilateral disarmament," he said. "We can't afford to do that."

Obama said he was asking the Congress to make the "American Opportunity [Tax Credit](#)", a college tuition tax credit worth up to \$2,500 a year, permanent for four years of college " because we've got to make sure that in good times or bad, our families can invest in their children's future and in the future of our country."

But the opposition Republican proposal to cut back on education by 20 percent would mean "reducing [financial aid](#) for eight million students and leaving our community colleges without the resources they need to prepare our students for the jobs of the future."

"It's not just about preparing our kids for the jobs of the future," he said. "It's about building a brighter future ... where the American Dream is a living reality. By opening the doors of college to anyone who wants to go, that's a future we can help build together."

In another address on "Moving America Forward" at George Washington University here Tuesday, Obama said, "The single most important determinant of how we do economically is going to be the skills of our workforce. "

"We used to be at the top of the heap when it came to math and science education. We're now 21st and 25th respectively in science and math. We used to be number one in the proportion of college graduates in the world. We're now ranked around ninth."

"Other countries are making huge investments," Obama said citing China, which "is doubling, tripling, quadrupling the number of college graduates it's generating" because it understands "that to start moving up the value chain in the economy, they've got to start producing more engineers and scientists."

"India understands that. Germany has long understood that. And yet here we are, losing that first-place position. That is unacceptable." Obama said.

Source: Washington/ IANS/ October 15, 2010/ [India Edu. News.news](#)

Advantages of Indian model

When does a small town grow up and become a big boy?

Does size matter? Geography is a peculiar addiction. Fat makes you large, possibly very large, but it does not make

you strong. Some nations have a quarter of their population herded in slums extending in myriad directions because they have not created the capacity to build more cities. America's strength does not lie in New York and Washington but in the fact that Microsoft can be born in Seattle and the world's software industry is controlled from a desert in California. India was weak as long as its strength lay in the traditional four great cities: Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai. These urban sprawls became sores instead of cities as the poor flocked toward them, driven by unrealistic hopes. It is only logical that all four were British cities. Chennai was seeded by an English adventurer who wanted to live within riding distance of his local girl friend; Mumbai harbor came as part of the dowry of Charles II and was then rented by the British monarch to the East India Company. Job Charnock founded Kolkata on a marsh because better points to the north along the Hooghly River were taken by European merchants who had arrived earlier. You might think of Delhi as a Mogul city, and so it was; but every bit of Delhi was razed to the ground by a vengeful East India Company after the uprising of 1857, and modern Delhi is a British invention with only a whiff of its glorious history. The great capitals of Indian India, Lucknow or Mysore or Patna or Jaipur, stagnated or decayed during the British Raj.

Modern India is rebuilding itself along its old centers of economic and political power, even as it lifts unknown one-street inhabitations into industrial hubs that are, to use a well-known phrase, the marvel of our age. Jamshedji Tata provided the template with Jamshedpur; Jawaharlal Nehru used state resources to create more steel cities. It was Dhirubhai Ambani who took the imaginative leap forward into the private sector ecopolis - the economic conglomerate around which Indians could create a new future. Imperceptibly, but indelibly, the map of India is now crowded with dozens of germinal points that make great labor migrations unnecessary. The future is in cities like Kochi or Aurangabad or Barmer: In less than a decade Barmer will rival Jaipur, and within the foreseeable future become the second or third heart of Rajasthan.

It is this India which is crashing through the glass ceilings of our social and economic history. It has turned Marxism on its head; instead of seizing from the rich in order to give to the poor, it is churning out its own cream. It is driven by a passion to improve the individual self, but knows that this is impossible without changing the collective well-being. It is not socialist, and indeed might be suffering from generosity-deficit when it comes to those at the lowest levels of our tragically tiered social order. But it is social-democratic, in an European rather than American fashion, willing to tolerate positive discrimination even if it grumbles relentlessly while doing so. The grumble is human; but tolerance comes from the fact that it has itself benefited from reservation policies.

It is this Indian who has swarmed across the medal podiums of the Commonwealth Games. Sport is a significant route to recognition as well as economic

upsurge. The story of the farmer who could not enter the stadium to watch his wrestler son win a medal because of his unfamiliarity with the big city and its projects, and the contempt which police have for the poor, is both saddening and luminous. That unfortunate father will get over his hurt; pride in the son's glory has changed his life already. These athletes, including the many who did not win medals but learned to compete, were not manufactured in some state factory machine, as in China; they are champions of free will, as well as champions through free will. China's achievements will be vulnerable to the contradictions inevitable within a state-dominated matrix; the idealism of Marx and Lenin could not prevent such contradictions from eroding its successes. Individualism makes Indian achievement more chaotic, but it is also the bedrock strength that will carry it further. China irons its dangerous creases once every 50 years; we do so as we go along, perhaps leaving the collar ruffled as we get the rest of the shirt right. The possibility of turmoil is far less in the second model. This is not to make a value judgment; one merely records an ongoing reality. Chroniclers do not always know how the chronicle will end, but we still have to do our reporting.

