



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**Discover the genius in you**

Thomas Alva Edison's teacher complained that he couldn't keep up with his classmates. Since then historians have said of Edison. "His brain had the highest cash value in history".

Many intelligent men and women underestimate their own intelligence. There is a very good reason for this. According to Professor J.P. Guilford of the University of Southern California, about 40 mental dimensions or factors have been mapped out so far. Main among these are: judgement, foresight, ability to visualise, to express ideas verbally, and to comprehend what is said.

Everyone is aware of the fact that one person can't excel in all 40 or more mental factors. For instance, a person may write good English. But when he tries to figure out his sums, he is confused. Another man is excellent in mathematics, but his mind goes completely blank if he's asked to say a few words, about any subject. He doesn't know how to communicate his ideas.

Often, you are so worried about the fact that there are two or three intellectual tasks you cannot handle well that you forget that there may be 37-38 mental dimensions in which you can shine. Even a mediocre man is brighter than he is usually given credit for being.

If an average man used his intelligence to its fullest, he would be classed as a genius!

You can't help being reminded of the story of the man who came to industrialist and offered to show his employees how to do their work better. "What's the use?" thundered the industrialist. "They're not doing as well now as they already know how to do."

Use that brain power

William James asserted that we use only a small fraction — about a tenth — of our brain power. To make the most of our mental powers, we must learn to use both our conscious and unconscious mind to good advantage. The unconscious mind observes and retains billions of impressions which we are not consciously aware of.

A young man passed by a shop window, glancing at it briefly out of the corner of his eye. When asked what he had seen, he laughed and said, "Why, nothing. I went by so hurriedly I paid no attention to its contents." But under hypnosis he remembered dozens of objects in the window that he had barely looked at.

The mind has such great powers that if you learn to tap just a small fraction of these, your mind will leap where ordinarily it just limps.

The first step is to study the subject you are eager to learn. Your subconscious guides you to success by flashing the

signal of interest in some particular area. If you defy it, you do so at your risk.

A young man who was lured by business enrolled in a law school course because his father wanted him to become a lawyer. He could not make the grade. But as soon as he switched to business administration, he did brilliantly.

Gift of intuition

Henri Bergson says, "intuition is the only means for perceiving the heart of things."

Dr. J.B. Rhine has shown that some of us possess marked intuitive powers, while others have only limited intuition. Tests have proved that the most intuitive individuals are usually those who believe in the power of intuition.

Don't ignore your hunches. Regard these as a gift of nature. You can prepare your own mind for flashes of intuition by learning as much as possible about one special subject. Then, if you are at all intuitive, you will be able to utilise your intuition, just as Dr. Fleming did once when a mold flew into his laboratory.

The result was the discovery of penicillin. But no untrained mind could possibly have gotten the hunch in the first place, even if a dozen molds had flown in and changed a dozen culture patterns of bacteria.

To prepare your own mind for success, absorb knowledge like a sponge. The simplest method of doing so is to get the basic facts about a problem, and write them down. This method has worked with scientists, mathematicians, authors, and just average people. It will work for you!

Use your faculties

Just as a muscle may degenerate through lack of use, certain qualities of the mind deteriorate when they are never called into action. Start using your mind so that it becomes flighty instead of flabby. Most people don't think. They just rearrange their prejudices.

Why do we fail to exercise our intelligence?

We let our emotions ruin our judgement. At times, we accept prejudices instilled in us by others. Nearly all of us have some prejudices, but we can usually lessen them if we try to discover whether there is a logical, factual basis for an opinion we cling to.

Intelligence is the ability to learn, to think, and to solve new problems. It is not the sole possession of genius. Alfred N. Steele, of Pepsi Co says, "My cardinal rule is: don't guess at anything. If the right kind of effort is made, it is usually possible to get the facts".

A man might learn all the theories about how to fix a TV set, but until he has actually worked on a number of sets and applied his theoretical knowledge, it has very little value.

You might learn all the rules for French grammar, but unless you continue to read or speak French, your conscious mind would, within a few years, forget much of

this knowledge. Knowledge is quickly forgotten by the conscious mind if it is not applied.

“No wind serves the man who has no port of destination.”

We all learn faster and more easily when we have a definite goal or motive. Give yourself goals that will make you eager to learn. Suppose you are working in the complaint department of a store, and would eventually like to be supervisor of that department. You will ask yourself what trade journals and books you can read to qualify yourself for such a job. You will pay more attention to the reaction of customers, noticing which phrases bring a favourable response, and which antagonise customers. You will learn how to write letters that turn complaining customers into friends of the store.

Select a definite goal. Select the subject that interests you most, and study it every day.

There are over 40 dimensions to your mind. If you are weak in some of these, you can surely shine in others.

William James says, “Compared with what we ought to be, we are only half awake. We are making use of only a small part of our possible mental and physical resources.”

Source: 15 December, 2010/ Jobs & Careers/ [The Tribune](#)

Unfair self-promotion

NOWADAYS, news items relating to award of fellowship to university teachers and other regular authors regularly appear in newspapers. In this context, attention may be drawn towards a ubiquitous but unwarranted trend in the academia with regard to running to the Press as soon as an announcement of an award of fellowship to a person holding a teaching-cum-research position on the faculty is made. Without waiting for the arrival of a formal communication in writing from a scientific or academic organisation/professional body, approaching the media becomes the first priority.

In my view, the whole activity is an indulgence in marketing of the self without first assuring the quality of the product. An obscure write-up that cannot be interpreted in the right context becomes another story of the day. The overzealous behaviour of the awardees is analogous to the marketing of academic achievements of pre-mature consequence that may later produce disgrace. Lack of skills to develop proper protocols and ignorance of methodology to achieve excellence in academic output are directly related to the quality of peer review sustained by intellectual honesty. Regrettably, both these basic tenets essential to the creation of new knowledge and its recognition are scarce in Haryana. For instance, an investigator or guide often includes his/her name as a co-author of a research paper for which the actual work is produced by a student scholar.

On most occasions, the faculty member's contribution towards enhancement of knowledge and its significance to society is neither properly documented and explained nor

put in public domain by uploading on the respective website for open access and scrutiny. It paves the way for self-promotion with a view to gain undeserved publicity in contravention to ethical values.

Since the public understanding of science, technology and engineering, its terminology and relevance to society is low in the state, the published write-ups only become a source of self-jubilation and eulogy. In case the award of fellowship is from a foreign body and the public image of the awarding institution is of questionable repute, the whole becomes futile and the resources wasted in the process. It eventually ends up as meaningless addition to the bio-data.

An award or selection for a fellowship is not as significant an issue as is often construed and certainly does not deserve attention. In fact, restraint ought to be exercised before rushing to the media. The guidelines for approaching the media have not been evolved in the academic institutions set up by the state government and, therefore, leave a void in which only default can grow.

There is an apparent distinction in getting a fellowship or associateship and becoming Fellow of an academic organisation of repute such as the Indian National Science Academy, American College of Surgeons, American Society of Chemistry, American Physiological Society or Royal Society of Britain, etc. There are thousands of registered societies in the world, including hundreds in India, which are of no consequence. These agencies have been selecting Fellows on receiving substantial amount of money, usually unaffordable for an Indian. The selection of a person as Fellow is an honourable exercise of conferring a title in recognition of a breakthrough contribution to the subject and cannot be equated with award of fellowship (amount of scholarship to pursue a short course of study or for learning a technique during research). It is a slow process in which citation values and impact factors play a great role.

In usual practise, highly reputed and acclaimed academic bodies themselves initiate the rigorous process of selection, in which critical evaluation of the work done by a person is performed by renowned peers. But in India, particularly, in the university system, award of a fellowship is considered an immensely honourable and an achievement fit to become media stuff. It is actually a self-generated erroneous sense of recognition. State-run institutions and universities need to not only dissuade their academic staff but also ignore pre-mature claims of suspect quality at the time of considering suitability for promotion under fast-track assessment system put in place by the University Grants Commission (UGC).

The frequency with which the news items about a person having received fellowship appears in the media stir up “considerable loathing” in the minds of acclaimed scholars. Moreover, certain questions that naturally occur in this context following publication of the news item need to be honestly examined and answered. For example, what kind of material or scholarly advantage actually accrued to an

individual as well as the supporting institution after completion of the fellowship? Has the participation in the event/completion of a course/research/study actually been able to enhance the image of the institution as well as improvement in the quality of teaching or merely utilised to create a false sense of scholarly advancement? The advantages, if any, need to be specifically put in place in a descriptive fashion on the records of the supporting institution's website only after the tenure of fellowship has been exhausted.

The University News, published regularly by the Association of Indian Universities (AIU), in addition to proceedings of a couple of seminars organised by the Society for Scientific Values (SSV), INSA and Indian Academy of Sciences, including its reputed journal Current Science, have regularly touched the above indicated issue. Prominent scientists such as the late Prof. Autar Singh Paintal, renowned neurophysiologist and formerly Director-General of the Indian Council of Medical Research, had to deplore the nasty and immature mentality of self-promotion through the media when it came to his notice.

Source: 14 December,2010 / [The Tribune](#)

NEWS

Task force on NCHER bill makes presentation to PM

A task force set up to prepare the National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) bill today made a presentation to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

The presentation, said one of the members, was a "logical conclusion" to a long-drawn process which began with the preparation of the draft bill and its presentation to HRD Minister Kapil Sibal couple of month back.

The task force members included Mrinal Miri, M Anandakrishnan, Goverdhan Mehta and N R Madhava Menon.

According to the proposed legislation, the NCHER will be the apex institution in higher education and will replace the existing regulatory bodies like University Grants Commission, All India Council for Education and Research (AICTE) and Distance Education Council (DEC).

The move to bring in medical and legal education under the ambit of the proposed body is facing stiff opposition.

The Ministry is believed to have prepared a Cabinet note for its approval before tabling it in Parliament.

Source: New Delhi/Dec 14, 2010/[PTI](#)

National Education Finance Corporation

A proposal under evaluation for establishment of National Education Finance Corporation (NEFC) for providing loans for infrastructure development and expansion of educational institutions, as well as refinance facility for educational loans. The proposal also envisages creation of

a Credit Guarantee Fund Resources for Education Loans (CGREL). The proposed objective of CGREL is to provide guarantees to the advances granted to students for acquiring higher education, without obtaining any collateral security or third party guarantees.

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

Source: Dec 1, 2010/[PIB](#)

Union HRD Minister and French Minister for Higher Education and Research Meet: MOUs Signed in Their Presence

Ms. Valerie Pecresse, Minister for Higher Education and Research, France met Shri Kapil Sibal, Minister of Human Resource Development, here today. A large delegation of senior academics and scientists accompanied the French Minister including President of UTT University Mr. Christian Lermignaux. The Indian side consisted of Dr. T. Ramasami, Secretary, DST, Shri Ashok Thakur, Addl. Secretary, MHRD, Shri Amit Khare, JS(ICC), MHRD, Prof. Devang Khakhar, Director, IIT-Bombay and Prof. Govindan Rangarajan, Head, International Division of IISc, Bangalore.

Both leaders appreciated the increasing cooperation between the two countries in the field of education and scientific research and discussed the need to have more arrangements for cooperation in the field of education and research such as Nanotechnology, Biotechnology, Weather prediction, Aerospace engineering, Advanced Mathematics, etc.

The following two MOUs were signed during the meeting:

1. Memorandum for setting up an INTERNATIONAL JOINT LABORATORY between INSTITUT DE RECHERCHE POUR LE DEVELOPPEMENT (France) and the INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE, Bangalore (India).

This MOU is for setting up a research and training partnership structure in the form of a Joint International Laboratory called: Cellule Franco-Indienne de Recherche en Sciences de l'Eau (CEFIRSE) or Indo-French Cell for Water Sciences (IFCWS). The Laboratory could strike partnerships with other research structures and organisations in India, France and abroad.

2. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Academic Collaboration between The Indian Institutes of Technology, India and ParisTech – Paris Institute of Science and Technology, Paris, France.

This MOU is between 7 Indian Institutes of Technology (Kharagpur, Bombay, Madras, Kanpur, Delhi, Guwahati and Roorkee) and Institutions under ParisTech namely:

- AgroParisTech (Institut des Sciences et Industries du Vivant et de l'Environnement), Arts et Métiers ParisTech (Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Arts et Métiers), Chimie ParisTech (Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Chimie Paris),

- Ecole des Ponts ParisTech (Ecole Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées),
- Ecole Polytechnique,
- ENSAE ParisTech (Ecole Nationale de la Statistique et de l'Administration Economique),
- ENSTA (Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Techniques Avancées),
- ESPCI ParisTech (Ecole Supérieure de Physique et de Chimie Industrielles de la Ville de Paris),
- HEC Paris (Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales),
- Institut d'Optique Graduate School,
- MINES ParisTech (Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Mines de Paris), and
- Telecom ParisTech (Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Télécommunications)

This MOU is for collaboration in research and education like:

- Promotion of institutional exchanges;
- Student exchanges,
- Organizing symposia, conferences, short courses and meetings on research issues;
- Joint research and continuing education programs; and
- Exchange information pertaining to developments in teaching, student development & research at each institution.

The MOU also provides that IITs & ParisTech may collaborate to participate in the European Commission initiatives such as the Erasmus Mundus, External Cooperation Window by partnering with other interested institutions.

Earlier, senior officials of France and India discussed in detail and finalized the draft MOU regarding IIT-Rajasthan which provides for a French Consortium to academically and scientifically accompany the Institute to develop areas in which France possesses considerable expertise such as: Technologies for Health; Renewable Energy (especially Solar Energy); Aerospace; Quantum Computing; Systems Integration and Design; Mechanical Engineering; Technologies for Art, Conservation and Heritage; as well as any other areas to be decided by mutual consent. This Consortium will be composed of French higher education, research institutions, and universities. When applicable, it will also have French and Indian industrial partners. The MOU also provides for the French parties to commit to work together, and to contribute substantially towards the establishment of a joint Center of excellence and also research laboratories in the top priority fields of the Institute in the next five years.

Source: Dec 6, 2010/[PIB](#)

Cancel Uran college's affiliation to varsity

"Education has become a major source of corruption," said Justice PB Majmudar of the Bombay High Court. Justice Majmudar and Justice Mridula Bhatkar on Monday directed the University of Mumbai to cancel the affiliation of Uran Education Society's College of Management and Computer Science, Raigad district, for giving admission to an ineligible student.

"The respondent (college) has acted in very irresponsible manner," observed the division bench of the high court. "Cancel their affiliation. Set an example for other colleges indulging in similar malpractices."

The bench said that by giving admission to an ineligible student, Swanand Agharkar, 19, the institution had deprived an eligible candidate from pursuing Bachelor of Science (Information Technology) course. While the university has set eligibility criteria of minimum 45% in HSC, Agharkar had secured 43.67%.

Counsel for the university, Rui Rodrigues, then pointed out that the varsity has come across several such incidences. What irked the judges more was the fact that the chairman of the education society was a builder. The institution had given admission to Agharkar for the first-year in June 2009, but the university found that that he was ineligible for the course only in September 2010.

On September 17, the university wrote to the college intimating it that the student, who was then in his third semester, could not have been admitted because he was ineligible.

The college, in turn, informed Agharkar about the impending cancellation of his admission on October 22. Agharkar then moved the high court contending he could not be punished for a mistake committed by the college.

His counsel, Suhas Oak, pointed out that Agharkar had not suppressed any information from either the college or the university, and if his admission were cancelled now, he would lose one-and-a-half year.

On Monday, Oak urged the court to allow Agharkar provisionally to attend classes because he has completed two semesters. The judges said they would consider the request on December 20, when the case will be heard next.

Source: December 7, 2010 / Mumbai / [Hindustan Times](#)

Change, the key word for schools world over

School education the world over needs a change and it has to come with teachers getting training and the schools updating their teaching tools, said experts in a conference here.

Addressing the conference on "School of Tomorrow", organised by *i-discoveri*, Gurcharan Das, an author, said the Right to Education Act (RTE), which came into being from April one this year, was one of the ways forward as far as school education in India is concerned.

