



WISH YOU ALL A VERY HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

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

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

Apeejay Education Society 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



ASPECT**Annual Status on Education Report – 2010****ASER 2010 FINDINGS***Percentage of out of school children in India at its lowest ever*

- In 2010, for rural India, the percentage of children (age 6 to 14) not enrolled in school is 3.5%. This number was 4.0% last year and 6.6% in 2005.
- The proportion of girls (age 11-14) who are still out of school has declined from 6.8% in 2009 to 5.9 in 2010. This number was 11.2% in 2005.
- However, the percentage of out of school girls (11-14) is still high in some states like Rajasthan (12.1%) and Uttar Pradesh (9.7%) where the proportion remains largely unchanged since last year.
- Noteworthy in this regard is the performance of Bihar where the percentage of out of school girls and boys in all age groups has been declining steadily since 2005. In 2006, 12.3% of boys and 17.6% girls were out of school in the 11 to 14 age group. By 2010, these numbers had declined to 4.4% for boys and 4.6% for girls showing very little difference by gender.

Big increases in private school enrollment in some states since last year

- Overall, ASER 2010 shows that private school enrollment for rural children in the age group 6 to 14 has increased from 21.8% in 2009 to 24.3% in 2010. This number has risen steadily since 2005 when it was 16.3% nationally.
- The southern states show substantial increases over last year in private school enrollment for the age group 6 to 14.
- Between 2009 and 2010, the percentage of children (age 6-14) enrolled in private school has increased from 29.7% to 36.1% in Andhra Pradesh, from 19.7% to 25.1% in Tamil Nadu, from 16.8% to 20% in Karnataka and from 51.5% to 54.2% in Kerala. Among other states, Punjab shows an increase from 30.5% to 38%.
- Private school enrollment (age 6-14) remains low in Bihar (5.2%), West Bengal (5.9%), Jharkhand (8.8%), Orissa (5.4%) and Tripura (2.8%).

Increasing numbers of five year olds enrolled in school

- Nationally, the percentage of five year olds enrolled in school has increased from 54.6% in 2009 to 62.8% in 2010.
- The biggest increase is visible in Karnataka where the proportion of five year olds enrolled in school has increased from 17.1% in 2009 to 67.6 in 2010. (This increase may be due to the fact that in April 2010 the Government of Karnataka

reduced the minimum age of enrollment into primary school from 5 years 10 months to 5 years).

- There are several other states where school enrollment has increased substantially for five year olds between 2009 and 2010. These include Punjab (68.3% to 79.6%), Haryana (62.8% to 76.8%), Rajasthan (69.9% to 75.8%), Uttar Pradesh (55.7% to 73.1%) and Assam (49.1% to 59%).

Reading ability largely unchanged except in some states

- Nationally there is not much change in reading levels as compared to last year. Only 53.4% children in Std 5 can read a Std II level text. This suggests that even after five years in school, close to half of all children are not even at the level expected of them after two years in school.
- In Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana and Rajasthan, there is increase in the proportion of children in Std I who are able to recognize letters.

- Similarly, in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, there is increase in the proportion of children in Std V who can read Std II level text.

Small declines in math ability except in some states

- Nationally, there is a decline in the ability to do basic math (i.e. recognize numbers and do basic operations). This decrease of a few percentage points is visible across all classes. For example, the proportion of Std I children who can recognize numbers (1-9) has declined from 69.3% in 2009 to 65.8% in 2010. The proportion of children in Std III who can do two digit subtraction problems has decreased from 39% to 36.5% in the same period. The proportion of children in Std V who can do simple division problems in Std V has dropped from 38% in 2009 to 35.9% in 2010.
- Punjab's performance in basic arithmetic has been improving over the last few years. For example, in Std II the percentage of children who can recognize numbers up to 100 was 56.3% in 2008. This number went up to 59.6% in 2009 and to 70.4% in 2010. Similarly the proportion of Std IV children who can do subtraction has gone from 66.9% in 2008 to 81.4% in 2010. The percentage of Std V children who can do division has risen from 43.5% in 2008 to 69.8% in 2010.

Middle school children weak on everyday calculations

- In ASER 2010, children in Std V and above were asked a set of questions that involved calculations that people do in everyday life. The tasks included calculations from a menu, using a calendar, estimating volume and calculating area.
- Overall, in Std VIII, three quarters of all children were able to do the calculations based on the menu, about two thirds of all children could use the calendar and only half could do the calculations related to area.