China makes the Chinese. Indians make India. Give me the second option any day.

Source: M.J. AKBAR/Oct 16, 2010/[ARAB NEWS](#)

Inclusive education key to progress: Anand

PATNA: Mathematician Anand Kumar of Super-30' was in Abu Dhabi on Thursday and Friday at the invitation of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) and the Abu Dhabi India School to deliver separate lectures about the education system, how underprivileged children are able to make it to the top institutions of the country and his own Super-30'.

The ICAI had earlier invited eminent personalities like former President APJ Abdul Kalam and former diplomat Mani Shankar Aiyar.

Speaking at the ICAI, Anand said inclusive education was the key to progress. In India, education has caught the fancy of even the poorest sections of the society. This trend is making a big difference. "People have learnt to appreciate the importance of education and are ready to sacrifice even their land and cattle, their main source of income for the poor for their wards studies," he added.

Citing examples of some Super-30' students, for whom cracking the IIT-JEE brought about a new social awakening; he said such success stories have inspired thousands of others in the remotest corners of Bihar. "The journey has just begun. There is a long way to go," Anand added. Indian singer Sunidhi Chauhan was also present on the occasion.

Recounting how he had set up Super-30', Anand said: "I set up the Ramanujam School of Mathematics way back in 1992 and gradually started giving coaching to students at

a nominal fee. Having experienced the pangs of poverty, I always wanted to do something for poor students, who came to my coaching. This resulted in Super-30' in 2002."

He also addressed students and teachers at the Indian School, which was followed by an interactive session, wherein Anand answered several questions about mathematics and key to success. It is not without a reason that US President Barack Obama is also talking about the Indian education system, he added.

Source: Oct 16, 2010/ [Times of India](#)

IIMs should evolve like corporate entities: panel

Proposals include restructuring IIM boards and offering incentives to corporate houses in lieu of funds

The elite Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) should function like corporate entities and improve their academic standards to stand up to the competition from foreign business schools that are expected to open branches in India, says a government panel.

The committee, headed by Maruti Suzuki India Ltd chairman R.C. Bhargava, submitted its report last week to the human resource development (HRD) ministry, proposing changes to how IIMs are managed and financed.

The government plans to bring in a law allowing foreign universities to set up branches and issue their own degrees in India. Currently, they have to work with Indian partners and issue Indian degrees. Several varsities, particularly in the US, have expressed interest in establishing Indian campuses.

Last week, the HRD ministry had accepted the proposals of another committee, which had suggested that IIMs be given more financial autonomy and be allowed to seek funds from alumni settled around the globe. It had also allowed IIMs to set up branches in India and abroad.

The Bhargava committee included directors of IIMs at Kolkata, Bangalore and Kozhikode.

"Private investment in management schools is growing rapidly, and the ministry of HRD is keen on attracting foreign direct investment in education, which could include joint ventures. This will pose new challenges to the IIMs," says its report, reviewed by *Mint*.

The proposals include hiring directors with experience of working abroad, altering their designation and profile, restructuring the boards of governors and offering incentives to corporate houses in lieu of funds.

"The director should be the chief executive officer of the IIM and carry out all the functions entrusted to him by the board (of governors)," says the report.

This would entail giving more administrative and financial powers to the directors. They should be people with the experience of working in different parts of the world, so that the institute can benefit from their global exposure.

"It is recommended that his designation be changed to president-cum-dean. Not only would this be in line with the designations prevailing in leading business schools, but would enable the organizational structure to have vice-presidents and vice-deans," says the report.

These, it adds, would be better accepted than vice-directors or deputy directors.

All the boards of governors should be dissolved and reconstituted with 14 members instead of the usual 26; a third of the new members should be IIM alumni. Absence from three consecutive meetings without taking leave should automatically curtail membership, the report says.

A cadre of managers should be developed to take up administrative work.

Every IIM is registered as a society, whose members are nominated by the government. The panel has suggested that payment of a substantial donation should be the criterion for membership. A corporate house, for instance, can become a member for five years by donating Rs.20 crore. "This would be equivalent to a person having an equity stake in the company, except that there would be no dividend payout from IIMs," the report says.

Members can be offered preference in placement dates and discounts in executive education programmes. Buildings, blocks and facilities can also be named after them.

"Autonomy and accountability should go hand in hand," HRD minister Kapil Sibal said last week.

Amitabh Jhingan, partner and national leader of the education practice at the audit and consulting firm Ernst and Young, said some of the recommendations of the Bhargava committee seem progressive. "I think what the committee is trying to do is benefit the students by collecting donation from society members or giving more time to teaching and research," he said. "I think they are trying to find ways where student fees will not increase."

Academician Yash Pal, however, said IIMs should not behave like corporate entities.

"I do agree that (a) lot of consultancy work and executive education takes away the teaching and research time of faculties, which is not good," he said. "But I think IIMs should remain as excellent educational institutes, not corporate or placement agencies. I feel IIMs should get engaged in rural management, agriculture management and even other issues that the country is facing."