"It's an important legislation...and now the government should make teachers accountable so they could justify their salary," Mr. Das said.

The whole idea of teaching gets defeated when the teacher is not present in the school."I have seen it myself that teachers just don't come to school...leave alone the idea of training them for the Generation Next," he said, adding that it is the biggest scam the country has ever seen.

Talking about the school education scenario in the country, the speakers said more than 95 per cent of the children go to school but most of them drop out even before they get a basic education.

"The methods of learning should be changed with the ever-changing times so that the child is fully prepared for the life ahead," they added.

Source: 7 December,2010 / New Delhi / [Central Chronicle](#)

Free computer education for the challenged in Pune

People with disabilities can now get computer education for free under one roof. The National Association for the Welfare of Physically Challenged (NAWPC) and the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Snehankit, achieved yet another milestone with the inauguration of their computer training centre that caters to all physically challenged.

Located in Annabhau Sathe Vidyalyaya on Kumthekar Road and inaugurated on Sunday, it is an example of what can be achieved when social and corporate sectors join hands. KPIT Cummins Infotech Systems Ltd and the Rotary Clubs of Pune City Sports, Kalyaninagar and Laxmi Road, have supported the effort.

The centre has special trainers for people with different disabilities. The NAWPC and Snehankit already run a computer training centre for the visually challenged, a recreational centre for the disabled and a digital library for the blind.

President of NAWPC and Snehankit, Rahul Deshmukh (33) said, "We have used software that makes it easy for these students to grasp computer knowledge. They find it difficult to get training at other computer classes in the city and so lag behind others in education and career."

Deshmukh is visually challenged and known for his service to the disabled. He has done his MPhil in computer education for the blind. He is concerned about the physically challenged from economically weaker sections, who cannot afford education. "The training is free for the students. We are depending on donors for running the centre." KPIT Cummins and the Rotary Clubs have generously supported the centre. The NGO runs without permanent sources of funds and is run by volunteers, said Deshmukh. The training centre has educated more than 500 people since 2003.

"These people are now working in various sectors in good positions. I had to go through many hardships as a

student, so I resolved to make life easier for others like me," said Deshmukh.

Girish Vardhadkar from KPIT Cummins and Rotary Club members Brijmohan Shethi, Nitin Joshi, Jignyasu Mehta and Shripad Kaduskar were present at the inauguration. Rotary Club member Dharmaraj Kheni donated Rs1 lakh to the association, which has announced scholarships for the physically challenged.

Source: Dec 7,2010/Pune/DNA

IITs, IISc ink partnership pacts

The Indian Institutes of Technology and the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, on Monday signed pacts with top French universities and research centres. The memoranda of understanding were signed after a meeting between HRD minister Kapil Sibal and French higher education and research minister

Valerie Pecresse, who is accompanying President Nicolas Sarkozy.

Sibal and Pecresse discussed increasing cooperation in education and research, particularly in nanotechnology, biotechnology, weather prediction, aerospace engineering and advanced math. India and France are undergoing similar higher education reforms principally aimed at improving access and quality.

The IISc will set up an international laboratory on water sciences jointly with the Institut de Recherche Pour le Developpement (IRPD) in France. The jointly set-up research laboratory can strike partnerships with other research institutions in India, France or any other country, under the MoU signed between the IISc and the IRPD.

The seven older IITs signed an MoU with Paris Institute of Science and Technology (ParisTech) on promoting student and institutional exchanges and joint research. The MoU with ParisTech is also aimed at giving the IITs an opening into European Union education programmes and initiatives.

Officials also discussed progress on France's proposal — announced during Sarkozy's 2008 visit — to help set up the new IIT in Rajasthan.

The proposal involves the creation of a consortium of French higher educational institutions that will academically and scientifically aid the IIT coming up in Jodhpur, in areas where France is a leader.

Source: December 07, 2010 / New Delhi / Hindustan Times

Management education now focusing on attitudinal development

Evolution is a perennial process yet basic values are eternal. This applies to academics also. Incorporating new changes, higher education in the country is evolving. Management education too is turning a new page. Amid modern approaches and infrastructure, industry experts find certain fundamentals like right perspective, professionalism and commitment missing.

According to them, in the competitive era, majority of students hanker after jobs instead of aspiring for excellence. Besides a strong knowledge base, the global industry today seeks persevered individuals with integrity for whom management is an outlook. To connect the missing link, higher education in the country is focusing on attitudinal development and capacity building.

Today, attitude in our country is still laid back and it is also reflected in education and profession, says Dr (Capt) CM Chitale, dean, faculty of management, University of Pune. "One's attitude tells on performance.

If we are aspiring to be a superpower, we need to bring about big changes. In India, we still have that 'chalta hai' attitude. We do not feel it's important to keep time. Meeting deadlines and being committed are extremely important not only in professional environment but in life as a whole," he adds.

Education needs to emphasize on attitudinal development. "It should comprise basic principles like punctuality and time management, quality, right perspective, ownership and sense of belongingness. Discipline is required throughout. Each good professional and individual should possess a degree of maturity to understand what is required to be a good professional and human being. Education is inculcating those values but they have to be there in the first place. Students must aspire to excel in all spheres of life," Chitale explains.

Management goes beyond education. "It is self-discipline and systematic outlook. Where is it reflected? Poor civic sense and disobedience to norms are not something to be proud of. Management is about streamlining things and on the contrary, many of us seem piling things and messing them up. One should set high standards of excellence and meet them. Management is not only part of higher education discipline but integral part of one's grooming up," he says.

Career development is an individual's show, he says. "Teachers are instruments of change but it's up to students to shape careers. One has to make optimal use of intellect. Thinking faculty has to be enhanced. Today, ASK-- Attitude, Skills and Knowledge-- is the watchword. We need a perfect balance of these factors," Chitale says.

Higher education should stress on capacity building, opines Dr Arun Nigavekar, former UGC chairman and renowned academician. "Education needs to be industry-centric and things are changing gradually. It's beyond classroom and communication personality development and professionalism are becoming part of syllabi. Enhancing overall integrated capacity of individuals may emerge as business potential. Students need to upgrade and stay committed," Dr Nigavekar says.

According to him, improved abilities are required to deal with mounting pressure. "Today's age is putting enormous stress on professional and personal lives. Running away is

not the way out. Being levelheaded and tackling pressures is required," he says.

Let's look at certain issues that make us realise the importance of right attitude, says Dr Pramod Kumar, president of ISB&M. "The basic reason is family and parenting. Students are guarded so much that they do not have to take any responsibility and also they are not supposed to manage things on their own. They have been provided with everything. To begin with, we should teach them to own responsibilities," Dr Kumar adds.

He feels that institutes should design processes where students can learn to put theory into practice. "I agree that industry people have been complaining about the younger generation's attitude and professionalism. Management schools should try to cater to the industry's demands. Students should look at stability instead of hankering after jobs. The moment they pick up one job, they start looking for another, which is not a good practice," he says.

Recruiters should not undervalue management professionals, Dr Kumar opines. "There is a wide range of packages management graduates are offered. Recruiters should exactly look at the kind of people they want and pay them right."

Innovation and leadership is the new mantra, says, Aruna Katara, executive chair I2IT and managing trustee, HOPE foundation. "Institutes should gear up to face the challenges for creating a new pedagogy. This ensures encouragement of intelligence quotient in our students, urges them to creativity, exposes them to the humanities, and stresses the necessity of giving back to the society," Katara adds.

Management schools should lay emphasis on everything, right from infrastructure to moulding. "They should value ethics deeply. At our institute, one of the happiest indicators of success is life-long relationship among classmates, faculty and alumni. Our student body reflects the diversity of India, where no region or culture dominates. After all, what matters is the power of learning and exposure to new ideas, to teamwork and co-operation.

Source: Dec 7, 2010/ [Economic Times Bureau](#)

National Vocational Education Qualification Framework

Union Minister of Human Resource Development, Shri. Kapil Sibal, presided over a Round Table on development of a National Vocational Education Qualification Framework. This meeting was with representatives of the automotive sector and the discussion was on the subject of automobile industry specific vocational education. Held on 6th December, the meeting was organized by the All India Council for Technical Education, (AICTE). To develop curriculum for the sectors of a) IT & Telecom, b) Entertainment Industry c) Hospitality Industry d) Construction Industry e) Financial Services and Insurance, the Minister will also be holding similar meeting with representatives of these sectors.

To develop the course curriculum for this sector, a core group was constituted by Shri Sibal, which would function under the chairmanship of Dr. R. Seshasayee, Managing Director, Ashok Leyland Limited and includes Shri S.S. Mantha, Chairman AICTE, Shri. Ashok Thakur, Shri. N K Sinha, both Additional Secretaries in the HRD Ministry, and Shri. Subhash Khuntia, Joint Secretary in the HRD Ministry. The committee would be submitting its recommendations to MHRD within 3 months. This Committee may co opt other experts as and when required.

Shri. Kapil Sibal pointed out that 56% of our economy and growth comes from the service sector, which is unsustainable, with the country's population crossing 1.2 billion. The national impetus that contributes to the service sector should continue, but the manufacturing sector definitely needs greater attention, he said. He emphasised that we have to create skills to empower our manpower, keeping in context fast changing technology. There is need to develop a system of vocational education with different levels of training (may be seven to eight) starting at the school level from class nine, with a choice for selecting the area of interest, he said. This should seamlessly provide multi point entry to appropriate jobs and or Higher education. He further said that we need to build a framework which provides a system of certification for the selected choices and provides options for vertical mobility from school to university.

The minister underlined the need to develop a curriculum which is need based and caters to the different aspects of the automobile industry. He called for active collaboration with the automobile industry to develop the curriculum for this qualification frame work, as also for the support system for hands on training, virtual training and software training. He pointed out that 39 million students pass out from class 12, of which only 1 million get an opportunity to be empowered through vocational education.

Addressing the gathering, Smt. D Purandeshwari, Minister of State for HRD said that the provisions of the National Policy on Education 1986 emphasize the introduction of systematic, well planned and rigorously implemented program of Vocational Education. She said that the qualitative aspect of assessment of the manpower situation should include a national qualification framework to address various issues of manpower assessment of training to facilitate lifelong learning of workers. The Secretary Department of Higher Education, Smt. Vibha Puri Das and Prof. S.S.Mantha, Chairman AICTE also addressed the group.

The conference was attended by representative of automobile industry including Ashok Leyland Limited, Scooters India Ltd. Asia Motor Works Ltd., BMW India Pvt. Ltd., Greaves Cotton Ltd., Piaggio Vehicles Ltd., Reva Electric Car Company, Skoda Auto India Pvt Ltd., Tata Motors Ltd., VE Commercial Vehicles Ltd., Hyundai Motors India Ltd., Rimaco Machines, Siemens Ltd, the

professional bodies including NASSCOM, ASSOCHAM, FICCI, Confederation of Indian Industry and the policy makers and officials of Ministry of Human Resource Development. The automobile sector contributes to Rs 2 lac crore of revenue figures and provides an opportunity for employment to at least 13 million people.

The delegates deliberated on various issues related to development of qualification framework and there was common consensus on the following:

1. There is an acute shortage of labor at Tier 2 and Tier 3, so there is a need to evolve a strategy to compensate the shortage. This may include some short term, medium term and long term solutions. The Industry may evolve the short term and Medium term solutions. But the vocational qualification frame work is required for providing a long term solution to become a global leader.

2. Students have no motivation to opt for the vocational stream, hence trainers as well as students both need to be incentivized for attracting them for the vocational stream. There were references to other Countries, where students willingly go for vocational education, which ensures a secure job opportunity.

3. The Man Power produced at the vocational, polytechnic or at a degree level lacks required core competence needed for the industry. The so called skilled man power is further required to be trained for 2-3 years to shape them as per Industry requirement.

4. Vocational education needs to be incentivized by industry either by offering incentive packages or by developing a process of certification.

5. It is anticipated that by 2020, about 220 million students will pass out from school, out of which, about 150 million will not enroll for college education. This young talent needs to be motivated for vocational education.

6. There are three important components of developing the qualification frame work for vocational education.

(I) Development of curriculum

(ii) Certification through examination

(iii) Incentivisation.

7. The qualification frame work should provide opportunities for lateral movement in main stream Higher Education and should ensure capacity building and skill development through quality education.

8. There is a need for suitable trainers to impart technical training to the students of this stream.

9. In addition to the core skills of the Automobile Industry, there is felt need of skilled drivers, mechanics and other skilled manpower for proper servicing of latest Automobiles. There is a huge shortage of skilled manpower and no

suitable framework available to cater to the needs of the services and sales sector in the Automotive Industry.

10. The Automobile Industries will come forward and collaborate with the institutions by providing required hardware and suitable trainers to teach the aspirants of vocational stream.

11. It was felt that the curriculum of vocational framework should be such that it provides a mix of technical skill with managerial skill for vertical integration in the industry and there should be regular refresher courses to update technical skills.

Source: Dec 8, 2010/[PIB](#)

Parents score poorly in RTE test

A large number of parents of children studying in schools across the city, when asked about the Right to Education implemented in April by the Government of India in April, displayed a lack of awareness.

Many who knew about the Act were not aware of the provisions. Many others were not aware of the Act at all. They also said schools had not taken any initiative to inform them about it.

Ashwin Deshpande, whose child is studies in Class IV, said he did not know much about the provisions. "Whatever little I know, I have known it from newspapers.

However, I think every child has the right to education and schools should make it a point to implement the provisions immediately," said Deshpande.

Anil Jain, whose children study in D Y Patil School, said, "We have never been told about the Right to Education by the school. I know about the provisions because I am an education activist, too.

I feel there is an immediate need to spread awareness so that more and more parents come to know about their and their children's rights."

Many parents said there was an immediate need to popularise the Act among economically backward families so that they are able to avail of their rights.

"None of the schools take the initiative actively to talk about these acts...Several schools do not allow parents to interact with teachers even if they have a problem, let alone spread awareness on RTE," said Ambikanath Parida, whose daughter is a student of St Anne's School.

Parents also stressed the need for the government to spread awareness. "There are so many people belonging economically backward families who are not even aware of something like the RTE. To expect schools to create awareness for such people is a bit unfair. The government should make it a point to talk to such people and let them know about their basic rights," said Shreya Saha, parent of a student.

Source: December 8, 2010 / New Delhi / [Indian Express](#)

Scholarship to Single Girl Child

Central Government has introduced a Post-Graduate Indira Gandhi Scholarship Scheme for Single Girl Child with the purpose of supporting higher education at PG level in non-professional subjects for any eligible girl who is the only child in her family. The Scheme was introduced from the academic year 2005-06. Duration of Scholarships is two years. Number of Scholarships given per year is 1200 and rate of scholarship is Rs. 2,000 per month (for 20 months).

The selection of candidates is made on the basis of recommendations of an Expert Committee following criteria is given below:

(i) Should be the single child in the family.

(ii) Admitted to Non-professional PG-1st year Degree course.

(iii) Should be less than 30 years at the time of PG-1st year admission.

Source: Dec 8, 2010/[PIB](#)

Beijing sends word: Can help CBSE with Mandarin course

Wen likely to visit Tagore International School during trip next week

With the CBSE announcing plans to introduce Mandarin Chinese in its 11,000 affiliated schools from Class VI onward next year, Beijing has offered to help the initiative with state-of-the-art software and hardware. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has already begun to liaise with the Chinese government on the matter.

With the CBSE initiative coming ahead of Premier Wen Jiabao's India visit next week, the Chinese government has conveyed to India that they would be happy to help and provide standard —textual and audio-visual material — to introduce Mandarin Chinese in CBSE schools.

The Chinese have also evinced interest in sending teachers for the language if India feels the need. The CBSE offers 32 languages at the secondary and senior secondary level. Of these, twelve are foreign languages.

The Mandarin Chinese curriculum and textbooks are being developed by practising scholars and the Board will be conducting a training programme for teachers. Schools interested in introducing the language from Class VI for the academic session 2011-12 have been asked to spell it out in clear terms so that the CBSE can then work on the details and indicate their needs, if any, to the Chinese embassy.