- The questions related to area seemed to be the most difficult for children to solve. Such problems are usually found in textbooks in Std IV or V. Here, among Std VIII children, Kerala does best with 79% children able to solve the problems followed by Bihar at 69%.

Tuition going down for private school children

- Nationally, there is not much change between 2009 and 2010 in the proportion of children who are enrolled in government schools and also take extra paid tuition classes. However there is a clear decrease in the incidence of tuition among children enrolled in private schools across all classes till Std VIII.

- Some states like Bihar, West Bengal and Orissa have very low private school enrollments but high proportions of children enrolled in government schools who also take tuition classes. For example, in 2010, in West Bengal 75.6% of Std V children enrolled in government schools take tuition classes. This number for Bihar is 55.5% and 49.9% for Orissa.

ASER 2010 : RIGHT TO EDUCATION REPORT CARD

RTE Norms for pupil teacher ratio

- At the all India level, more than half of all schools are in compliance with the RTE norms regarding pupil to teacher ratio.

- This means that over the next few years, about half of India's primary and upper primary schools will need more teachers.

RTE Norms for teacher to classroom ratio

- About 30% of visited schools had only 1 or 2 teachers, and the majority of these met the RTE norm of one room for each teacher. However for schools with more teachers, compliance was lower. 20% of schools with three teachers did not meet the norm.

- 30% of schools with four teachers did not meet the norm and this figure is 35% and above for schools with five or more teachers. This implies that at least a third of all primary and upper primary schools in rural India will need more classrooms to be built over the next few years.

RTE Norms and school facilities

- RTE stipulates norms for facilities that all schools should have. Some these RTE indicators were observed for the first time in ASER 2010. The evidence shows that in 2010:

- Office cum store: 75% of all visited schools had these.
- Playground: 62% of all visited schools had playgrounds.
- Boundary wall: Just over 50% of all visited schools had a boundary wall or fence.

- Library: 63% of all visited schools had a collection of books other than textbooks.

- Toilets: 90% of all schools visited had toilets. However, they were useable in only half of these schools.

- Separate girls' toilets: 70% of all schools visited had a separate girls' toilet. However, the toilet was useable in only 37% schools; elsewhere it was either locked or unusable.

- Kitchen shed for midday meals: 81% of schools had a kitchen shed. Midday meals were observed to be served in 83% schools.

- Drinking water: 72% of all schools had drinking water available.

Student and teacher attendance in schools

- The all India percentage of primary schools (Std 1-4/5) with all teachers present on the day of the visit shows a consistent decrease over three years, falling from 73.7 in 2007 to 69.2 in 2009 and 63.4 in 2010.

- For rural India as a whole, children's attendance shows no change over the period 2007-2010. Attendance remained at around 73% during this period. But there is considerable variation across states.

Source: ASER 2010 ([Annual Status on Education Report – 2010](#))

NEWS

Government enforces right to education however delays outlaw of malpractices

Sixty three years after independence, India's 6-to-14-year-olds were empowered in 2010 with a right to education and a Bill was introduced to outlaw capitation fees for admission to schools of medicine.

'A landmark year for education in the country,' was how the Human Resource Development Ministry described it, citing, among other things, the enforcement of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009.

The Act is intended to fulfil a dream older than the nation's independence.

It was about a hundred years ago that Gopal Krishna Gokhale, a pioneer of Indian freedom movement, had urged the Imperial Legislative Assembly to confer on the Indian people the Right to Education.

But it was not until 2002-- 55 years after independence-- that the Constitution was amended during National Democratic Alliance rule to inscribe the Right to Education as a fundamental right.

Eight more years later, children woke up on April 1 empowered with a right to education endorsed by a United Progressive Alliance Prime Minister who shared that 'I am what I am because of education.' Dr Manmohan Singh went

on the air declaring: 'We are committed to ensuring that all children, irrespective of gender and social category, have access to education.' The law to secure completion of the elementary education of children in that age group in a neighbourhood school came with norms for pupil teacher ratios, school days and teaching hours.

For instance, private schools are required to enrol children from weaker sections and disadvantaged communities in their incoming class to the extent of 25 per cent of their enrolment.

'No school that does not fulfil these standards within three years will be allowed to function,' a government statement warned.