Source: Mon, Oct 18 2010/ [Live Mint](#)

Revisit the basic framework of the system

India's higher education system is the third largest in the world, after China and the US. But in spite of the various steps being taken by the government, the country is able to manage a literacy rate of just 65%, which is far below even many of the lesser developed countries. Several

initiatives like the Right to Education Act and government-sponsored education have not been able to provide the desired results. The sluggishness of Indian bureaucracy, widespread corruption and the lack of monitoring by various administrative bodies are some of the reasons that have marred the growth of the education system.

As of 2009, India has 227 government-recognised universities of which 20 are central universities, 109 deemed universities, 11 are open universities and 215 are state universities, under the State Act. According to the department of higher education, government of India, there are 16,885 colleges, 99.54 lakh students and 4.57 lakh teachers in various higher education institutes in the country.

And steps to improve higher education in the country are being taken. The Prime Minister announced the establishment of eight IITs, seven IIMs, five Indian Institutes of Science, Education and Research, and 30 Central Universities in his speech to the nation on the 60th Independence Day.

The coming of foreign universities in the country will further add to the competition and will push Indian universities towards excellence. Defending the proposed entry of foreign universities in India, union human resource development minister Kapil Sibal asserted that they would help create a talent pool for the country. This will also help recognition of Indian university courses in the foreign countries.

Apart from these initiatives, in order to raise the quality of education even in small towns, the central government has to revisit the whole framework of this system. Almost all of us agree that our education system focuses on learning by rote rather than understanding the basic concepts. All the institutions, right from the primary schools to the colleges, should focus more on concepts and practical applications of learning.

Last but not least, most government schools and colleges fail to provide quality education because of poor infrastructure, a problem that can be solved if the government mandates sharing of infrastructure with private educational institutions.

Source: Monday, Oct 18, 2010/[Financial Express](#)

RESOURCE

India: Labour to unlock

Knowledge economy: clamouring to collect application forms for a Delhi university. Competition for education is fierce but employers complain that the workforce lacks the requisite skills

India's remote Rajasthani town of Kota thrives by peddling hope to aspiring young students preparing for the most

crucial exam of their lives: admissions tests for the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology. The state-run colleges' top-ranked engineering degrees are seen as passports to a lifetime's success. Competition is fierce – more than 470,000 candidates vied for just 7,740 places last year. Securing entry to the Indian Institutes of Management is equally tough, with 290,000 aspirants for just 1,700 places in 2008.

In an attempt to beat these daunting odds, about 60,000 teenagers flock each year to Kota, a hub of intensive cramming schools known for boosting chances of acing the tests. The leading centres – which conduct their own highly competitive entrance exams – boast multistorey buildings, student support services and computer labs where students replay DVDs of star lecturers. Smaller operations focus on a handful of charismatic tutors. Private hostels have mushroomed, feeding and sheltering the out-of-town teenagers whose bicycles jam the town's roads.

Expenses for the best schools can exceed \$3,400 a year, for which many poorer families, dreaming of their children's success, take out loans. That compounds the pressure on students such as 16-year-old Manmeet Kumar from impoverished Bihar state, whose railway worker father borrowed \$2,200, equivalent to several months' salary, to meet the cost. "We don't want to be here – we are extremely homesick and overburdened. But it's a sacrifice for our parents."

Kota's booming cram-school economy reflects the biggest challenge confronting India today. It will need to absorb a massive "bulge" – an estimated 240m youths coming to working age in the next 20 years and clamouring for opportunity – in a system not fully geared to accommodate them. Potentially, rising numbers entering the labour market could accelerate economic growth, bringing a much-touted "demographic dividend". But the frustration of their hopes, security experts warn, could fuel social instability.

"When countries have had youth bulges like ours, it's either been a time of great progress or a time of revolution," says Major General G.D. Bakshi of the Vivekananda International Foundation, a New Delhi-based think-tank. "At this moment, we are at a tipping point. It could go any which way."

As economies worldwide – including fast-growing rival China – grapple with the cost of ageing populations, India, with 1.2bn people, [growth of 8.5 per cent a year](#) and a pro-western business elite, is widely expected to be an engine of global growth, both as a market for multinationals and as part of the global supply chain. Its estimated 4m English-speaking software engineers and call-centre workers – as well as talented scientists and investment bankers – create the aura of an emerging knowledge superpower, brimming with untapped talent waiting to be absorbed.

In reality, however, about 50 per cent of the population still lives in rural areas and works in agriculture. Pressures on land are pushing many to seek other opportunities, potentially unlocking a huge manpower reservoir. Many question whether India, with its weak physical infrastructure, restrictive labour laws and stunted manufacturing sector, can create enough work to absorb them.

An even bigger worry is whether most young Indians have, or can be given, the skills required to fill those jobs already available or rapidly being created, both white and blue collar.