The Chinese Premier is also expected to visit the Tagore International School in Vasant Vihar during his two-day trip, starting December 15. Students and faculty from the school visited China recently on an exchange programme. They will interact with Wen, recalling their stay and impressions of China.

The decision to introduce Mandarin Chinese as a foreign language in CBSE schools followed Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister Kapil Sibal's visit to China in September. China has also been keen to mark a space in the growing education scenario in India. Earlier this year, the Embassy of China in India approached the HRD Ministry, proposing education road shows and fairs like their European counterparts to woo Indian students and teach Mandarin Chinese in Indian schools.

That the schooling system in China is quite similar to India's is being positioned as an advantage. Like India's 10+2 format, China also offers a 6+3+3 schooling format, totalling 12 years of study.

Source: Dec 11, 2010/New Delhi / [The Indian Express](#)

MCD want another education survey

With poor response from the parents of underprivileged children during the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan (SSA) survey, the MCD on Sunday said it would write to the Union Human Resource Development (HRD) ministry to conduct another survey. Approximately 14,000 teachers of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) conducted a door-to-door survey on Saturday and Sunday across 181 municipal wards under the SSA to find out if there is any child between 6 and 14 years of age who does not go to school, among other things.

These teachers were supposed to fill two forms (A & B) with details about the child and his parents' background like the language spoken at home, if the child is physically disabled, whether the house the family lives in is own or rented, said Mahinder Nagpal, chairman, education committee, MCD.

Over the weekend, each teacher was supposed to cover approximately 100 houses.

"However, in rural areas, jhuggi-jhopri clusters and in resettlement colonies, our teachers faced lot of problems," Nagpal said.

"In most of the cases, the houses/slum dwellings were locked as the labourers were out on work. In several cases, the parents, especially the illiterate mothers, did not answer the questions as they were not aware of the importance of the survey," he added.

"The survey has therefore not brought out the exact picture. There should have been ample publicity for the survey.

We are going to write to the HRD ministry to conduct another survey," Nagpal said.

Source: 12 Dec,2010 / New Delhi / [Hindustan Times](#)

Hard realities for India's \$35 computer

New Delhi - The Indian government won headlines around the world when it unveiled a prototype 35-dollar tablet computer in July, but questions are now growing over whether the project is just a pipe dream.

At the computer's launch, Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal vowed "the solutions for tomorrow will emerge from India" as he revealed the breathtaking price tag - a fraction of the \$500 cost for an Apple iPad.

Officials said the touchscreen device, aimed at the country's millions of students, could even be hammered down to just \$10 once production rates increased.

The tablet computer, which has yet to be named, is billed as boasting a three-hour power back-up, internet browser, media player, video-conferencing capability, good data storage, hard disk drive and webcam.

"The price includes a small component of profit for the manufacturer and hence higher volumes will fetch more returns," Sibal told AFP.

"This low-cost device is likely to revolutionise the education system in our country. It will have a very positive impact on our literacy campaign."

But Indian promises of a "laptop for the masses" have hit the buffers before. The government said it was on the brink of putting the computer on sale in both 2005 and 2009 - only for the much-hyped product never to materialise.

Government subsidy

Terry Thomas, a partner in the local arm of global audit firm Ernst and Young, is among those striking a note of caution.

"A computer with all normal functionalities at this price will not be sustainable unless it is subsidised by the government or the industry," he said.

Thomas suggested a "stripped-down version" with a bare minimum of facilities could perhaps be engineered at nearer the advertised cost, though users would likely be unimpressed.

The first 100 000 computers are slated to be released as soon as January, but details of its exact specifications are still scarce - as is the level of government subsidy that will be essential to keep the price down.

Experts have also warned the device could struggle with issues such as cheap imports and India's rising labour charges.

"If one takes out the cost of labour then the cost of materials like plastic and silicon will have to be virtually nothing," said Joydeep Bhattacharya, of the Indian unit of US computer giant Hewlett-Packard.

The motherboard of a prototype cost \$47 alone, Sibal's ministry said in a statement earlier this year, claiming it was still possible to cut costs.

Technological skills

Sibal hopes that 10 million of the computers will be manufactured within 12 months of the first one coming off the production line - an ambitious target by any measure.

Just months before the first models are due in public, the government has been determined to keep its manufacturers a secret.

The Delhi-based Manufacturers' Association of Information Technology (MAIT) stressed that government subsidies may not be able to guarantee the \$35 price tag against market pressures.

MAIT executive director Ashwani Aggarwal said he wondered if the price included taxes, transportation charges and delivery costs. And he said not enough thought had been given to the potential users.

"Parallel to the cost factor, serious effort must be put into triggering demand through programmes that deliver easy finance to students," Aggarwal said.

India, whose 61% literacy rate lags far behind many other developing nations, such as China with 92%, is making major efforts to improve its education system.

The planned tablet computer is part of a push to increase the number of students in higher education and give them the technological skills needed to further boost India's economic growth.

Despite the many obstacles, George Paul, executive vice president of Indian technology firm HCL Infosystems, is optimistic, saying the march of progress means the affordable computer was a long-term certainty for India.

"The One Laptop per Child Association in the US was difficult to comprehend and there was scepticism then but it led to the low-cost Netbook laptops," he said. "This is a journey which will evolve."

Source: AFB/Dec 12, 2010/ News24.com

Indian students turn to Canada following Australian backlash

NEW DELHI—Vipin Sehajpal has worked for the past two years at a call centre on the outskirts of India's capital, helping frustrated Dell computer owners solve technical problems.

But when he connects with a caller from Canada, the 26-year-old pauses before dispensing advice to pose a few questions of his own.

"I mostly ask about the weather, food and what life is like," Sehajpal says.

It's knowledge he plans to put to use in a few weeks.

Barring last-minute problems, Sehajpal will be leaving India in late December to enroll in a two-year website design course at Lambton College in Sarnia.

His pursuit of a Canadian education highlights a growing trend in India.

While Canada for years was regarded of as a sad-sack afterthought by India's brightest college-aged students, that perception is changing fast. The number of Indian

college and university students studying in Canada has surged fourfold over the past three years.

Canadian diplomats say they expect to issue student visas to as many as 14,000 Indian students this year and perhaps more than 20,000 in 2011.

In 2008, Canada approved just 3,152 visas to Indian students.

The increase comes as Canadian schools strengthen ties in India, which is among the world's most promising markets for international students and higher education. Nearly one-third of India's 1.2 billion population is under the age of 15 and the country's 300 million strong middle class is expected to grow 10 times by 2025.

At the same time, the Canadian government has pledged to triple two-way trade with India to \$15 billion over the next three years and adding international students will help. A recent Canadian government study showed the average international student adds \$25,000 to the local economy.

David Manicom, a diplomat who heads the immigration department at Canada's mission in New Delhi, said he was flummoxed when a group of Canadian university presidents recently toured India and spoke publicly about their efforts to coax Ottawa to increase its \$1 million global budget for marketing post-secondary education. Australia, university officials pointed out, spends \$20 million a year.

"The truth is that we've already come a long way in a very short time," Manicom said. "The perception is that we're trailing Australia still but that couldn't be father from the truth."

Manicom said there are several reasons for the dramatic increase.

For starters, unlike some other Western countries, many foreign college and university students who study in Canada gain credit towards becoming a permanent resident.

But Manicom and Canadian college officials say an overhaul of Canada's student visa program is more responsible for the turnaround. For the past two years, the Canadian mission in New Delhi has partnered with 38 Canadian colleges to create the so-called Student Partners Program.

Under the program, colleges work more closely with the Canadian mission to understand which students will likely be approved for visas.

For instance, schools now insist students submit grades from the International English Language Testing System, or IELTS, which is run by a British group. In past years, students would provide results from a number of less reputable English proficiency testing agencies.

The mission also demands students provide financial guarantees from chartered Indian banks.

"We had cases where a student would say they had an uncle with fields of rice paddy who was willing to promise to cover their school costs and other instances where families had the value of their gold assessed as proof of their financial wherewithal," Manicom said. "It was totally unreliable."

Manicom said the high commission is also working more closely with schools to winnow out immigration agents who recruit under-qualified students.

Since the student visa program's overhaul two years ago, the approval rate for Indian students applying to Centennial College has climbed to 87 per cent from 37 per cent and the number of Indian students at the Toronto school has climbed to 1,400 from 350.

"In past years, the biggest complaint we had was that it took too long for students to have their visas processed, but it's much less cumbersome now," said Virginia Macciavello, an official with Centennial.

Canada is also making inroads in India thanks to a public relations disaster for Australia's educators.

While Australia has drawn more than 90,000 Indian students annually in recent years (the U.S. attracts about 105,000 Indian overseas students a year), the number of students here applying for visas to Australia has plunged by 80 per cent, Western diplomats say.

Over the past two years, Indian media have furiously chased stories about racial attacks on Indian students in Australia. There were 14 attacks during one five-week stretch in 2009, with TV channels running incendiary headlines such as "Curry Bashing" and "Australia, Land of Racists."

Manicom conceded that Canadian officials "watched what was happening with Australia and we knew there would be some backwash."

But Macciavello said she isn't worried about a similar imbroglio in Canada.

"We've been recruiting overseas students for 30 years and we just haven't seen any problems like that," she said. "Canada's just much more multicultural."

Canadian schools also demand high IELTS test score, sometimes as high as 6.5 out of 9, to root out less qualified students who might drop out for a grey-market job. Some schools in the U.K., by contrast, demand a 4.5 IELTS score, meaning students would probably struggle to understand classes taught in English.

On a recent afternoon, Sehajpal and several other potential students crowded into an immigration agent Bhagirath Bhardwaj's office in the heart of New Delhi.

Bhardwaj, who is paid a commission of about \$150 for every student he sends abroad, said Canada is becoming a much more popular destination for students from the Indian capital region.

"I think there's an understanding here that the Canadian economy is outperforming others and there's a real opportunity there," Bhardwaj.

"Immigrants have a real chance in Canada because you have such an aging population. The average Canadian is 44, which the average American is 34 and the average Indian is 26."

Aayezah Jameel, a 30-year-old single mother, said she's been researching Canadian schools for the past year and is now saving up, with the hopes of traveling to Canada for studies in the spring of 2012.

"When you're a mother, planning like this takes time, nothing happens fast," she said. "It's a big commitment and a big deal for me because I'll be asking my mother in Bhopal to watch my daughter for me while I'm overseas."

Jameel, whose English was flawless, said considered schools like U.C.L.A. and the University of Texas before shifting her gaze to Canada.

"There's really no difference with Canadian schools except they cost less," she said. "The faculty and curriculum are just as good. I know. I've checked."

Sitting next to his mother, Sehajpal, who also has a computer science degree from Agra University, said his parents forbid him from going to school in Australia. Instead, he considered schools in the U.S. and U.K. and Canada.

"Canada has a bright future and I'm excited about the possibility of staying there after school for a job," Sehajpal said. "I've never seen snow before. What's that like?"

Source: Dec 12, 2010/The Star .com

GLOBAL: China and India to dominate education e-books

China and India are positioned to take a lead in digital publishing including e-books for use in higher education, digitalising existing content or developing digital avatars of print textbooks with enhanced features which, for example, can show up scientific diagrams in greater detail.

China's digital publishing industry is booming with a mammoth US\$12 billion output in 2009. It is propelled by large numbers of digital readers - over 40 companies are manufacturing e-readers in China, many of them offering similar functionality.

These companies are making a big push into the market or promoting their devices to publishers and content providers. Publishers in China have digitised a large amount of content to cater for their huge domestic audience.

The large storehouse of content is integrated with e-readers as free e-books, which helps to familiarise readers with screen reading. That is important because some in the industry believe that once students start to use e-readers, tempted by the free content, publishers can later charge for

add-ons such as student assessment packages for course tutors.

Chinese textbook publishers are using the same standardised format, unlike the different standards hampering the e-book market elsewhere in the world, and they are delivering open access e-books to students through CERNET, China's Education and Research Network, accessed by most of the country's higher education institutions.

Although e-books are still in their infancy, the reading devices from China - some of them with multilingual functionality - are gaining popularity in Asia as the price per unit is very competitive. This will be important for the growing student market, which is price-sensitive but potentially very large.

Publishers and aggregators have started to source these cheaper e-readers and sell in local markets across the world. Their ePub compatibility gives them an advantage, so it is likely that Chinese devices will percolate to every corner of the world.

India's advantage is its ability to create digital content for a world audience. The technology and expertise for digitising in India is an attraction, with a strong talent pool that is digital-savvy but is also equipped with multimedia and animation skills -. The number of institutions in the country offering training in these skills has skyrocketed in recent years.

Many technology companies - big ones like Accenture, Tata Interactive, Aptara, and hundreds of startups and smaller players that have mushroomed in Pondicherry, Pune, Bangalore and the environs of New Delhi - are involved in digitising.

But rather than simply copying paper books, academic content from India is being produced with digital enhancements. Indian companies could transform this sector as many are already focusing on e-learning products and have resources in place to leapfrog from pre-press content specialists to full-scale digital publishing offering finished e-books in specific academic disciplines.

e-Books and higher education

e-Books for the higher education audience evolved with Project Gutenberg which provides free e-books and is the oldest digital library, now with 33,000 e-books in its collection. The initial focus was reference books and out of print titles. STM (science, technical and medical) and reference publishers initiated and digitised their current titles and backlists, with reference libraries an assured market for such endeavours.

Then online books available on a subscription basis, the "cluster purchase" of e-book collections and downloadable e-books entered the academic field, making access to e-books more convenient for researchers.

Another game changer in open access e-books is the free online textbook offerings of Flat World Knowledge, used by more than 40,000 students on more than 400 US college campuses. These compete with leading textbook publishers, but new options such as print-on-demand softcovers, audio books, chapters and self-print options are innovative.

e-Books are preferred by students because of the price advantage over the print version. On average, e-books are 50% to 60% cheaper than the print version. As textbook usage by students is generally limited to the period of their course, online textbooks sold on a subscription basis have started to gain some acceptance in the US.

Digital book rentals and chapter downloads are also being offered. In the United Kingdom Amil Tolia's start up *Reference Tree* is generating interest with its announcement that it will offer chapter-wise academic content online.

Universities understand the utility of using e-books as textbooks. Initiatives by the US-based company CourseSmart featuring the textbooks of major publishers have helped digital textbooks gain access across North America. But a device that could transform the higher education space in the near future will be the Apple iPad. The launching of textbook apps could make the iPad a popular choice for students. Digitised textbook content needs to be more widespread so that students have a digital option for every print textbook.

Winning over students

However, despite the publishing industry and aggregators' efforts to convert print buyers to digital, the average student still has an affinity for the printed book. Printed books outdo e-books in portability, ease of use, and as a gadget-free experience, while the price of e-readers is still considered high for the average student.

Adoption of digital books will increase proportionally with the decrease in price of e-readers. Devices from China and India are already being released with attractive price tags. The Bambook from Shanda Literature China and Wink from EC Media India are two attractively -priced products launched this year. However the uptake rate of e-textbooks in emerging nations is currently bleak.

Korea has positioned itself as a leader in e-book usage and promotes their use, for example through the Korean Ministry of Education-sponsored Education & Research Information Service's (KERIS) eBook Consortium for Higher Education. KERIS has formed a consortium of over 70 universities to share access to more than 8,000 e-book titles. The Korean example can be emulated by many countries.

Content creation

Authors, editors, instructional designers and multimedia specialists need to understand students' requirements in

creating digital content. These include students' need to annotate e-books and provide interactive links.

Simply putting PDF content on a digital device does not do justice to digital media. Enhanced Editions and Vooks, which combine video, internet links and text, are demonstrating new ways to produce digital content.

eTextbooks can be well integrated into undergraduate courses. Engineering and the sciences need illustrations and detailed photographs. Digital editions can accommodate greater detail and clarity than print versions, while micro zooming options can benefit biology students.

While e-textbooks can integrate features impossible to offer in print versions, the cost of development would make their cost significantly higher than for printed books.