'Huge decision making,' was how HRD Minister Kapil Sibal described to journalists what lay ahead for the Centre and the States. 'It's not going to be easy.' In the first week of April, the National Council of Educational Research and Training was asked to develop a framework of national curriculum.

The process of aligning the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan strategies and norms with the RTE mandate was underway.

The Ministry says 3,09,727 new schools have been opened, textbooks given away to 87 million children, 11.13 lakh teachers hired and 14.02 lakh teachers given in-service training under the SSA, a key vehicle for implementing the RTE.

On April 9, Central Rules under the RTE Act-- The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules, 2010-- were notified.

Model Rules were sent to the State governments to adopt or adapt.

On August 23, the National Council for Teacher Education notified the minimum qualifications for appointment as a teacher.

The NCTE prepared a National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education aimed at enabling the child to learn through exploration of his surroundings.

It launched a portal for online processing of applications for recognition of teacher education institutions, as did another regulator.

The All India Council for Technical Education, recovering from a scandal in which top regulators were suspended or arrested, went online in the interest of transparency. BR acknowledging public concern over malpractices prevalent for decades, the Ministry introduced in May 2010 in Parliament. The Prohibition of Unfair Practices in Technical, Medical Educational Institutions and Universities Bill, 2010.

Unfair practices include drawing students through misleading advertisement, charging capitation fee or

unaccounted donations, and questionable admission processes.

Also noticeable have been complaints of sub-standard quality of education, hiring unqualified teachers or withholding students certificates or other documents. Another Bill sought to regulate the entry and operation of foreign education providers. The Ministry acknowledges that 'a large number' of them are reported to be operating across India, and some of them resort to malpractice to allure students, specially in smaller towns. But hitherto the government neither has a policy nor a regulatory regime to check them.

A third Bill pertains to setting up a Tribunal for Fast-track quasi-judicial adjudication of disputes involving students, teachers and other employees, institutions and regulators. The Bill has been passed by the Lok Sabha and is in the Rajya Sabha for consideration.

The Tribunal is sought because the Indian judicial system which should ordinarily handle such disputes suffers from serious delays and enforcement overall fails to produce a deterrence to wrongdoing. A Bill was also introduced on universities for innovation aimed at world class standards.

Experts say it is a manifestation of the government coming to terms with reality on a dream project it had set out to accomplish three years ago-- setting up world class universities. Norms were clarified on a range of matters: teachers duties in elections, admission of children from disadvantaged groups, applying the RTE to minority institutions-- such as Madarsas.

Schools affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education switched to the grading system at class X level, the Board examinations being dispensed with from 2011, except when a student opts out of the CBSE System.

Class IX and X students will be assessed through school level Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation. The Ministry signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Unique Identification Authority of India to create an electronic registry to help track students' mobility from primary or elementary level through secondary and higher education.

The Ministry says imprinting UID number on students' marksheets or certificates will help prospective employers and educational institutions. UID number will help in tracking problems of fake degrees which the government has failed to check so far-- let alone punish perpetrators. It says the move will also be useful in implementing Mid-Day Meal Scheme.

Sibal unveiled a \$35 (Re 1,500) computing-cum-access device in July aimed at affordable connectivity for Indian students. The event made headlines but the device is yet to be available. As many as eight new Indian Institutes of Technology and seven new Indian Institutes of Management were set up.

Yale University entered into partnerships with IIT Kanpur and IIM Kozhikode to develop leadership programmes. IITs at Bombay, Delhi, Guwahati, Kanpur, Kharagpur, Madras and Roorkee and the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore held online a Graduate Aptitude Test in Engineering in two out of 21 subjects-- Textile Engineering and Fiber Science. Some 1,700 candidates took the tests conducted simultaneously in eight cities in two shifts.

While racial attacks in Australia reportedly brought down the number of Indian students going there for education, the two governments took 'a landmark initiative' in agreeing to set up an India-Australia Education Council.

The Council 'will bring together government, academia, business and industry of both the countries to further bilateral collaboration in the education sector,' the Ministry said. UNI

Source: 1 Jan, 2011/Indian.law.News.com

Education loan disbursal at Rs 108 cr by Sept-end

Banks operating in Orissa-PSU as well as private sector banks have disbursed loans worth Rs 108.27 crore in the education sector during the April-September period of 2010-11.