YOUTHFUL FUTURES

Aspirations and opportunities shaped by family and geography

Famously competitive exams for senior bureaucratic posts at leading educational institutions, such as the Indian Administrative Services, have helped shape India's image as a place where talent can rise to the top even from a deprived background. Officials and local media delight in celebrating apparent rags-to-riches stories, such as that of billionaire Anil Agarwal, founder of resources group Vedanta – though he actually came from modest business family, albeit from remote Bihar, and attended a respected local private high school. Indeed, for every young Indian who emerges from humble, provincial origins, millions of others have their destiny largely determined by accidents of birth – be it their family's social status, the region they come from or the quality of government schools, which varies widely from state-to-state. Despite the rapid economic growth and greater opportunities of recent years, most young Indians' aspirations – and their ability to realise their dreams for the future – are still largely determined by the powerful forces of the past.

"In the next four or five years, there is a higher probability that India's growth machine will stop because of a lack of skills – because it can't create the skills – rather than because it can't create jobs," says Jahangir Aziz of JPMorgan Chase. "We are already seeing significant wage pressures building, and part of that is because there are serious skills shortages."

Many believe India is poised to cash in on a demographic advantage. As a result of its [one-child policy](#), China's population is peaking and will slowly turn grey. By contrast, India's population – 50 per cent of which is under 24 – is growing, and also growing younger, because of New Delhi's poor record in promoting smaller families. By 2020, the average Indian will be 29; the average Chinese will be 37.

Indian entrants to the labour force will rise in each of the next 16 years. By 2035 the population will reach 1.5bn, with about 65 per cent of working age, making it the world's largest labour market. More working-age adults should translate into a higher savings rate, potentially spurring investment and facilitating growth. Goldman Sachs

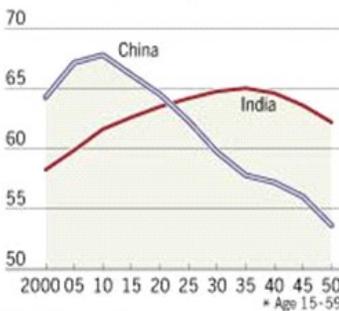
estimates that the rate could rise from 32.5 per cent of gross domestic product now to about 40 per cent by 2016, remaining at that level for more than a decade.

Kaushik Basu, the government's chief economic adviser, says these trends could fuel faster growth and increased

Earning and learning

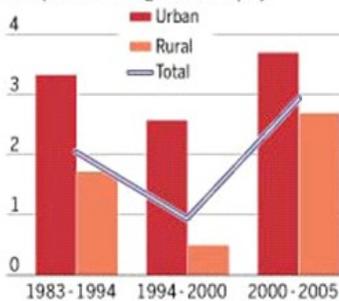
Working-age population*

As % of total (estimates)



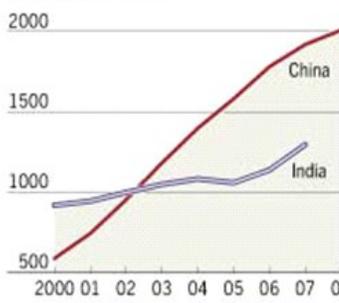
Employment

Compound annual growth rate (%)



Enrolment in higher education

Per 100,000 population



Sources: UN; Ministry of Labour and Employment; Unesco

prosperity just as they did in many east Asian economies and, more recently, during Ireland's transformative 1990s economic boom. "The demographic dividend really creates a potential for India to go up to 10 per cent growth," he says.

But such an outcome is hardly guaranteed, he warns.

"If this is an ill-educated, ill-skilled labour force coming in, it can cause all kinds of political trouble. Potential workers who are not working – there is nothing as dangerous. That is the downside risk." The crux of the labour problem – the poor employability of many young people – is reflected in the paradox of high unemployment coupled with labour shortages.

Despite the ostensibly favourable demographic trends, companies complain of difficulties recruiting and retaining qualified staff, whether civil engineers and software developers or bricklayers, waiters and shop assistants. "We don't have people to build bridges.

We don't have people to build high-quality buildings. We are bringing in architects and engineers from overseas," says Saurav Adhikari of information technology company HCL.

Yet unemployment, especially among the young, remains high. According to the labour ministry, 16 per cent of urban men aged 20 to 24 were unemployed in 2005, the most recent year for which data are available; as were 12 per cent of the same age group in rural areas. Of an estimated 510m Indians in the workforce, just 7 per cent have formal-

sector jobs, of whom two-thirds are civil servants. The rest toil in informal jobs, unprotected by labour laws and often paid less than the minimum wage.

The problem is acute for those from rural areas, where government schools – often staffed by poorly trained, absentee teachers – produce low learning levels and high drop-out rates. But even privileged youths whose families have paid for private education can emerge ill prepared for the modern environment. "Unemployment to a large extent is because people are unemployable in the absence of a significant, urgent dose of skills upgrading," says Mr Aziz.

Close to one in three of those aged 15 to 35 is functionally illiterate, according to the National Sample Survey Organisation's most recent data. States with the fastest-growing young populations tend to be the poorest, with the weakest schools and lowest literacy rates. Even rural youths who achieve basic literacy rarely have any vocational training.

While India boasts a few tiny bastions of world-class excellence in higher education, many of its other institutions churn out degree holders who are barely prepared for work. As a result companies must invest heavily in training, adding to their costs.