Meanwhile the multitude of file formats of e-books is still a challenge, although ePub is evolving as a more popular format, thanks to the efforts of the International Digital Publisher's Forum (IDPF) - the trade and standards organisation dedicated to the development and promotion of electronic publishing - which has adopted it.

Off-shoring digital development to countries such as India, the Philippines and Sri Lanka can keep the development cost lower. As with the success of eTutoring in off-shore tutoring, e-publishing for education too will have a larger presence in India as Indian education specialists can help develop good value e-textbooks. The technical expertise, adaptability of the work force to new technologies and cost savings give the country an advantage in off-shoring digital content development.

The Chinese invented paper in 105 AD and pioneered printing too. China is now positioned to make the world read digitally. Similarly, India's ancient writings and epics in Sanskrit are a treasure house of knowledge. These emerging countries now have the potential to contribute to learning in the digital way.

Source: Dec 12, 2010/[University World News](#)

Crash course on education planning

If you can, Invest in property to insulate your investments from inflation.

When it comes to children, every parent would like to give them the best of everything. With costs of education skyrocketing, parents often wonder about their capability to provide adequately for their child's higher education in future.

Assuming schooling is taken care of, we will look at how you can plan for your child's graduate studies. The cost of professional courses at undergraduate levels are exorbitant, unless your child can get into government institutions, where fees are affordable. Your child should not be denied an opportunity to enter her chosen vocational area for paucity of funds.

So, as a parent you need to plan to provide funds. Some degree courses, such as medicine and engineering, architecture, can be very expensive. If the actual requirement turns out to be lower than what you planned for, the balance can be redirected for other goals.

Inflation in education is very high, so over the years, the costs are going to rise substantially. A course which costs Rs 4 lakh today can cost Rs 10.37 lakh in 10 years at 10 per cent inflation. A plan made this way, including inflation, will have you more or less prepared to provide the funds when the time comes. The plan can be fine-tuned as the child is towards the end of schooling.

For post-graduation studies, the education can be funded by a loan, where the parent can be a guarantor. As the student would start working right after the post graduate studies, he or she can repay the loan in installments when the earnings start.

START EARLY; COMPOUND

If you start early and invest the maximum you can, the effect of compounding will create a better corpus over time. For education of your child, you can start when the child is born. If the funds are not sufficient at the beginning of your career, start allocating funds as you progress.

It is possible to plan for education at later stages, too, but the allocation of resources required will be very high. The portions of your investments earmarked for funding education should be sacrosanct and not be utilised for any other purpose.

INSTRUMENTS

You have to be prudent in your choice of investment vehicles. Emotional advertising is very much in vogue to lure you to products which say they'll help fund your child's future, especially unit-linked insurance plans (Ulips). Products which have the name 'children's plans' may actually not be necessary or suitable to fulfil your needs. You need to understand the underlying asset and strategy of the product before jumping in to buy one.

Ulips are sold as a short-term products. They are expensive and you need to look at the fine print before signing on the dotted line. If you have already invested in a Ulip, you need to stay invested for the complete tenure of the fund and keep contributing to it regularly. If you withdraw it before the tenure, the initial costs may eat into your returns.

Since the tenure available is very long, in most cases more than 10 years, investments in equity should work well. Direct equity investing can give excellent results, but you need to take care to pick up quality stocks, diversify optimally and hold for long periods. Most of the time, a small systematic investment plan (SIP) in mutual funds will see you through.

Land or property is a favourite among many for long-term goals. The initial outlay will be very high. It can give good capital growth over longer periods, but is very illiquid. The lack of liquidity may impede your goals. Property prices are

also cyclical in nature and the cycles may be quite long. Your investments may not yield the returns you expected if the cycle is on the downward trend.

Public Provident Fund is an excellent product in the fixed returns category. An investment of Rs 70,000 per annum over the 15-year duration, with an annual compounded return of eight per cent, will give you about Rs 20 lakh. This can be a huge support to fund your child's education. Since it is risk-free, guaranteed and tax-free at withdrawal, this product is a must for every portfolio.

You can plan your investments well, but if you miss out on protection strategies, all your planning will go waste. Adequate health and life insurance can keep your plans viable even in the unforeseen circumstances of disability or death.

As the time for the need of funds gets closer, you need to give paramount importance to preservation of capital and move from riskier assets to risk-free/low-risk assets, to protect the growth accumulated over the years.

Source: 12 Dec,2010/Mumbai/[Business Standard](#)

India's new hall of fame: CBSE texts

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) is flooded with requests from various government departments, the military and para-military forces, and industry bodies suggesting the work they do be included as a lesson in the students' social science syllabus. All claim they want to 'inspire the young generation' by relating all that these agencies do and their 'contribution to nation building'.

But academics feel that if their requests were acceded to, the social science syllabus, already heavy, would become overburdened.

The CBSE has yet to take a call on any of these requests. "There is pressure from organisations such as the Income Tax department, the Indian Air Force, Indian Navy and the Border Security Force, who have approached CBSE requesting their work be included in the syllabus," said a professor at the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT), which drafts the country's school text books.

The army has requested human resource development minister Kapil Sibal to make 'the contribution of the armed forces to India' part of school curriculum.

"Incorporating fresh content into existing syllabi involves bringing out a new edition of the existing textbook and ensuring it reaches all students," said a senior CBSE official.

"It can only be done once in a few years."

After a recent request, a committee was formed which is working on making road safety part of the social science syllabus.

Source: Dec 13, 2010/New Delhi / Hindustan Times

CBSE cracks the whip to ensure quality

In a major decision to bring accountability and transparency in schools affiliated to Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), the board is all set to take help from independent bodies for quality assessment and accreditation of schools.

The CBSE had recently invited 'Expression of Interest' (EOI) from registered educational institutions/NGOs/ trusts/ companies /group of individuals affiliated to an institution (registered) actively engaged in the education sector or in social services sector for more than two years to undertake institutional evaluation of schools affiliated with the CBSE, as well as schools planning for CBSE's affiliation.

"The board hopes that the exercise will ensure transparency and accountability in its affiliated schools, besides ensuring that students are provided accurate information," said an official of CBSE.

The selected independent bodies by CBSE will accredit schools on the basis of a seven-point assessment chart.

"The seven points on which a school's accreditation will be judged are academic processes and products, co-scholastic processes and products, infrastructure adequacy and functionality, human resources, management and administration, leadership, and beneficiary satisfaction," stated a circular issued by CBSE recently.

"For the evaluation methodology, the board has decided on a multilayer assessment approach. A school's performance will be assessed at various layers, keeping in mind the seven points of assessment."

The multilayer assessment approach will include peer review for quality assessment, review of stakeholders and beneficiaries to judge satisfaction, checking the school's reports to assess its self-review, and checking any other analysis and overall assessment of the school.

"The board has narrowed down assessment to seven points as these encompass the entire gamut of issues involved in the effective running of a school — from curriculum planning and teaching-learning process to student assessment and performance, staff recruitment, retention, parent education, alumni involvement, preservation of accounts data, social linkages, academic leadership, quality management, and satisfaction levels of students, parents, teachers as well as the school management," said the official.

In fact, the board has decided to take its latest step according to guidelines set by Kapil Sibal, Union minister for human resource development. The minister issued guidelines to ensure a transparent functioning of all educational institutes. Union human resource development (HRD) ministry has been pushing for reforms in the CBSE and has advocated accreditation/rating of its schools to ensure quality education.

Source: Dec 13, 2010/[DNA India](#)

National Secretariat of UMAP Inaugurated at Orissa-based KIIT University

KIIT University added yet another feather to its cap with the inauguration of India Secretariat of a very important organization, UMAP. University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP), dedicated for the cause of University level education in Asia and the Pacific, is an association of government and non-government organizations which administer student mobility in order to enhance international understanding among university students in 34 member countries with more than 364 participating Universities in the region of Asia and the Pacific.

UMAP National Secretariat of India at KIIT University was inaugurated on 11th December 2010 by Sri Debi Prasad Mishra, Hon'ble Minister of Higher Education, Tourism & Culture, Govt. of Odisha in the presence of Dr. Sumate Yamnoon, Secretary General, UMAP, Dr. H. K. Satapathy, VC, Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapitha, Tirupati and Madam Voravan Limtong, Director of the International Secretariat, UMAP.

KIIT has the unique distinction of being the only member of the country in UMAP since last two years. KIIT's focus on internationalization, knowledge sharing with more than 50 partner Universities across the globe, and other international activities were taken into consideration by the International Secretariat and the Board Members of UMAP to consider opening the UMAP National Secretariat of India at KIIT.

It is indeed a great honour for KIIT and for the State of Orissa that the India Secretariat has been opened in KIIT. Students and Universities of India can take advantage of it, said Dr. A. Samanta, Founder, KIIT & KISS who incidentally happens to be a Member of the Executive Board of UMAP.

Source: Dec 13, 2010/[Odissa Diary](#)

Navodaya schools set to get exemption

The Right to Education Act is likely to be amended for the second time within a year of its implementation to allow Navodaya Vidyalaya schools to continue with admission tests.

The law says that no school will screen students or parents for admission. But after the law ministry and attorney-general G.E. Vahanvati gave their opinion in favour of continuing with the tests at the specialised schools for poor meritorious students, the law is likely to be amended to exempt the Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti from the ban on screening.

The samiti, which runs the Navodaya schools, had written to the HRD ministry seeking special permission to continue with the screening. It had highlighted the crucial role of the schools, which admit students in Class VI, play in identifying talent from rural and backward areas through the tests and contended that this would not be possible through lottery.

The ministry then sought the opinion of the law ministry and the attorney-general.

“The view from the attorney-general and the law ministry is that the Navodaya Vidyalaya schools are specialised schools and they promote rural talent by providing them with free residential schooling. These schools should get exemption from the RTE provision of ban on screening,” a top source revealed.

The law ministry has favoured a fresh amendment to the act for this purpose. Although a clause in the education law empowers the government to issue a clarification on contentious matters while implementing it, the law ministry said bringing an amendment would be the appropriate way to grant the exemption.

“We have been arguing that every gifted and talented child has the right to be identified and provided with quality education. Without the admission test, it would be difficult for the schools to identify talent and the purpose of the Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti to provide quality education to talented children from poor families would be defeated,” a samiti official said.

The 594 Navodaya schools are regarded as islands of excellence. About 97 per cent students of these schools pass the board exam every year. About 74 per cent students are from families with an annual income less than Rs 48,000. Nearly 11 per cent students are first generation learners in their families.

The law ministry appreciated the samiti's argument that the US has enacted the Jacob Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act to protect the rights of gifted and talented students. The right to education law, on the contrary, seeks to homogenise education.

The law, which seeks to provide free and compulsory education to all children between six and 14 years, came into force on April 1 this year. It is now in the process of being amended to include physically challenged children.

The proposed exemption to the Navodaya schools might be opposed by private schools. “If RTE is a policy, then every school should respect this policy and abide by the provisions.

The act, which bans screening, is in the larger interest of children,” said Sangita Bhatia, principal of New State Academy, a private school.

A former secretary in the HRD ministry, A.K. Rath, however, said that the Navodaya schools teach poor talented children and should be allowed to hold the tests to find eligible students.

Source: Dec 13, 2010/[The Telegraph](#)

Rajasthan leads the way in ensuring right to education

State implements Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation as pilot project in 60 schools

Rajasthan is racing against time to get rid of the tag of a State with poor human development indicators. At least as far as the school education is concerned, the efforts are dedicated and results expected to be positive. Keen on implementing the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 in letter and spirit, the State is already way ahead in ensuring all children are in school and keeps track on 12 lakh children who are out of school, including drop-outs and those who never went to school.

Door-to-door survey

"This figure of 12 lakh was arrived at from a comprehensive door-to-door survey done on the lines of Census," said Veenu Gupta, Commissioner and State Project Director of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). These names will now be put on an interactive web portal that will become functional next month with directions to the officials to enrol them into schools. The out-of-school children include 7.13 lakh girls and 4.77 lakh boys.

"Citizens and civil society groups too can give names of out-of-school children which would be verified and then added to the list. As and when these children are enrolled it will be displayed on the website. Each student will be given a registration number that will help the government to keep track on them," Ms. Gupta explained.

The SSA is the implementing vehicle for the Right to Education Act and as part of this exercise the State government has created a resource group of experts for advising it.

Apart from banning corporal punishment and ensuring total sanitation and safe drinking water in all schools by March 2011, Rajasthan has started implementing Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) as a pilot project in 60 schools.

CCE scheme refers to a school-based evaluation of students that covers all the aspects of their development, where 'continuous' means regular assessments, frequency of unit testing, analysis of learning gaps, applying corrective measures, retesting and giving feedback to teachers and students for their self-evaluation, 'comprehensive' on the other hand means covering both the scholastic and co-scholastic aspects of a student's growth and development. "Implementing CCE is a huge task as it involves changing the mindset of teachers," Ms. Gupta pointed out.

Shortfall of teachers

There is a shortfall of 23,000 teachers that has put the teacher-student ratio at 1:40 against 1:30 envisaged under the RTE. She said the State has already done away with Class V and Class VIII Board exams as part of the CCE.

CCE pilot projects have been initiated in schools in Jaipur and Alwar districts for students from Class 1 to Class IV for three years before the system is introduced in all schools. The teachers in these identified schools have been given

special training for implementing CCE, Govind Singh, Assistant Director of SSA told TheHindu.

Of the 317 teachers to be trained for the purpose, 265 have already completed their training and are now in the process of introducing the new system in the schools. The training was conducted with the help of UNICEF and Bodh Shiksha Samiti. Admitting that the new system meant more work for teachers, Mamta Sharma, a trained teacher in a primary School in Malviya National Institute of Technology (MNIT) said that the system was inclusive and more relevant. The students are judged according to the level of performance for which various innovative methods are used by teachers, thereby discouraging rote learning and fear of exams. A proper daily register of a child's performance is maintained and the parents who form part of the School Management Committee kept updated.

Source: Dec 13, 2010/[The Hindu](#)

Nursery admissions: New deadline irks parents

The wait for nursery admission guidelines continued to harass troubled parents as the Delhi government failed to meet yet another deadline. The Directorate of Education, which was supposed to announce the new guidelines on Monday, has set yet another deadline now - December 15 (Wednesday).

In a meeting between education department officials, the various categories for nursery admission under the Right to Education (RTE) Act were finalized on Monday. The list of categories has been sent to the Ministry of Human Resource Development for approval. As per the indications given by education minister Arvinder Singh Lovely, there will broadly be three categories - neighborhood, sibling and alumni - under which schools in the capital will have to conduct the lottery.

The lottery system, which has been recommended under the RTE Act, has been severely criticized by both schools and parents who have been arguing that the 100-point system is a more transparent and fair way of granting admission. Reacting to the proposed criteria, most school principals said they would comment only after the guidelines come out on Wednesday.

However, some others did raise a few questions.

"What happens to other categories like girl child and first born? Apart from this, one also needs to see whether the management quota has been maintained and how," said a school principal, who didn't wish to be named. The parents, probably the most harried lot, too, did not seem entirely convinced.

"Let's see what the final guidelines are. But if lottery is being conducted based on criteria like alumni, sibling and neighborhood then parents like me do not stand a chance in any good school. Conducting lottery under these three categories is not fair," said Bindu Mishra, a resident of Mayur Vihar. Mishra is seeking admission for her twin sons. "Both me and my husband are not from Delhi. So, we do

not come in the alumni category."My sons are first borns, so we do not even fit in the sibling category and if we talk of neighborhood, there are only a couple of schools which are considered to be good.

Source: Dec 14, 2010/[Hindustan Times](#)

Supreme Court notice to States on de-recognition of deemed varsities

Tandon report has recommended de-recognition for their not meeting standards

The Supreme Court on Tuesday issued notice to all States seeking their response to the Tandon committee report recommending de-recognition of 44 deemed universities (DUs) for not meeting the prescribed standards and that these institutions be affiliated to the respective State universities.

A Bench consisting of Justices Dalveer Bhandari and Deepak Verma passed this order observing that it was necessary to hear the views of the States before any order was passed as about two lakh students were sought to be shifted to the State universities if the Tandon committee recommendation was to be accepted.

The Bench posted the matter for final hearing on January 11, 2011 and asked the parties concerned to complete the pleadings and file written submissions by then.

Earlier, Additional Solicitor-General Indira Jaising, appearing for the Centre, submitted that since Solicitor-General Gopal Subramaniam was not available in Delhi, she was seeking an adjournment. She said Attorney-General G.E. Vahanvati would appear in this matter.

Justice Bhandari, while granting adjournment, made it clear to the ASG that since the matter pertained to the lives of about two lakh students, no further adjournment would be granted and it was immaterial for the court whether the AG or any other law officer appeared in the matter.

In response to the notice issued to the 44 DUs, it was submitted on their behalf that none of the DUs was ever informed of the withdrawal of affiliation as a possible outcome of the review by the Tandon committee.

The DUs were led to believe that they were participating in the Centre's efforts in formulating the policy relating to higher education.

Allegation

It was alleged that the motive behind the churning process had been to clear the field of university education to welcome foreign universities into India.

It was submitted that the Centre had sought to stretch the scope of an unrelated writ petition to achieve a collateral object of quickly effecting a wholesale de-recognition of several existing DUs on an ill-formed and still-evolving higher education policy.

Media publicity

The decision to de-recognise 44 DUs was wantonly given wide media publicity even without any forewarning to the affected universities and shifting the stage to the next level, viz. that of rehabilitation of students studying in these institutions and at the same time causing irreparable harm to the reputation of the DUs concerned.

The DUs wanted the court to take into consideration all these factors and render justice to the students.

Source: Dec 14, 2010/[The Hindu](#)

ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

Trickle-down theory

In the season of scams and sleazy tapes, human compassion has blazed like a meteorite. Wipro chairman Azim Premji's \$2 billion donation to Indian primary education could become a turning point in the relationship between rich and poor in post-Independence India. Ratan Tata, Anand Mahindra and NR Narayana Murthy may have given millions of dollars to Harvard University, but Premji has donated over R8,000 crore to primary schools in rural India.

The biggest donation ever in the history of philanthropy has not gone to business schools or to religious establishments or to higher education. Instead it has gone to the youngest Indian citizens and called on them to dream the impossible dream. It is a donation that has invited tiny feet to abandon the slushy dirt tracks and run to school and then climb the staircase of destiny. Premji's donation will fund 100 schools over the next five years, train teachers and invest in technology to create quality modern education at the lowest levels of development. Premji has promised more money in the future. Let the jingoists shriek all they want, but here is a Muslim corporate leader who has made India the holy land of his mission and his endeavour.

Premji's act has brought philanthropy to the centre stage. In the heady era of the 'I-don't-care-I-want-to-party' mindset, India's philanthropic and charitable traditions have fallen by the wayside. While western pop icons like Bob Geldof, Sean Penn, Madonna and Angelina Jolie are distinguished by their commitment to sharing wealth and becoming voices of the disaster-struck, India's popular icons are marked by their endorsement of brands and jockeying for IPL teams. There are notable exceptions like Shabana Azmi's recent support to the Ek Jodi Kapda campaign or Rahul Bose's work among tsunami victims. But its difficult to find a Bollywood star who would lend his services as passionately and as self-effacingly to a disaster-struck area as perhaps actor Sean Penn's humanitarian work for the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Historian Kancha Ilaiah believes that spiritual traditions determine motivations towards philanthropy. The bania notion of 'gupt dhana' or hidden wealth has meant that

wealth has been hoarded, not openly shared with the needy as a way of enriching society, as an act of individual conscience or even as an act of worship. The Christian belief that god exists among the poor and the suffering is not as central to the Hindu way of thought where poverty is often seen as bad karma of a previous birth. Great charitable works have been done by religious foundations like the Sathya Sai and others, but often ritual donations to temples and priests have taken the place of focused development-oriented wealth-sharing.

In the 1950s and 60s, the Birlas and Tatas led the way in the setting up of many educational and cultural institutions. But today's prevailing culture of unabashed display has meant that the elegance of the old wealthy families, where money implied low key taste and discreet good living, is hardly practised. The Ambani billion-dollar home, valued at R4,000 crore or Lakshmi Mittal's famous \$60 million wedding for his daughter are, at one level, signals of the arrival of Indian business on the world stage, but from the point of view of the aam aadmi, they stand out as symbols of flamboyantly displayed wealth, wealth as shock treatment rather than wealth as healer.

The profits of India's new billionaires have not kept pace with their philanthropic works. While there are local development initiatives in RIL's Jamnagar, announcement of facilities for poor patients in the Ambani hospital, these are only a fraction of the mega profits of India's top businessmen. Firms that are committed to the building of human capital, or building brain power have fared better. There is, for example, the Akshay Patra scheme of Infosys, the rural school network of the Mittal group and HCL Infosystems' Vidyasagar scheme. No doubt, suspicion and hostility of the bureaucracy towards corporates, lack of public-private partnerships in key sectors like education have curtailed society building initiatives. Yet a grand gesture of generosity of the heart has been missing. Warren Buffet and Bill Gates asked US billionaires to give away 50% of their wealth to charity. But in India, we want to pamper our own children and our next generation too much.

Three years ago, in a message to India's rich, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had advised that they should shun wasteful lifestyles and conspicuous consumption like ostentatious weddings. The prime minister said that every rich person should do more to help ordinary people, instead of creating lifestyles that plant resentment in the minds of the have-nots. "India has made us," the prime minister said, "let us build bharat." A return to a Nehruvian-style austerity may be impossible in a market economy. But can there be any doubt that in a country of the poor, the rich do have a duty to be a little low-key about their wealth?

As the economy grows at above 8% and more money than ever before becomes available, let each one adopt a sector where we can be a drop in the ocean, be it health, education or environment. In 1991, we underwent a

collective mental transformation. It was a psychological overhaul. As the economy changed, making money was no longer seen as a sin and we ceased to be hypocritical about the human urge for material improvement. As a nation, we became healthily unapologetic about generating wealth, generating jobs and generating much-needed revenue from business.

But now we can't let corruption and selfishness take away from achieving the 'good life' in every sense of the term. Let each of us take a pledge of philanthropy, that even if we can't do as much as Premji, we will become a country where India's privileged are known worldwide as India's hands-on care-givers.

Source: Dec 7, 2010/[Hindustan Times](#)

Education and training is the next sunrise industry

Amit Bhatia, founder & CEO, Aspire Human Capital Management talks about the fast pace at which this industry is growing and the current employment/hiring trends in it

1) Please give us an overview of the industry and how it is doing presently.

The Education and Training is a \$80 billion industry (larger than IT/ITES) of which \$50 billion is private spend and \$30 billion is government spend. Of all private spend, \$40 billion is formal spend on schools, colleges and universities; while all professional/vocational training, test preparation and tutorial services, etc. account for another \$10 billion. India educates and trains over 320 million students, 300 inside schools and 20 inside colleges. The industry is growing at a compounded annual growth rate of 8-9 per cent. According to CII, India expects 500 million new job seekers between 2007 and 2022 but our current education system is not able to meet the demand.

2) Please give us a brief overview of your company.

Aspire™ is a social entrepreneurial firm, enabling embedded education that enhances employability through the world's first "hallmarked" Employability Education Management System (EEMS™). Aspire™ deploys its EEMS™ through ProHire™ and EnglishPro™ with Content, Assessments (including NEST™), Training, Technology & Placement capabilities for schools and colleges. Aspire's academic education offerings, in partnership with global education leaders, include iCarnegie CS-STEM (Grade III-X robotics based program), iCarnegie Computer Science (for UG/PG), and, MBAPro with Harvard Business Publishing content. Aspire™ currently trains over 25,000 students across 40 institutions in 12 states.

3) Can you describe the current employment/hiring trends in your industry?

Education unlike IT/ITES which is more concentrated is creating jobs around the country, especially in Tier 2, 3 and 4 cities. Like Retail, Telecom and Insurance, Education and

Training jobs are localised and have to be near schools, colleges and universities. The private Education and Training services sector is growing at over 20% year-on-year and is creating jobs in content creation, instructional design, graphics and desk-top publishing, sales, training, training operations, technology/software development, counselling, et al. Companies like NIIT, Educomp, Everonn, Aspire, Seed Infotech, etc. are all growing and creating these jobs. Even in 2008-09, when the industry went into a recessionary cycle, Education & Training continued to grow.

4) *What are some of the traits and qualifications you look for in people you hire?*

We look for deep passion for education and social impact; entrepreneurial skills and risk-taking ability; proven track record of success (in other industries) and outstanding communication/behavioural skills.

Source: December 8, 2010/ [Timesascent](#)

Q&A: Anurag Behar of the Azim Premji Foundation

Last week Wipro founder [Azim Premji announced that he was transferring almost \\$2 billion](#) in shares to the education-focused trust he controls. India Real Time spoke to Anurag Behar, who is co-CEO of the foundation along with Dileep Ranjekar, about why it works in education and its plans for expanding its programs. Edited excerpts:

IRT: What made the foundation focus on education?

Behar: The foundation was set up with the purpose of trying to improve Indian society, to make it more just, equitable and humane. We felt that education is perhaps the most important enabler of society. If people are educated then their capacities increase, their ability to take care of themselves increases, they develop in many ways, not just from a standpoint of livelihood, but from the standpoint of being individuals, being engaged social citizens and so on. Essentially education is the most powerful vehicle and has the greater multiplier effect in terms of having a good society.

And we also did decide that we will work on the issue of quality of education. Schools might be there, but is education really happening? So therefore we focused on the issue of quality of education, which is what we've been working on for the past nine years.

IRT: What projects is the foundation currently involved in?

Behar: Current programs reach about 25,000 schools. We work on various kinds of things—I'll give you some examples. First example is we worked under Karnataka state government on examination reform, while the other was that we worked from Class 1 to 10 in Rajasthan for the government. The third is we are working in Uttrakhand in two districts in partnership with the government where it is a holistic improvement program and that means that we are intervening on everything: teacher training, principal training, curriculum development, management systems.

IRT: Is the foundation planning on scaling up?

Behar: Yes. The reason that this endowment has been created is because we are now at a stage of a very significant scale-up. The scale has two different dimensions. The first dimension is that we are setting up a university; it is a fairly unique university. It will not offer any programs in engineering, medicine (or stuff like that).

The university will focus completely on offering programs in education and in development areas, like a postgraduate program in Education Technology, a postgraduate program in Curriculum Development, in Education Leadership and Management.

The purpose of the university is to create a talent pool of education experts, because unless we have education experts how can our education system improve? We will have about 3,500 to 4,000 students in about 5 years. It will be operational from July 2011.

This was one dimension of the scale-up. The other dimension is the field program I was talking about. It will scale up very significantly. From the field programs we will set up institutions in 50 remote, disadvantaged districts of this country. These institutions will understand the local issues, the local means, and we will devise local programs that we will develop to help that particular district.

Just to give you an idea of the scale-up—currently we have about 350 people employed with us. That number will go up to 5,000 people in about five years.

IRT: Which project were you were most proud of?

Behar: In the social sector you tend to not be very proud of things, as things change very slowly. Everything that I have pointed out are good efforts, not just ours but equally of the government. The Karnataka reform project was a good one, and the comprehensive holistic school improvement plan is a good one. But again it is not just us who are doing it, this is with absolute partnership with the government.

IRT: What is the biggest bottleneck you are facing?

Behar: The people, absolutely. It's the biggest problem and we have faced this problem for the past 10 years, which is why we are setting up the university because there is no solution otherwise.

Source: Dec 7, 2010/[The Wall Street Journal-India Real Time](#)

Education must strengthen pluralism: Pratibha Patil

President Pratibha Patil on Wednesday said the country's education system should strengthen adherence to secularism, inclusiveness and pluralism. The President was speaking as chief guest at the convocation of Manipal University here.

Ms. Patil said these great values were enshrined in the country's Constitution and developed by its civilisation. "These give strength and sustenance to our diverse multicultural, multireligious and multilingual society. We are a democratic nation, which means there must be

willingness to listen to the other's point of view, and to have respect for differing perceptions," she said.

Peaceful and prosperous nations were indeed, predicated on an educated and well-informed population. She reminded the students that the large youth population of the country had a unique demographic advantage in terms of manpower availability for building the nation. "The energy of the youth and their enthusiasm must be guided into productive work," she said.

"It is important that universities have an environment conducive for the healthy growth of students so that their talents can blossom and they become positive individuals. Our nation has made significant strides. We also responded creatively to advances in electronics, communications and computer technology and, resultantly, India has emerged as a major player in these fields. To maintain a leadership role in the knowledge economy, we must focus on innovation and remain competitive."

"Today, we are the fourth largest economy in the world in terms of purchasing power parity, and one of the fastest growing economies. We have to address many constraints and remove many roadblocks on our growth trajectory. For a nation which is the seventh largest in geographical terms, and the second largest in terms of population, our existing physical infrastructure is inadequate."

Making a mention of Manipal University, she said, "Today, Manipal is one of the leading academic and educational institutions in the country. I wish the University of Manipal a bright and prosperous future."

Source: Dec 9,2010 / Manipal / [The Hindu](#)

Globalising India needs 'schools of tomorrow': Harvard education professor

As India moves ahead on the path of globalisation, it also needs to overhaul its education system to meet the demands of the coming age, says Harvard Graduate School of Education professor David Perkins who believes that "schools of tomorrow" should move towards teaching "knowledge that matters".

"I am broadly familiar with educational practices in several parts of the world. To my way of thinking, one of the greatest challenges of education today is fashioning a system that truly speaks to the people live and gives the skills and insights people need in our complex globalised era," Perkins told IANS in an e-mail interview.

Perkins said education in India needs to move away from mere rote learning and embrace an application-based approach through "schools of tomorrow".

So what exactly are "schools of tomorrow"?

"My personal sense of the schools of tomorrow is that they will teach knowledge that matters, that connects meaningfully with the lives learners are likely to live," he said.

With a population of over one billion, reach is still the biggest challenge for Indian education, say experts. Though the percentage of children going to school reached 83 percent in 2007, according to some sample surveys, quality remains a problem, with rampant teacher absenteeism and under-qualification of teachers being major issues.

Perkins -- the author of several books, the latest being "Making Learning Whole" -- emphasised on a comprehensive approach towards education.

"We need to be aware of the tendency in education to break ideas and skills into small elements and teach them, hoping that it all comes together later. I like to call this the disease of 'elementitis' in education," said Perkins.

"For instance, we need to teach ordinary arithmetic as a form of mathematical modelling, which it is, not just as a bundle of skills. We need to teach history, even in the early years, as an interpretive process that involves consideration of evidence and alternatives," he said.

There has been debate in India and other parts of the world on changes needed in the education system. The Indian education system, based on the British system, is one of the largest in the world.

After the enforcement of the Right to Education Act, the government is in the process of standardising the system.

However, Perkins said the present system was not enough to meet the needs of the students.

"Does what we teach and the way we teach it enlighten learners about major themes such as ecological problems and economic complexities? Does it empower learners as workers, citizens, and family members? Does it cultivate responsibility?" he asked.

"All too often, no! A great deal of what is typically taught beyond basic literacy and numeracy will never play a significant role again in learners' lives. It's just there for the test, not usable knowledge," he said.

Perkins is co-founder of Project Zero, a research programme inquiring about the psychology and philosophy of education at Harvard.

Discussing Project Zero, the academician said it was a mission to conduct basic inquiry into ideas important for learning and connect them to practical agendas "in education, formal and informal, including adult learning".

"Project Zero ideas have been applied in many settings around the world, including some settings with large numbers of relatively uneducated children. For instance, one widely used framework from Project Zero is Teaching for Understanding, an approach to teaching the disciplines in a way that fosters deep understanding. Another is Visible Thinking, a very practical model for integrating thinking skills and dispositions into the teaching of content.