Video: Cyberwarfare and the economic toolbox

FT.com launches [Analysis Review](#), a fortnightly debate between a panel of FT experts. This week they discuss cyberwarfare; and the economic tools available to policymakers as interest rates remain near zero

"There seems to be a subterranean government and civil society expectation that: 'you want employees – can't you manufacture them?'" says Manish Sabharwal of TeamLease, the country's largest temporary staffing company. "But shaming corporate India, or threatening them – that 'you need to manufacture your own employees' – is not a lasting solution."

New Delhi is sluggishly awakening to the challenge. The recent Right to Education act guarantees free education from six to 14 and mandates a maximum teacher-pupil ratio of one to 30. Activists hope this will improve state schools, in which there are about 500,000 teaching vacancies, 550,000 staff without training or qualifications and a teacher-pupil ratio, in the case of Bihar, of up to one to 114. However, central government is quibbling with states over who will meet the estimated \$37bn cost of the act over the next five years.

The government is slowly establishing more IITs and IIMs, and considering reform of its tightly controlled higher education sector, including allowing foreign universities to establish campuses as China has done. Companies such as the Indo-Japanese Hero Honda motorcycle company, Tata Motors and Ispat Steel of India are adopting obsolete state-run vocational training centres to modernise and expand, while the government has established a National

Skill Development Corporation, with \$217m to seed private training ventures.

Yet many fret that the pace of change is too slow. McKinsey, the consultancy, estimates that – with 12m students enrolled in higher education – up to 7m more university places are needed to meet economic needs. “This is the one big brake on Indian development,” says Mr Adhikari. “Unless you free education, you are not going to free up the accelerators to Indian growth.”

India is already feeling the impact of restiveness. Agitation to [divide southern Andhra Pradesh state](#), which shut down the IT hub of Hyderabad for a few days this year, is fuelled partly by ill-educated youths who believe such a division would give them better chances of winning civil service jobs. In the north of the country, the powerful Jat caste is threatening protests to demand government posts for the community.

“A government job still occupies a particular place in our imagination,” says Pratap Bhanu Mehta of New Delhi’s Centre for Policy Research. “The distributive conflict in India has not manifested itself starkly in terms of rich versus poor. What has taken a political form is how to distribute this government pie.”

But the anger of youth excluded from the growth story could yet take a harder turn. There is already [a strong Maoist insurgency](#) in the heartland states involving indigenous tribal people threatened with the loss of their land to industry. Authorities say leftwing ideologues are trying to organise in cities.

“You have 300m Indians whose lifestyles are akin to [those] in the US, and 700m who don’t know where their next meal is coming from,” notes Maj Gen Bakshi. “You are already seeing the first incipient clash. What is leftwing extremism? It is the thin edge of the wedge.”

Source: Oct. 4, 2010/ The [Financial Times Limited 2010](#)

Broad-basing broadband

Education and training through the Internet need Commonwealth Games-like crisis management

The central government and the Delhi administration have shown they can engage in sheer execution to save face for the Commonwealth Games. Couldn’t our governments choose to make similar efforts to improve an aspect of infrastructure that is perhaps the most powerful means for enhancing our productive capacity and quality of life: broadband? One might ask: why broadband, and not energy, water/sanitation, or roads...? While all infrastructure is essential, broadband gives the quickest, biggest bang for the buck, because of its nature vis-à-vis energy, water or transportation and our regulatory environment and functional organisation (for instance, the complexity of addressing power supply). If we could increase mobile phone coverage to present levels by reducing costs and increasing availability, it should be possible to do so for personal computer (PC) also, to draw

on the wealth of free educational and training material for our vast numbers.

Unfortunately, for such infrastructure, there is no triggering crisis like the threat of failure of the Commonwealth Games, and consequently, no face-saving or glam factors, like the arrival of foreign teams and visitors. This article makes a case for a Commonwealth Games-type crisis management for broadband through a collage of factors.

Consider these aspects of our demographics:*

- Nearly 460 million people are aged between 13 and 35 today.
- Of these, 333 million are literate.
- In 10 years from now, the countrywide average age will be 29, compared to 37 in the US and China, 45 in Europe, and 48 in Japan.
- As many as 100 million Indians — the combined labour forces of Britain, France, Italy, and Spain — are projected to be added to our workforce by 2020, which is 25 per cent of the global workforce.

This indicates our productive potential. Its realisation would require education and training, efficient functioning, i.e. the matrix of enabling infrastructure, and organisation. If these needs remain unmet, the demographic opportunity can become the liability of an unproductive population, with attendant difficulties and social hazards.