"How does this apply to the Indian context? In general, Project Zero focusses on big universals of learning and

their translation into practice, and our ideas apply to almost any setting where there is a concern with deep and thoughtful learning," he said.

Source: NEW DELHI:

Choosing the right B-school

The CAT 2010 is over and students across the country are focusing on which business schools to apply. With thousands of AICTE-approved business schools, university MBA programmes, autonomous schools and more, it isn't easy to choose the right institute.

Do rankings and ratings help? Beyond the top 10-15 institutes in the country, the rankings aren't clear. Every business magazine, test-prep magazine and coaching class publishes its own list of top schools, and mostly, these lists are wildly different from each other.

There is an intelligent way to choose the right business school. Let's get past the IIMs and other top 10 schools, which cater to less than one per cent of the students. Let's give a thought how to select the right school from the rest. Over the years, we have surveyed thousands of students, looking for a framework, which would help them make choices.

The most important factor is YOU. Your academic record, entrance test-scores and profiles do matter. Hazy idea of a career plan is the biggest stumbling block. You must come up with a five-year plan- What industry do I want to work in, the field (Sales, marketing, finance, HR) and cities these industries located.

The second most important factor is FIT. Do your academic scores fit your chosen career profile and also your attitude and aptitude? For Example, if you are not one for spending a whole day walking around a busy city, you might not want to consider a marketing/sales career...no matter which business school you go to- all marketing jobs start on the street!

A B-school's placement record is not the only criterion. Within those records lies your career. The key factors to consider are, the recruiters coming to the school every year, new recruiters introduced last year and the job profiles offered to students of different majors.

The third most important factor is COST. Give it a thought whether the school is within your budget and if it offers bank loan facility. What's the fine print? Are there hidden fees (additional fees for industry visits and workshops) and also donation/capitation fees?

And finally, it's the choice of right business schools. Most students end up with three choice groups based on their academic record- the hopeful group (top schools that look only at 90+ percentile scores), the mid-range group (schools that look at 70 to 90 percentile scores and give weightage to your academics as well) and the local options (schools in your city, a strong choice for students on a

budget, with the added bonus of having a home base and a job network through friends and family).

Source: Dec 10, 2010/[Economic Times](#)

Experts voice concern over shortage of researchers

Nobel laureates, international scientists and bureaucrats discussed the higher education in 21st century on the fourth day of ongoing science conclave organised by Indian Institute of Information Technology, Allahabad on Saturday.

The panelists including chairman, board of governors, IIT-New Delhi, Nobel laureates Roald Hoffman and Richard Ernst, scientists Helmut Schwarz, Stuart Parkin, Ramesh Chandra, Anish Arora, Ramjee Prasad, Graham Weight, Radhakrishna, MD Tiwari and M Radhakrishnan discussed the existing problems in the higher education system. They raised several issues like the shortage of PhD and MTech students who could be utilised as the teaching staff.

Talking about the raising the budget by the government allocated for the higher education, Agarwal talked about the assets, equity and excellence as three pillars of the higher education.

There was a discussion on the educational reforms taken by the Indian government like the subsidy given to the students in the loan, pay revision for the teachers etc. In the last portion of his talk, he spoke on how to revive the respect associated with the teaching field.

Roald Hoffmann said that he was puzzled why the number of PhDs was low these days. He said that retaining the magic of education is not an easy task. India is growing with education, moving toward excellence but the proper relation between the two could be maintained through research.

Richard Ernst expressed concern over the education system in India due to the lack of universities and proper collaboration between the foreign universities and Indian universities. He said: "We are becoming so dependent on gadgets that we have become a machine. Culture in India is very rich but in the field of science & technology India lags behind.

He remarked: "You are the upper class Indian living in the lower class development. So you need the justice, justice for development with respects to other, supports for development of robust education system. India is also lagging behind in holding respect for teacher. Changing the attitude will automatically grow the respects. India has to attract foreign faculty members. That's very important and will only be achieved by the good collaboration among the global universities."

Ramji Prasad, director CTIF, Alborg University, Denmark raised a question that why Indians become famous when they leave India? The reason for asking this question was to raise the concern over the salary issue of the teachers and professors in India. He also raised the issues regarding the family responsibilities that are faced by the Indian

professors and teachers and how they come in the way of becoming a quality educator.

Source: Dec 11, 2010/[The Times of India](#)

MBA's should look at the broking industry, too

Believe it or not, the financial services sector has some great career options. Here's a look at some of these. For the business graduate, obtaining a degree is just the beginning. What's more important is to take a closer look at available career options and measuring which industry sectors have the greatest need for budding professionals. The finance industry is multi-faceted, offering a variety of positions catering to different skills and interests.

Looking specifically into the equity broking and wealth management sphere, there are ample opportunities in the financial services sector. The Indian broking industry has come a long way in the last decade and has also become more professional in its approach.

Despite the Indian economy growing at 8.5% and the global funds increasingly eyeing the India story, direct participation of retail investors in equity markets is only 1.4% of the population. Other emerging economies such as China and South Korea... boast of a higher direct participation to the extent of 9.4% and 7.4% from the retail public in their respective stock markets. Given this scenario, there is ample scope for exponential growth in this sector. It is estimated that the number of households that have an annual income of over Rs 10 lakh will touch 18.1 million by 2020 and the number of those in consuming classes (income between Rs 90,000 and Rs 10 lakh) will grow to 180 million by then. Just like the telecom and consumer goods industry benefited from the consumer boom in the last decade, the retail financial services industry is going to benefit from the investment boom. The broking industry is practically at the sunrise stage and should directly reap the rewards from this growth.

With an increase in the number of PE inflow and IPOs, ample career opportunities have been created in equities, investment banking,... wealth management and retail broking.

How does one tap into this opportunity? It is always wise to consider the direction of the market before seeking a financial job. To effectively pursue jobs with the highest probability of success, one must measure the demand for the position. Different financial jobs require different skills and present varied work environments, so it's wise to select a job that aligns with one's long-term interests and abilities. Someone with good interpersonal skills, for example, might do well as a financial advisor, while someone who enjoys crunching numbers might do better in research.

For a fresh management graduate, it is the analytical skill and knowledge of the stock market that would determine career growth. For one who likes identifying new clients,

interacting with them and advising, relationship manager or a financial planning manager can be a good option. As one gains more expertise about market, client acquisition and advisory, one can lead a team of relationship managers as a financial advisor or senior relationship manager.

Fresh graduates should have a clear idea of what is the ideal profile one is looking for. Apart from campus, there are two ways to find openings—online and offline—and it's a good idea to use both. One should keep in mind that some financial jobs are highly specialised, so job portals are not the best places to seek such positions. Instead, placement agencies that specialise in financial services industry should be considered. The key to individual success is to research, locate and land the job that has the greatest compatibility with one's skills and interests.

Source: Dec 13, 2010/[The Financial Express](#)

Higher education should reach poor sections of society: Pitroda

Asserting that the country needs to improve upon the quality of higher education, [Sam Pitroda](#), advisor to the prime minister on public information infrastructure and innovations, on Sunday said that it is also necessary to ensure that the poor sections of the society are able to get the best education possible.

Addressing the students at the seventh convocation ceremony of the [Symbiosis International University](#), Pitroda said that one of the challenges is to expand the reach of higher education by having more colleges, teachers and seats.

"This is the time to act. If we are willing to deregulate, be flexible, open and trust our academic community, we will definitely achieve our goals. That's what we did in 1991 to our economy and that's what we need to do in 2011 to our education," he said.

Observing that this is a critical time in the history of India, Pitroda said that the next ten years are going to dictate the destiny of the country. "The next big challenge is developing desired skill-sets for the twenty-first century. Despite having a population of a billion people today, our education system has not been able to produce enough qualified people in any discipline," he said.

Pitroda said that by the year 2050, [India](#) would have a new model of learning and for rural development. "We do not have to be a super power. We just need our own people to live with respect and with proper sanitation, healthcare, food and water," he said.

"The old model of education has to be replaced by a new model through which teachers can be mentors, and children can learn from each other and not only through teachers. Research scientists should be able to teach in colleges and universities. The government should support funding the research and development activities at universities and colleges," he added.

The convocation ceremony was presided by president and founder director of Symbiosis, S B Mujumdar.

Source: 13 Dec, 2010/Pune/ [The Times of India](#).

Education through art for children in need

Young Indians, a wing of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), has started a project to educate 2,000 underprivileged children across Calcutta through art experiments and fieldwork.

“Our aim is nation-building and what better way to do that than by helping young people who do not have the means to become productive members of society,” said Namrata Jalan, an entrepreneur and the chairperson for the YI (Young Indians) Kala initiative.

YI Kala has joined hands with 10 organisations — the Salvation Army girls’ orphanage, the Dakshin Kalikata Sevashram boys’ orphanage, the SMM Liluah home, the Rehabilitation Centre for Children, Ek Prayas, Apne Aap, New Light, Dakshin Prayas, Ramakrishna Vivekananda Mission Suryapur and a school in Belur — for the project.

The plan is to reach out to orphans, rape victims, juvenile delinquents, platform children, children of sex workers and differently abled children.

The YI members have appointed teachers who go to these organisations and tutor kids using “interactive, creative methods”.

“Geography is taught using models instead of just reading out from a book. Life science teachers use skeletons and other diagrams to teach about the human body,” said Deepika Kedia, a YI member who is a consultant hepatologist and gastroenterologist.

Members from across the YI students’ network in Calcutta, covering Globsyn Business School, Praxis Business School and Calcutta University, are executing the project.

The students have taught the children to paint diyas and helped them make handicraft items that are being sold at the Crossword bookstore on Elgin Road for a week.

“We are trying to find a way to utilise the skills the children are acquiring to increase their employability,” said Jalan.

For the students, involvement in the project means more than just helping those in need. “We are learning management skills, leadership qualities as well as application of marketing tricks through the project,” said Priyanka Saha, a second-year student of Globsyn Business School.

The YI’s aim is to take the week-long display and sale at Crossword, which began on Saturday, to a permanent stall at the store that will help to make the project self-sustaining.

The Kala project will be taken up nationally by the YI chapters in other cities.

Source: Dec 13,2010/[The Telegraph](#)

Inquirer Editorial: Firing bad teachers

One way to improve public education is to speed up the process to remove bad teachers from the classroom.

Unfortunately, getting rid of bad apples has become nearly impossible under union tenure rules that were crafted to protect teachers’ rights but too often deny children a decent education

The antiquated system fails to hold teachers with a bad performance record accountable. They should not be allowed to wear tenure like a badge of honor that entitles them to a lifetime appointment in the classroom.

The New Jersey Education Association last week came up with a good idea: to allow an arbitrator to handle tenure cases instead of an administrative judge. The change could save time and money.

Not surprisingly, Gov. Christie, who has battled with the union since before he took office, blasted the proposal as inadequate. But if Christie plans to implement a sweeping agenda to reform public education, he must open the door for all stakeholders to participate. Legislation would be needed to change the tenure rules.

The state’s largest teachers’ union deserves credit for at least showing a willingness to tackle a tough issue like tenure. Historically, collective bargaining units have been reluctant to talk about changing work conditions.

But the union must also be willing to work with Christie to make other needed reforms. They include changing how teachers are evaluated and rewarding the best teachers with merit pay.

President Obama has called for similar reforms to raise the bar on teacher quality. His plan would give more training to those who need help. But those who still fail to improve after a reasonable period could be fired.

A recent Rutgers-Eagleton poll found that 70 percent of New Jersey residents believe tenure is an obstacle that prevents districts from removing ineffective teachers. Most teachers get tenure after three years on the job.

On average, a tenure case can take a year to resolve and cost upward of \$100,000, according to the New Jersey School Boards Association.

As a result, dismissals are relatively uncommon, even when teacher effectiveness may be at issue. In 2008, there were only 35 education-tenure cases in the state, about one for every 6,600 employees.

There are plenty of good, hardworking teachers and they should not be painted with the same brush. But allowing bad teachers to stay is a blemish on the profession and a disservice to students.

New Jersey should look to other states that are trying to overhaul the tenure process but keep safeguards in place.

They want to make it more difficult for teachers to earn tenure, increase the time that it takes to get the job protection, and mandate periodic evaluations to retain tenure.

Source: Dec 13, 2010/ [The Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

Upbringing, Education and Health

Americans like to win. Competitiveness is deeply ingrained in our culture. We enjoy the many sports our athletes dominate worldwide, like football, baseball, basketball, the Olympics – soccer, not so much. Besides sports, we like to think of ourselves as leaders in many other disciplines, like science, technology and economics. But comparing ourselves favorably to the rest of the world has become harder these days. According to an international test program conducted by the *Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development*, a Paris-based research group, called the "Program for International Student Assessment" (PISA), the by far highest scores in math, science and reading were all earned by students from China, and in particular by students from the city of Shanghai.

American students were not only outperformed by their counterparts from China. In most subjects, they came in 23rd and 24th, behind other Asian- and a number of European countries. In math, the results were even worse.

Government officials called for immediate action and declared the test results a "*Sputnik* moment," reminiscent of the times when the Soviet Union succeeded in launching its first satellite ahead of the United States in 1957.

Of course, one particular test does not reflect the educational standards of entire nations. Observers of the PISA survey were quick to point out that Shanghai is exceptional even by comparison to other Chinese cities. But there is clearly a culture of learning and achieving in China today that is strongly supported and promoted by the government. Students are asked to strive for personal success as a matter of national pride. And so is everyone else. On a recent visit to Beijing, I had the opportunity to observe this emerging vibrancy first hand. China may have a long way to go to improve the standard of living and quality of life of all its citizens, but there is great confidence among young people that the future belongs to them.

Skeptics may say that educational achievements are not easily measured by tests like PISA. Chinese students are predominantly proficient in specific subjects, like science and math, but less so in vocational ones, like sports and the arts. Often that may not even be by choice. However, since the "No Child Left Behind Act" was established by the Bush administration, our own public school system has taken a similar approach. So what's the difference? Why does a strictly test-driven curriculum work better there than here?

In a different but quite relevant survey, the *United Nations Children's Fund* (formerly *United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund* or UNICEF) has examined the welfare of children in the world's richest countries on a variety of measures, such as material well-being, educational well-being and health well-being.

With regards to material well-being, the UNICEF investigation focused on a number of diverse factors, like affordability of housing and educational resources. The educational evaluation looked mostly at proficiency in math, science and reading. A third component was health.

Unsurprisingly, all these elements of a child's well-being turned out to be intricately connected. Children learn best in a safe environment where they can concentrate on their studies and where they have access to good schools and learning materials. They thrive when they are enrolled in a well-structured school system with a high level of discipline and a balanced curriculum.

UNICEF also included health care as one of the most vital components for the welfare of children. Access to affordable medical services was found to be equally as important as education and basic material means by the survey. If one of the elements is missing or in scarce supply, the others suffer as well.

If you think that these conclusions are self-evident, you are probably right. The problems are plain to see and solutions seem to dictate themselves. Yet, UNICEF found stark inequality of the welfare of children everywhere it looked. Even the Europeans with their relatively strong social safety nets are falling behind in their care for poor children. When ranked by country, however, the United States came in dead last among 24 of the world's richest nations – behind Slovakia, Greece and Italy.

These results are puzzling and disturbing. The American education system has long been considered as one of the very best in the world. Our colleges and universities are the first choices of students who want to study abroad. Our medical facilities and services are among the most advanced and best equipped.

But unlike other wealthy nations, we are quite tolerant of the ever-widening gap between the richest and the poorest members of our society. Nowhere is this more evident than in the three areas investigated by UNICEF. Educational resources are plentiful for those who can afford them. So is safe living space. We have excellent private schools, but they are expensive and for most families out of reach. Many of our public schools, on the other hand, are in bad shape, especially in low-income school districts. Our hospitals and medical centers may be state of the art but, again, they are inaccessible for those without sufficient health insurance, which are many.

The hardest hit by this great divide are the children who grow up in poverty. Without safe living conditions, without sufficient educational resources, without access to quality medical care, there is no hope that disadvantaged children will be able to compete against those who receive all the support they need. The decisions who will grow up to be a winner and who will end up losing are made early in life, and setbacks suffered at the start can't be made up for later.

Yes, this may very well be our second "*Sputnik* moment," however, this time the battle is not going to take place high up in the sky, but in our homes, neighborhoods, schools and medical facilities. This is where we must learn to be winners again.

Source: Dec 13, 2010/ [Blog.Seattle](#)

Is a University Education Worth It

Oversupply looks to have reduced the value of a degree.

The proposed increase in university tuition fees has been in the headlines for the last few weeks, in large part thanks to the violent demonstrations in central London. Then again live TV violence always sells; as the saying goes, "if it bleeds, it leads."

It's human nature to complain about price rises, at least when it concerns those goods and services which you consume. But tuition fee increases are also posing a question that many prospective students should ask themselves; is a full-time university education worth it?

Many have found to their cost that it wasn't, particularly those who studied subjects that most employers [consider to be less worthy](#). Many would-be students might benefit from being a little bit more selective in what they study instead of focusing upon tuition fees.

Valuing education

It's hard to put a price on an education because many of its benefits are non-monetary. Education doesn't just improve a person's quality of life; education rewards society if only because it should increase tax revenues and reduce crime rates (the well educated are reckoned to be less likely to commit crimes).

Whilst we can value these non-monetary factors (the courts do it all the time when assessing damages for personal injury), I will ignore them for the rest of this article.

What's a degree worth?

The monetary value of a degree is equal to the extra income that the student earns over their working lifetime, less the cost of acquiring it (mostly tuition fees, extra living costs and the loss of earnings whilst studying).

It's impossible to come up with a precise answer because there are too many known unknowns to consider, such as the student's employment prospects. But it's useful to try to estimate the additional income, particularly for students who have already decided what jobs they intend to aim for.

Not what it used to be

It used to be an easy decision. You spent three years at university; the taxpayer paid most of your costs and after graduating you chose which of several high-paying jobs to take.

Not any more though. Universities have been taking in record numbers of students in recent years, but this has cut the financial support available for each student. To plug the gap there needs to be fee increases, or tax rises, or both.

The last government aimed to ensure that 50% of teenagers will go to university but this has [depressed](#)

[graduate salaries](#). In large part this is because the British economy can't absorb all these extra graduates at what used to be graduate salaries.

You don't need an economics degree to realise that increasing the supply of anything will decrease its market value -- this law is true for labour just as much as it is for goods.

To paraphrase Chief Engineer Montgomery Scott of the Starship Enterprise, "ye cannae change the laws of economics." This doesn't stop people from trying.

More debt, less pay

Recent graduates have found that the job market isn't what they thought it would be. Most are now saddled with huge debts, albeit with deferred payment options, at the start of their working life. Is it any wonder why many are asking whether it was worth it?

Even worse, studies show that if you start your career during hard times the damage to your earnings lasts for most if not all your working life. Research from [Yale University](#) indicates that these graduates can expect to earn roughly 9% less.

Furthermore, the premium paid for certain types of education and skills is increasingly being reduced by the effects of globalisation. If you're a newly qualified engineer you're not just competing with graduates from the rest of Britain, your job market includes the rest of the EU (particularly Eastern Europe) and to a lesser extent, the rest of the world.

Americans are now finding out that a law degree, once one of the most cost-effective subjects to study, [doesn't guarantee a job](#) which provides you with enough to live on let alone service your debts.

Cost-effective education

Whilst there are many reasons for going away to university (right of passage, social life, leaving home, etc.) the cost of doing so is increasingly drawing attention to more cost-effective alternatives, such as studying at universities where students can still live at home and/or taking a part-time degree whilst working.

More and more teenagers are now studying with the UK's biggest university, [The Open University](#). An OU degree is cheaper than a conventional university; the total fees are somewhere between £5,000 and £9,000, depending upon the subjects you take, which is a big saving.

I wouldn't be surprised to see some universities respond by offering two-year degrees, cutting costs by making more efficient use of university premises. The [University of Buckingham](#) has been doing this for many years.

After all, the reason why students have long summer holidays dates back to the days when they were needed to help bring the harvest home!

Source: Dec 13, 2010/ [The Motely](#)

Indian youth see US colleges as more flexible, life changing: NYT

Indian school and college students are reportedly seeing the United States as a viable avenue to pursue higher education after acquiring their bachelor degrees in India.

Higher education institutions in the United States are said to have flexible and diverse courses, besides hands-on experience in the subject of a student's choice.

There is a view within the Indian student community that courses in the United States offer practical experience, whereas in India, the syllabus is not at all flexible.

The younger population in India wants and says it can pay for better education, but they also know that in a country where thousands apply for each spot at a handful of top universities, the chances of securing admission are remote, the New York Times reports.

Indian students believe that a good foreign degree will land them better jobs and a better life.

In interviews with students around India recently, the NYT said that most of them said they wanted to strengthen their credentials outside of the country and voiced hope for growth in India after returning. They also spoke of the usual fears and concerns of students headed overseas.

The NYT quoted Ruchika Castelino, the head of the Indian operations of Study Overseas, a company that advises students, as saying: "That's such a huge question that students have. Then everything else follows - "Where shall I go, what is the kind of course, job placements, etc."

She estimates that the number of Indian students going overseas annually has doubled in the past six years, reaching more than 200,000.

For other students, where money is an issue, they opt for one or two-year programs at British universities.

Source: Dec 13, 2010/Sify.com

We give funds up to 100% for students who can't afford to pay margin fees, on merit'

Credila Financial Services, which specialises in education loans, says it has been successful in particularly helping students who are otherwise deprived of a good education due to their poor economic condition

In an interview to Moneylife, Prashant Bhonsle, country head of Credila Financial Services, explained various aspects of education loans in India, and elaborated how Credila is working to help students and universities. He discussed the criteria for sanctioning loans, interest rates, credit rating of students and co-borrowers, rating of universities and so on. Mr Bhonsle also answered questions about the shortage of basic education and facilities. Following are excerpts from the interview.

Moneylife (ML): How different is Credila from banks and other financial institutions, whether they are in the public or private sector? What are your unique features?

Prashant Bhonsle (PB): We have innovative products and services. Many lenders prefer giving loans to students applying at institutes and universities recognised by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) or some other accreditation agency. Seeing the growth in the number of private institutes, we are also providing loans to such students. We take into consideration factors such as the quality of education, employment potential, and so on, when sanctioning loans. There is flexibility in the collateral guarantee. We provide services for legal verification of collateral documents, whereas banks ask students to do that on their own. Banks insist on a confirmation of admission and universities ask for a proper guarantee that finance will be secured to pay the fees. Here the student is in a catch-22 situation. At Credila, we give the student the sanction letter based on his documents and the institute he has applied to. Once admission is completed, the loan is disbursed. We provide loans of up to 20 lakhs. We fund students even up to 100% of their fees for those who can't afford to pay margin fees, based on merit. Finally, we even consider relatives, cousins as co-borrowers (other than parents), which is generally avoided by banks. And we don't have hidden charges.

ML: How many students have availed of education loans from Credila, for higher education within India as well as to study abroad? Has there been an increase in loan disbursements?

PB: There has been a big increase in the number of students applying for education loans in both segments-for those seeking to study in India and at foreign universities. The cost of education is rising and these days students want to be independent in funding their education, so many of them apply for loans. Another reason is the incentive on loans-students can claim a tax benefit on the interest paid. We saw around 500 students applying on each day during the peak season. In the last study we did, we recorded an average one student applying every minute at Credila.

ML: Credila offers customised loans for students and co-branded loans to academic institutes. Can you explain these products?

PB: The customised loan programme, as the name suggests, is structured based on the institute and the course, or the individual student. Here we evaluate factors like the student's and co-borrower's credit history, fees schedule and repayment capabilities holistically, after which the loan amount is decided. A co-branded loan is basically using the Credila tag together with the particular university or institute. Suppose a new course is launched by the university, many of the banks may not sanction loans to the students applying for this course. But Credila partners with the university to become an exclusive loan partner and provide students with finance for the course.

ML: As per the information on your website, there is a borrower and co-borrower's underwriting criteria as part of the eligibility for a loan. Please explain the criteria.

PB: Primarily it is the occupation profile of the co-borrower, which in most cases are parents. The credit history of the co-borrower forms a major pillar in sanctioning loans. We have tie up with credit bureaus to evaluate credit history. But we do have provision for deviation if the student is highly meritorious.

ML: Credila has an exclusive credit scoring model for student loans. Is the score given in a particular number or in percentage terms? What is the range for high and low scores? Does the credit score of a student influence the amount of loan he will get?

PB: In 2005-06, when we launched our service, we conducted research to understand the domain of the education loan sector in India. A lot of data pertaining to the sector was studied. We partnered with Fair Isaac Corporation to give credit scores for education loans, based on the data collected by us. It is a complex algorithm of various factors such as the quality of the student, the institute, the type of course, the quality of the collateral, credit history of co-borrowers, and so on. We also give weightage to the merit of a student. The score depends on each individual student and there is no particular range.

ML: How will a credit score given to universities based on their programme benefit them?

PB: This is a ranking which is given to the university. Many times, universities lack in talented students as meritorious ones are financially weak. When we co-brand with a university, we become a platform for the student applying at the university and the loan is provided to him/her there. This way the university gets quality of students and vice versa.

ML: Credila offers partner programmes for foreign universities which allow them to provide Credila Financial Services as a student loan provider to fund Indian students entering Indian Universities and Indian students entering US universities. Is this limited to universities in India and the US?

PB: This is not limited to American universities. We have funded loans for students applying at universities across the globe. Many students have been enabled loans to study at campuses in New Zealand, Germany, France and other countries.

ML: How many universities-Indian and foreign have you partnered with? What has been the overall response from universities and students who opted for a loan from you?

PB: Many universities from both India and abroad have partnered with us. The response has been good and encouraging from both students and universities. Students who have benefited from the loan have recommend others to apply to Credila. Universities see it as a value-addition

service. Insead University in France has recommended us on their website for loan services for students.

ML: What is the current rate of interest and how is this calculated? Does Credila have a universal interest rate for all, or is the rate calculated depending on the university? For instance, State Bank of India charges special interest rate for students of ISB Hyderabad and it has a different rate for students of other institutions.

PB: We have both services. As I said earlier, various factors are taken into account for customisation of loans and interest rate at the individual student level. The rate of interest can vary depending on the institute, the student's academic achievement, and so on. We only provide loan on floating interest. We too provide special interest rates to certain institutes. For students applying from ISB Hyderabad we have provided loans at a rate of 9.75%. There is a special rate for universities like Insead University.

ML: Azim Premji recently donated around Rs8,846 crore as a gift towards his foundation, which promotes education and related work. Do you think this trend of big financial houses investing in the education sector will grow?

PB: Personally, I think it will be beneficial. The demographic deviation of India, as suggested by policymakers, corporate, states that education will facilitate the workforce. The scope for this sector is growing.

ML: The cost of private education is spiralling day by day. Will corporate investment in the sector (as it is happening now), make it more costly, or is it the other way around? Also, is it possible to opt for a public-private partnership, given that the large population is dependent on the government for even a basic education?

PB: Currently there is a lot of positive environment for the education sector in India. The government is taking steps which are conducive for the sector to grow. The cost of education is definitely increasing, but the quality is also increasing. In this situation a better enabler should be provided, which can provide financial backing to students for achieving quality education. Public-private partnership is good and I see it growing in the right direction.

ML: Mahindra & Mahindra managing director Anand Mahindra gave \$10 million to Harvard University and Ratan Tata's Tata group gave \$50 million to Harvard Business School. At the same time there are many people in India who cannot afford even a basic primary education, usually because of the lack of finances and facilities. Do you think there is a need to give more attention to basic education and provide funds to make it affordable to everyone?

PB: Basic education should be given more emphasis. The current five-year plan, that is the 11th plan, is making positive changes in the area of primary education. The incentive along with educational programmes like the mid-day meal programme, and so on, have helped improve the attendance level. A better enabler who can provide loans to

students will contribute to making education more affordable. This is currently going in a positive direction.

ML: As on 31 March 2010, non-performing assets in the education portfolio of public sector banks had increased and now they are putting certain mechanisms in place to check delinquencies. How does Credila track students in case of default or delay in re-payment?

PB: We constantly communicate with students during the academic tenure of the student who has been granted a loan. We generally ask for 3-4 references, apart from the borrowers. Again there is constant engagement with all the references. As of now, for the students going to the US, we have tied up with some government agencies there which help us track a particular student. But since we only specialise in students' loans, we undertake thorough research, so we have the upper hand to track the student in case of any default.

ML: There has been talk that the government's UID (unique identity) project will help trace borrowers. Also, banks could seek updated data from credit bureaus to help overcome these defaults. Do you plan to tie up with any of them?

PB: We have partnered with Credit Information Bureau (India) to evaluate credit history while screening the application. There has been cases where loans have been rejected because of credit history. But we don't solely depend on credit histories, but there are various factors (as I had explained earlier) that play an important part. As regards the UID project, we would want to partner with them.

ML: When it comes to education loans, there is a lot of documentation hassle, which is the biggest hurdle for students who are opting for education abroad. How can this be made more user-friendly for student borrowers?

PB: Customer education is the most important. Every aspect of education loan portfolio should be explained. At Credila we perform KYC (Know your customer) as per RBI guidelines. Most banks don't provide education on the student loans mainly because this is one of the services provided by them also it is seasonal in nature. We make parents and students understand that opting loan will not only give them tax benefit but also build credit history.

ML: There is a lot of confusion among people regarding education loans and the processes. How do people seek guidance on this?

PB: I think there has to be some onus on the borrowers to undertake research. Students should start their preparation, especially financial preparation, much earlier. A lot of information about banks is available. An early start will make things easier.

ML: Given the fact that there is an increase in the number of students opting for higher education, the number of education loan-seekers has also increased. What is Credila's roadmap for the year ahead?

PB: We are aiming at multi-fold growth. We want to scale up the loan disbursements, for which we are expanding our operations, workforce and locations.

ML: What are the major challenges Credila faces in verifying applications, disbursing loans and recovery?

PB: Our operational capacity is very efficient, because of which there is hardly any challenge in verifying, disbursing, or even recovering loans. Our main challenge is to reach out to a larger number of people. We are expanding our operations in phases. Our biggest challenge is the cost of funds. Being a non-banking financial company the costs are higher.

Source: Dec 14, 2010/[Money Life](#)

Foreign varsities: Myths and reality

The latest QS world university rankings place the UK-based Cambridge University in the top spot, pushing Harvard to the second. In the list's seven year history, this is the first time that Harvard has been knocked off the number one spot. Nevertheless, the US retains its dominance at the top of the table, with 20 of the top 50 and 31 of the top 100 universities in the overall table. The list also features 15 Asian universities, led by the University of Hong Kong at 23, and none from India. All these wrongly suggest that only the US and UK universities offer the best higher education. The fact is that universities in the US and UK are plagued with enormous difficulties. An Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report finds the UK lagging behind competitors in public investment in higher education. The sector is facing cuts of more than £1 billion by the end of 2013. The share of public spending in British higher education is 0.7 per cent of the GDP, below the OECD average of 1 per cent. The American Enterprise Institute (AEI) and Goldwater Institute have been very critical of the American university system. The Economist reports that while the median household income rose 6.5 times in the last 40 years, the cost of attending a state college has increased by a factor of 15 for in-State and 24 for out-of-State students and a factor of 13 for attending a private college making medical inflation look modest.

The American universities' commitment to research should be measured by productivity, and not by the grants. Kauffman Foundation in a report has found that research productivity on federal grants measured by the number of patents and licences has been falling in the recent years. The Goldwater Institute's report is also critical on the administrative bloat that adds to the rising tuition fee and falling productivity.

In this background, many US and UK universities are looking for alternative pastures to fund their homeland growth. The proposed Foreign University Bill in India is providing royal access to the Indian higher education market. During the recent visit of US President Obama, there appeared to be hectic discussions pushing for

passing of the controversial Foreign University Bill in Parliament.