We have many formal and informal institutions providing training and education. We add nearly 300,000 engineering graduates every year to our pool of 2 million engineers. India’s vocational training capacity is estimated at 3.1 million a year, whereas about 12.8 million people enter the workforce. However, the National Sample Survey (2004) found that only 2 per cent of the 15-29 age group had formal vocational training and another 8 per cent had non-formal vocational training. In the developed economies, the proportion of skilled workers is 60-80 per cent; Korea has 96 per cent skilled workers.**

Five years ago, McKinsey reported that only a quarter of India’s engineers were employable in the IT industry. Recently, a survey showed this has reduced to 18 per cent.***

Apart from training and education in specific disciplines, the processes that make for good work practices are: systems thinking, a scientific temper, and goal-oriented work practices to meet standards of quality and time. Then there are the attributes of playing team, while engaging in a hard-charging individual effort. All these skills and practices are necessary and can be learned and renewed over time.

How will our workforce of over 500 million, adding 12.8 million every year, have access to continuing education and training, information for civic amenities and facilities and easy, efficient access to commercial and public services? What about the prerequisites of schooling, vocational training and university education? To answer these

questions, consider parallel developments in domains such as distance education, e-learning and smart applications. Here are glimpses of the transformation underway in university and secondary education, especially outside India:

- iTunes U has become one of the world's largest educational catalogues for free educational material. After three years, there are over 300 million downloads. Over 800 universities have their websites at iTunes U, including many of the top universities from the US, UK, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Singapore and so on.
- Khan Academy (<http://khanacademy.org>), a brilliant, free educational site by an ex-hedge fund analyst and manager, Salman Khan (Salman Khan of Silicon Valley, not Bollywood), covers mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology, with over 18 million page views in August (<http://khanacademy.org>). Started in late 2006, Khan is reportedly developing an open-ended set of material covering many subjects, and is a favourite among people like Bill Gates, and John and Ann Doerr (Fortune: http://money.cnn.com/2010/08/23/technology/sal_khan_academy.fortune/index.htm). Of the 200,000 students who access this site every month, only 20,000 are from India.
- There are many other educational sites from school level upwards, for instance, the Open Courseware Consortium (<http://www.ocwconsortium.org>) by MIT, with US members like the University of California (Berkeley), Michigan and so on. Many universities and schools have their own websites. There is the Wikiversity, with portals from pre-school through primary to tertiary education, non-formal education and research (see <http://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Wikiversity:Browse>).

India, BCG estimates that Internet usage will increase from 7 per cent of the population in 2009 to 19 per cent in 2015 (237 million). PC penetration, which was just 4 per cent in 2009, is estimated at 17 per cent by 2015 (216 million). To quote BCG: "India has among the highest PC costs and lowest PC availability of all the BRIC countries (including Indonesia)." Mobile phone penetration, however, is 10 times higher, at 41 per cent. This appalling situation needs to be redressed.

Inferences

Hundreds of millions of Indians should use these websites and the Internet for radical transformation. This will require policies and practices aimed at providing:

- inexpensive access to broadband;
- greater access to PCs and PC-equivalents as they evolve (e.g. Pranav Mistry's SixthSense); and

- systems and processes that encourage distance education, and discipline in all fields, with professionalism and excellence across all activities.

Regulations and tax regimes determine which activities are profitable, and to what extent. This is where the government and its policies come in. Could Internet users in India converge public opinion to rouse governments to address these needs, emulating the example of Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit?

Source: October 07, 2010/ [Business Standard](#):

Recruitment of management professionals in PSUs rises to 7%: Survey

In what can be seen as good news for management professionals in India, recruitments of such professionals in the public sector has increased to seven per cent, out of the total placements, according to a survey.

"Although private sector companies continue to remain the biggest employers of management professionals, the domestic public sector companies have become more aggressive with recruitment accounting for 7 per cent of total placements in 2009 as compared to 4 per cent in 2007," a survey conducted by Dun & Bradstreet said.

"The increasing demand for management education in all major cities in India along with the Government's role in ensuring better access to higher education has had a positive impact on the economic growth of our country," D&B's (India) CEO, Kaushal Sampat, said in a statement today.

The company had surveyed 168 universities affiliated as well as private business schools in India. The study further indicates that there is a 22 per cent increase in the number of students with work experience opting for management studies.

"In terms of placement, our study also reveals that in 2009 around 61 per cent of the management schools offered more than 85 per cent placement," Sampat said.

According to the report, Category I business schools account for 16 per cent of total intake capacity of the surveyed 168 schools. On the other hand, category II and category III business schools cover 55 per cent and 28 per cent respectively.

The report mentioned that the number of new courses and programmes offered by business schools has also increased, to meet industry demand for employees with certain skill set and talent.

"Consequently, the number of students with work experience increased 22 per cent from 1764 in 2006-08 batches to 2167 in 2007-09 batches," it said.

The report mentioned that for the academic year 2007-09, total student enrolments increased 6 per cent YoY.

For the 2007-09 batches, on an average, female students constituted nearly 40 per cent of the total enrollments,

which had increased by seven per cent as against six per cent growth of male students.

"Among the different categories, category II business schools registered highest growth of 9 per cent YoY in terms of student enrollments in 2007-09 batches. In fact, this category recorded the highest y-o-y growth of male and female enrollers at 7 per cent and 11 per cent respectively," the report said.