The Bill is currently stalled in Parliament along with other crucial Bills on higher education. Even some Congress MPs are not happy with the hurried manner in which the Human Resource Development Ministry is trying to push these Bills. Senior academic Prof. Yash Pal in an interview to SciDev.Net says: "We don't need foreign universities — we need good teachers from abroad who will live here, teach here and [develop] here ...

Allowing foreign universities in India is a recipe for destroying the Indian institutions and turning education into a commodity" The Union HRD Minister's concern to meet the demand of growing economy with better educated workers is laudable. But his concern can be handled by de-regulating the Indian higher education system, instead of inviting foreign universities.

Source: Dec 15, 2010/[The Hindu Business Line](#)

The costs of cutting higher education

STUDENT UNREST in England took a dramatic turn last week when angry protesters attacked a car carrying Prince Charles and his wife, and set fires outside the House of Commons. They took to the streets after Parliament approved Prime Minister David Cameron's plan to allow British public universities to nearly triple their tuition, from about \$5,300 per year to \$14,000. The plan also calls for funding of courses in the humanities and social sciences to be slashed by 40 percent, as part of efforts to cut government spending by \$130 billion.

Could these protests be a portent of similar events in the United States? To be sure, American students have been dealing with increased college costs much longer than in Britain, where public colleges were free until recently. But the higher education landscape is changing quickly here, too.

Since the recession began, nearly every state has dramatically reduced funding for public higher education, by as much as 25 percent in some cases, resulting in painful tuition hikes. President Obama and Congress have increased federal aid for low-income students, but other programs that serve low-income and middle-class students — such as Perkins Loans, Academic Competitiveness Grants, and SMART Grants — are scheduled to expire soon.

Now, with states facing continued distress and a national political mood focused on cost-cutting, further proposals to reduce student aid, cut research spending, and raise public college tuition are on the horizon. For example, Obama's deficit commission recently proposed eliminating subsidized student loans, in which the government covers interest payments while students are in college. Meanwhile, most states have run out of federal stimulus funds to support their higher education systems, making more faculty layoffs and tuition increases extremely likely.

It doesn't have to be this way. Our leaders are right to be concerned about closing immense budget gaps, just as Cameron is in Britain. When it comes to higher education, however, they should consider whether the short-term benefits of limiting government support are contrary to the long-term interests of the nation.

It's no overstatement to say that higher education — and government support of its mission — has contributed substantially to our nation's preeminence. After World War II, the GI Bill enabled millions of veterans to earn college degrees and build the American middle class. In following decades, states enlarged their university systems and established community colleges, expanding access to millions more. Today, government research support is helping universities pioneer new discoveries and incubate new industries that will speed our economic recovery.

As China, India, and Latin America challenge our economic supremacy, federal and state governments should be doing more, not less, to support higher education's vital role. Indeed, the countries with the fastest-growing economies in the world are all investing heavily in their higher education systems. Instead of reversing course, US leaders should be redoubling their commitment to the strategies that have fostered our nation's long-term prosperity.

One country that has emerged as a higher education powerhouse is Australia. Asserting that higher education should be at the center of their response to the global financial crisis, Australian leaders approved a substantial higher education investment package last year. It commits billions to improving public university infrastructure, and reforms the country's student aid system to target funds to the neediest students. It also increases research funding and encourages research collaborations between colleges and industry partners.

At the same time, it's not a blank check. It establishes a "demand-driven" funding system for public university campuses — meaning that future funding will depend on their ability to offer an education students find valuable. Moreover, the investments are tied to ambitious growth targets for raising college enrollment and completion rates over the next 15 years, setting the stage for economic progress over the long haul.

As US leaders consider how to fund public higher education in coming months, they might do well to contrast Britain's approach with Australia's. Increasing public investment at a time of scarcity won't be easy, and it may require the higher education sector to be open to new ways of doing business. But instead of filling the streets with protesters, it's more likely to fill them with college graduates who will contribute to our nation's success for years to come.

Source: Dec 15, 2010/ [Bostan.com](#)

Educating India - A great initiative

Education may be a recession-free business but it needs huge amounts of money if some significant improvement

has to take place. In this context, Wipro chairman Azim Premji's transfer of shares of his company, worth Rs88.46 billion, to a trust that works primarily in the field of education is an exemplary gesture. In fact, it is unarguably one of the largest charity sums ever donated by any Indian entrepreneur. Premji has been an exemplary industrialist in more ways than one. His focus on primary education shows his correct diagnosis.

The current state of primary school education is in a state of utter mess. Majority of the students who do well are doing well more because of tuitions or because of their own efforts rather than the schooling system. If we don't address this problem, then maybe in 20 years, China will overtake India in services also.

What is more interesting about Premji as compared to Bill Gates or Warren Buffet is that the succession law and estate tax laws in America are such that transfer of wealth from one generation to the other generations is very tax-unfriendly. In India, this is not the case. In spite of easy passage of wealth from one generation to the other generation, Premji resisted the temptation to keep wealth within his family and instead chose to transfer it to society. Certain cynics argue it was done to comply with listing guidelines, but in India, every act is dissected with a negative mindset.

Deepak Parekh recently made headlines when he spoke about investments in education and how he and his organisation are going to take steps in improving the quality of education. Two gentlemen of stature, reputation and ability are taking the right steps in education. Just as Parekh revolutionised the home loan markets in India, I hope that he can replicate the same in the education field. Society needs education and the so-called 9-10 per cent growth rate, which India is seeing will falter if we don't invest in education.

One of the reasons why America has been so successful is because of the quality of education. In the 20th century, the world's finest brains migrated to USA. World War I and II merely accelerated the exodus. Students of science would remember that England and France were in the forefront till the US overtook them in the last century. In any field, America always finds solutions to problems because of its incredible brain power. This society respects brain-power: Silicon Valley is a case. Irrespective of your colour creed or ability to speak English, if you have a good idea, you will get backers.

More importantly, education changes the mindset and will help in reducing other social evils like female infanticide and perhaps to some extent corruption. Any father who has laboured to get his child admitted to a good school will understand the pain because schools are few. To get into a good school, in most cases you need to pull some strings or give donations. Most children are known to travel a few kilometers to school as well.

With this, I hope other big donors like Ratan Tata, Anand Mahindra and Narayana Murthy also start espousing the cause of Indian education and loosen their purse strings for Indian institutes. Wipro's catch line is Applying Thought; and Premji has certainly converted his thoughts into positive action.

Source: Dec 15, 2010/ [Khaleez Times](#)

RESOURCE

Eduniversal B-School Ranking 2010: IIM Bangalore, IIM Ahmedabad, IIM Calcutta, Indian B-schools with International influence

The Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIM-B) has been ranked 24th while IIM-Ahmedabad ranked 55th in a worldwide survey of 'Universal Business Schools with major international influence'.

The results of the annual survey 'Eduniversal Worldwide Business Schools Ranking 2010' conducted by French consulting firm SMBG amongst deans of 1000 business schools were officially announced in Prague at the third Eduniversal world convention, IIM-B said in a statement.

"This is the third consecutive annual recognition of IIM-B as the number one business school in India," it said.

The institute has been awarded '5 Palmes', given to the top 100 business schools. The ranking positions IIM-B in the top 25 amongst 100 best business schools worldwide. Notably, only two Indian B-Schools feature in the Top 100.

"The ranking by Eduniversal positions IIM-B in the first quartile of the 100 best business schools worldwide. This acknowledgment from an independent international firm consolidates our status as a leading international management school," Professor Pankaj Chandra, Director (IIM-B) said.

"Over the past year we have made significant enhancements to faculties, curriculum and infrastructure. We have obtained EQUIS accreditation and are taking steps to further diversify our courses so that we continue to remain the business school preferred by post-graduate and doctoral students throughout the Asian region," he said.

The ranking uses a comprehensive methodology that takes into account all the aspects of a business schools' influence on three different levels: international recognition through accreditations, memberships and international, regional and local rankings; international awareness through votes of the 1,000 deans and suggestions from members of the international scientific committee appointed by Eduniversal.

Source: Dec 10, 2010/[NDTV](#)

Several institutes apply for closing down IT departments

As compared to a round a decade back when careers in Information Technology (IT) had been the favorite career choice among students of engineering colleges all over the country, the scenario today is in stark contrast to before with not many choosing a career in the IT field.

Several colleges in the country are now mulling over closing their IT departments. According to data received from the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE), the body that is responsible for professional technical education in India, one in every three institutes that offer courses in IT have sent an application asking to close down their IT departments.

AICTE Chairman S.S. Mantha has said that the council has received applications from more than 1000 institutes, requesting to either close down their IT departments or convert the seats allotted to the department for other departments such as mechanical or civil.

Because of the large number of such applications, the AICTE has rejected them all. It has ordered all institutes that wish to shut down their IT departments to first get a no-objection certificate from their respective state governments and then supplement that with their applications.

Mantha added that shutting down so many IT departments in institutes all at once would have resulted in an imbalanced growth of other streams. So far, only 6 colleges have been able to acquire no-objection certificates from their affiliating university and state government.

Even so, most institutes that had applied for closure of their IT departments earlier will be applying again to close their IT departments for the academic session beginning in 2011.

Mass closing of IT departments all over the country could result in several issues such as what would happen to the faculty that teach IT at institutes as well as the infrastructure that has been set up for the stream.

Source: Dec 10, 2010/ indiaedunews.net

All-India study on higher education

The [University Grants Commission](#) (UGC) has embarked on an initiative to collate comprehensive data on [higher education](#) which will help in framing academic policies for the future. Simultaneously, the Union human resource ministry has constituted a task force to conduct an all [India](#) survey on higher education.

The [UGC](#) has issued a proforma to all universities and colleges in the country asking for details of the examination results in recent years, number of foreign students enrolled in their institutions and figures relating to the doctorate degrees and MPhil degrees awarded to research scholars during 2008-09 in different subjects of study. Besides, the UGC is also updating its directory of professors.

The HRD ministry's task force would look at key academic data which will help in planning for growth and development, and to achieve the target of 30% Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in the eligible age group.

The mandate for the task force includes exploring the mechanism of conducting an all-India survey on higher education, identifying the implementation agency to conduct the survey, preparing the modalities to conduct the survey and subsequently monitoring its implementation. After compiling the data and analysing it, the task force would give its recommendations to the ministry.

According to a HRD ministry notification, the task force will comprise the additional secretary of the ministry, UGC secretary, [AICTE](#) member secretary and the vice-chancellor of the National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA).

"The task force shall submit its preliminary recommendations to the ministry to operationalise the survey within two months," the HRD ministry notification said.

A few months ago, the [Tamil Nadu State Council](#) for Higher Education (TANSCH) had constituted a two-member expert committee to undertake a survey to ascertain the GER in higher educational institutions in the state. The expert committee is working on the survey.

Source: Dec 12, 2010/The Times of India

Visionary VidyaGyan

It is corporate social responsibility initiative, nee social re-engineering with a difference. VidyaGyan, the school project conceived and run by Shiv Nadar, founder of the \$5-billion global enterprise HCL, is a radical concept that aims to induct and transform the brightest and meritorious rural children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, provide them free, world class education and allow them to transcend the disadvantages they face to build a more equitable society. And in the process, churn out world class leaders for tomorrow, who are not only able to take balanced decisions for themselves but also for the world at large and inspire others to lead, too.

Constructed on an area of over 20 acres in Bulandshahr, VidyaGyan's first such school has all that a global residential school has—state-of-the-art classrooms, separate hostels for girls and boys, a language lab, a computer lab, a maths lab, a library, an amphitheatre, an auditorium, an... athletic track, a football field, a skating rink and indoor sports facilities. While all this may look commonplace to the urban bred, for the rural folks who are used to seeing classrooms that either don't have walls or have crumbling roofs, and where there are no blackboards, let alone any other infrastructure, all this is like manna. And all the 200 students from the fifth grade who topped the UP state board examinations and got selected for VidyaGyan realise that this is the best tool that they could have ever

asked for, to change the face of destiny as it had been bestowed on them at their birth.

The initiative, a brainchild of Shiv Nadar Foundation, is in collaboration with the government of Uttar Pradesh and aims to scale up each year from class 6 to class 12. It also has ambitious plans to roll out many more such success stories in Uttar Pradesh. "With our first school getting off successfully, we now aim to open another VidyaGyan school in Sitapur in 2011, to be followed by one in Varanasi. We will have seven such schools but all in Uttar Pradesh," said TSR Subramanian, managing trustee of the HCL group.

When asked what had prompted the group to roll out this enterprise in Uttar Pradesh, Subramanian, who has served as the chief secretary of the state and had also been the Union Cabinet secretary, said that for both the founder of the HCL group Shiv Nadar and him, Uttar Pradesh is where their heart belongs. "Both of us were born in Tamil Nadu but have spent most of our working lives in Uttar Pradesh. And the fact is that Uttar Pradesh is more in need of such an enterprise. A backward state, it requires philanthropic measures like these to transform region as... ..well as transform the lives that will build our tomorrow," he said.

Indeed, it has been Shiv Nadar's mission to change lives, either through technology or by education. "The positive impact of education has always been driving force behind Nadar. He strongly believes that knowledge is a tool, the highest wealth, which can truly uplift and transform lives of individuals and communities. And it is only through world-class education, and the finest mentoring and nurturing that we can hope these children would be able to transcend the disadvantages they face and compete with their urban counterparts," stated Subramanian. "We not only aim to give these students world-class academic education but also instil in them a feeling of service, high values and leadership qualities—all character building exercises, which will make them leaders in whatever field they enter," he added.

The vision of the VidyaGyan scholarships, says Subramanian, actually revolves around building future leaders... from rural backgrounds by using education as a tool to bridge the rural-urban divide. "Through this programme, we want to give students from the rural countryside, who otherwise have the potential to become achievers but who lack the advantage of exposure to a competitive environment at par with their urban counterparts, a chance to neutralise that disadvantage. Once they are given that exposure and a level playing field, these select few can then take the positive impact of education to where it can set off a chain reaction and uplift and transform lives. It will help narrow the sharp socio-economic divide and the end result will be a more equitable, meritocracy-based society," he said.

In fact, VidyaGyan is not HCL's first shot at philanthropy. It started more than a decade ago with the Shiv Nadar

Foundation setting up SSN institutions in Chennai. SSN College of Engineering (SSNCE), SSN School of...

Management and Computer Applications and the SSN School of Advanced Software Engineering have made a mark of their own. SSNCE has, in fact, become one of top ten private engineering colleges in the country. To carry on the mission further, the group is now on the threshold of setting up an full-fledged university in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh.

"Realising that it is education only that has made him what he is today, Nadar thinks that the best way to give back to the society that nurtured him is to make education a tool for the change. He has known the power of education in transforming lives and decided to give back to society what it has given to him," said Subramanian.

Though a one-of-a-kind idea, the well-intentioned VidyaGyan project has already got many detractors who question the logic and effectiveness of the entire project. "Questions like the practicality of spending Rs 70,000... on every child per annum, the efficacy of a global school education, without the backing of an onward higher education programme for these children are indeed raised but we are confident that children who come out of our schools after class 12 will be groomed enough to take care of their future. They would not need any help in higher education," answers Subramanian, adding that there is a huge potential among rural students, which goes unrecognised because they do not get opportunities. "Currently, all benefits are available to the urban people. We were quite worked up as to how we can take it to the rural people and how we can bring them to be equals. We realised that we need to bring leadership at the rural level. Talent is randomly distributed and it doesn't look at caste, creed or religion. It doesn't even look at where one is studying... and where one is living. To hone this random talent, we have come up with this Rs 60-crore campus to begin with, to be followed by many more in the years to come."

While sceptics do abound, neither Shiv Nadar, nor his daughter Roshni, who, as the trustee of the Shiv Nadar Foundation and executive director & CEO of HCL, has taken this project upon herself and views it as a challenge. In fact, the only challenge that they see now is to run VidyaGyan and replicate it in other cities.

Source: December 13, 2010 / [The Financial Express](#)

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

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

Please email your contributions to aserf@apeejay.edu

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