Source: Mumbai/ PTI, Oct 15, 2010/ [The Times of India](#)

D&B launches inaugural edition of 'India's Leading Business Schools'

Public sector companies get more aggressive with recruitment accounting for 7% of total placements in 2009 as compared to 4% in 2007: Dun & Bradstreet Study

Dun & Bradstreet, the world's leading provider of global business information, knowledge and insight, released the inaugural edition of its publication, 'India's Leading Business School's on October 14, 2010.

The publication profiles 168 University affiliated as well as private Business Schools in India that fall under the purview of the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and/or governed by the Ministry of Human Resource Development. Apart from profiling, the publication also provides detailed insights on the operational aspects, infrastructure, placements, challenges faced, growth drivers and future plans of these business schools. To understand the functional and operational dynamics of business schools, the respondent business schools were divided into three categories, based on their average placement salaries in 2009.

Speaking at the launch, Mr. Kaushal Sampat, President & CEO – India, Dun & Bradstreet, said, "The increasing demand for management education in all major cities in India along with the Government's role in ensuring better access to higher education has had a positive impact on the economic growth of our country. D&B's study on the leading business schools reveals that although private sector companies continue to remain the biggest employers of management professionals, the domestic public sector companies have become more aggressive with recruitment accounting for 7% of total placements in 2009 as compared to 4% in 2007.

The study further indicates that there is a 22% increase in the number of students with work experience opting for management studies. In terms of placement, our study also reveals that in 2009 around 61% of the management schools offered more than 85% placement", he added.

About D&B's India's Leading Business Schools:

'India's Leading Business School' is Dun and Bradstreet India's (D&B India) recognition of the prominent business schools in the country. Business Schools covered in the publication have affiliations and recognitions with the Foreign Universities, Central Universities, State

Universities, Deemed Universities, Private Universities, AICTE, AIU, UGC, MHRD and Institutes of National Importance. The publication is based on direct responses received from business schools.

To invite nominations from various business schools, questionnaires were sent out to business schools sourced from MHRD, UGC, AIU, NAAC, AICTE and D&B's internal database. Additionally, mass media channels such as advertisements in leading business news dailies were used to invite participation in the publication. Every effort was made to reach out to all business schools and ensure their response to the questionnaire. Business schools that did not respond to the questionnaire have been excluded from the publications.

For the purpose of this publication, the total number of students provided are for the batch passing out in 2009. Business Schools have been listed on various parameters such as total number of full time faculty, region wise and total intake capacity of the students. A standardised format has been used for reporting the information of the business schools.

Key highlights:

- Establishment of business schools gathered momentum in the post liberalisation period, owing to a spiraling demand for talented professionals. The survey reveals that nearly 53% of the surveyed business schools were founded during 1990-2000, while 32% of them were established post 2000.
- While the private sector continues to be the biggest employers of management professionals, it is worth mentioning that domestic public sector companies have been aggressive in the last year. The survey revealed that the public sector companies accounted for 7% of total placements in 2009 as compared to 4% in 2007.
- In the study, Category I business schools clearly outperform other institutes in the study in terms of placements. Category I business schools placed 98% of its batch in 2009. Overall, the surveyed business schools achieved 87.46% for the same period.
- Composition and quality of faculty have a direct bearing on the performance of business schools. On this front too, Category I institutes are clear leaders in the study – over half of the faculty in Category I business schools have doctoral degrees – substantially higher than the rest of the institutes.
- An increasing number of students with work experience are opting for management studies - an indication of the fact that many professionals prefer to upgrade their skills to remain competitive. The survey has revealed that the number of students with work experience opting for management studies increased by 22% y-o-y in the 2009 batch.

- Marketing and finance, the two most preferred specialisations, registered a decline in their overall share in 2009 batch. On the other hand, the share of students opting for retail management studies increased to touch 4% of the overall number of students.
- One of the prerequisites for imparting quality education is to maintain a lower faculty to student ratio. On an average, the faculty-to-student ratio of all business schools taken together stood at a respectable level 1:11.4. The Category I schools emerged as the best in terms of faculty to student with a ratio of 1:8.6 and the Category III schools had the highest faculty to student ratio of 1:13.2
- The increasing cost of managing business schools and lack of quality faculty emerged as the two biggest challenges faced by the business schools in the country.
- To meet the challenges posed by globalisation of management education in India, the study found that business schools consider collaborations with international universities/associations, development of infrastructure and global accreditation as top priority.
- Category I business schools account for 16% of total intake capacity of the surveyed schools. On the other hand, category II and category III business schools cover 55% and 28% respectively.
- Average intake capacity of category I schools is the highest at 210 students per business school followed by category II and category III with 168 and 137 students per business school respectively.
- Average number of classrooms per business school for the surveyed schools stood at 13 per school with category I business schools leading with 17 classrooms per school.
- Around 93% of the surveyed business schools provide hostel accommodation to students, which can accommodate a total of 30,112 students.
- The surveyed business schools are well equipped with latest technology and have a high student to computer ratio of 1:1.03.

D&B's 'India's Leading Business Schools' was launched by Dr. Stephen D'Silva, Director, Jamnalal Bajaj Institute of Management Studies and Mr. Alok Bharadwaj, Senior Vice President, Canon India was the Key Note Speaker. A panel discussion on "Taking Indian Business Schools to the Next Level" followed thereafter.

Source: October 15, 2010/ [Business Standard](#)

India's youth have moved on

The subdued, mature response by all manner of people and organisations to the recent Lucknow High Court

verdict on the six-decade old Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute has been rightly read by political commentators and media pundits alike as sign of a new India's desire to move beyond divisive politics to more progressive, development-led agendas.

And it seems the desire to 'move on' has been particularly strong with India's young population for some time now. The country's young demographics, over 65% of the population under the age of 35, is our biggest calling card, not just in terms of achieving the much avowed global economic stardom, but critically the nature of polity that we ultimately become.

INDIAN YOUTH	
Religion and development go hand-in-hand	
Are you religious?	76.00%
Media interest	
News & current affairs	72.00%
Music & films	78.00%
Cookery	39.00%
Environment	34.00%
Politics	30.00%
Member of political party	1.00%
Support women reservation in Parliament/state assemblies	67.00%
Live in joint family	75.00%
SC/ST/OBC	63.00%
Support caste reservation in higher education	47.70%
Source: National Book Trust-NCAER National Youth Readership Survey 2009	

Let's look at some proxy indicators. A massive survey of India's youth last year by the National Council of Applied Economic Research for NBT throws of some very interesting findings. The survey takes the National Youth Policy's definition of 13-35 years as youth. The survey, undertaken as part of the National Youth Readership Survey 2009, interviewed over 3,11,431 youth in 432 villages & 199 cities/towns the biggest by any survey so far.

The survey results are for literate youth, who constitute around three-fourths of 459 million youth in the country.

Let's look at some proxy indicators. A massive survey of India's youth last year by the National Council of Applied Economic Research for National Book Trust throws of some very interesting findings. The survey takes the National Youth Policy's definition of 13-35 years as youth. The survey, undertaken as part of the National Youth Readership Survey 2009, interviewed over 3,11,431 youth in 432 villages and 199 cities/towns, the biggest by any survey so far. The survey results are for literate youth, who constitute around three-fourths of 459 million youth in the country. in 432 villages and 199 cities/towns, the biggest by any survey so far. The survey results are for literate youth, who constitute around three-fourths of 459 million youth in the country.

Lest we assume that we're now a country of atheists or 'non-religious' young people, the survey says that a overwhelming proportion, over three-fourths, of India's literate youth (333 million) said they were religious, with the count of atheists at 2% and non-religious at 15%. These numbers are roughly similar across gender, faith, cities and villages and level of education.

But it seems being 'personally religious' (the specific question was "Irrespective of whether you attend religious



services, would you say you're a religious person?") does in no way come in way of embracing progressive thoughts and rejecting dogmatism.

Under 1% of literate youth in the country is associated with any political party as a member, lower than memberships for apolitical organisations like self-help groups and youth clubs. The study trashes the 'fairly competitive and intense student politics at the university and college level', as non-representative of 'the political orientation of the literate youth in India'. After all, only a third of all 333 million literate youth in India are students, and less than one in ten literate youth go to colleges for higher education, so indeed why should 'students politics' in big cities based colleges be marker for all youth in the country!

Clearly, Indian youth and not political creatures in the sense of belonging to one group or the other, or espousing one ideology over another, but that doesn't mean they're apolitical. Far from it. Over a third are interested in politics, higher than the proportion that shows interest in fashion. And a high number (72%) is interested in news & current affairs making them aware citizens.

A large majority (67%) of literate Indian youth support reservation for women in Parliament and state assemblies. And around half are aware of developmental programmes like NREGA and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, pointing to a growing trend towards supporting gender & economic inclusiveness.

Importantly, even while two-thirds of India's literate youth fall in the SC/ST/OBC category, the proportion that support the current caste-based reservation in higher education is under half (47.7%). And this, even when unemployment remains high (around 10%) amongst graduate/post-graduate youth. What this points to is a losing traction for caste-based politics of the Mandal kind that tore through the country's social fabric in the early 1990s. However, a caveat here is in order. The NCAER-NBT survey is for a period in time (2009) and we don't have time series figures to compare it with, 1990-91 for instance, the year of the anti-Mandal agitation against OBC reservation. Nonetheless, available anecdotal evidence suggests that indeed caste-based reservation is losing its potency to rally people, for or against it.

What is also important to bear in mind is that a large part of literate Indian youth (75%) still lives in a joint-family, with around three generations under one roof. With conformism a social behaviour even with young people in India, undoubtedly, the general family/elders view has a bearing on the youth's responses and opinions. In that sense, what the youth of India is articulating here points to a vastly changed India. And that, in a sense, proves that we as people are surely moving away from the bitterness, insularity and parochialism of the past, and for the better.

Source: Monday, Oct 18, 2010/ [The Financial Express](#)

Contribute

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

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

Please email your contributions to aserf@apeejay.edu

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

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