Of this, while the PSU banks have disbursed Rs 97.56 crore and the private banks Rs 81.6 lakh, the education loan exposure of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) stands at Rs 9.89 crore.

The highest amount in education loan has been advanced by the State Bank of India (Rs 34.35 crore) which has 6202 branches in the state followed by Central Bank of India at Rs 14 crore and Bank of India at Rs 8.41 crore.

Two PSU banks- State Bank of Bikaner & Jaipur and State Bank of Hyderabad have not disbursed any education loan in the said period. Similarly, among the private sector banks, Federal Bank, ICICI Bank, Rajasthan Bank Ltd, ING Vysya Bank, Axis Bank and Indus Ind Bank have not disbursed even a single rupee towards education loan in this period. The total loan outstanding in the education loan segment (as on September 30, 2010) is Rs 1368.75 crore. Out of this, the outstanding amount of PSU banks stands at Rs 1317.18 crore, that of private banks at Rs 2.75 crore and RRBs at Rs 48.81 crore.

The NPA (Non-Performing Assets) of this segment of all the banks is estimated at Rs 35.60 crore by September end.

Source: December 28, 2010,/[Business Standard](http://Business.Standard)

Three new IIMs struggle in the absence of permanent teachers

The absence of permanent faculty is hurting the quality of education at the three Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) that opened last year, even as the government readies to launch three more in the next academic session.

Visiting professors from other IIMs are taking virtually all classes at the IIMs in Rohtak, Ranchi and Raipur.

IIMs are India's elite business schools. Older IIMs are located in Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Kolkata, Lucknow, Indore, Kozhikode and Shillong.

"I am the only permanent faculty," said P. Rameshan, director of IIM-Rohtak which is running out of a temporary campus inside Maharshi Dayanand University in Rohtak.

All courses are being taught by visiting professors, he said. "Students have missed out the benefit of having permanent faculty, but we must say that IIM-Lucknow faculty (members) are helping a lot."

Rameshan agreed that shortage of full-time teachers is affecting the learning process as well as summer placements, which are typically handled by full-time faculty members. "The summer placement should have ended by September, but we are stretching it to the new year (January)," he said.

The institute admitted 50 students in its first batch and plans to add 120 more this year. It will need around 20 faculty members.

Rameshan said IIM-Rohtak started recruiting teachers in the last week of December. "We will not like this problem to continue and hope to recruit almost 15 faculty members."

Officials at the human resource development (HRD) ministry said the situation is similar at Ranchi and Raipur IIMs, where visiting teachers from IIM-Kolkata and IIM-Indore are making up for the faculty shortage.

IIM-Ranchi admitted 45 students in its first batch, while IIM-Raipur admitted 65. Both plan to increase the number of admissions this year.

"These institutes are just a year old as they have come up in 2010. We understand the problem they face, but hope things will improve," a ministry official said, requesting anonymity.

The official said lack of full-time teachers can be frustrating, and affects the growth of any institute.

IIM-Raipur's director B.S. Sahay did not respond to several attempts to reach him.

Shekhar Choudhury, director of IIM-Kolkata, which is handholding IIM-Ranchi, said professors from his institute had helped students of IIM-Ranchi to finish their course, as well as in summer placements.

"Yes, permanent faculty bring a lot of benefit for students, but Ranchi students will enjoy them once their own faculty join," he said.

The faculty shortage may worsen in the next academic session. The government has already announced that three more IIMs would be opened at Trichy in Tamil Nadu, Kashipur in Uttarakhand and Udaipur in Rajasthan.

Another HRD ministry official, who also did not want to be named, said instead of opening new institutes every year, the government should focus on providing adequate facilities at institutes.

"We have moved in a reverse way—first institute, then search for faculty. We should have changed the order as quality institutes need quality faculty," the official said.

Narayanan Ramaswamy, executive director at auditing and consulting firm KPMG, said while opening IIMs in new places to make them more accessible is good, lack of faculty will hamper higher education.

"Higher education is not only about teaching. Research is very important. Here, we are lagging behind because of faculty crunch. This is a key area of concern," he said.

Rameshan of IIM-Rohtak, who has earlier worked with IIM-Kozhikode and IIM-Lucknow, said he plans faculty and student exchanges with overseas institutes in 2011. "We would have our own research output," he said.

Source: Jan 3 2011/[Live Mint](#)

PM asks scientists to 'think out of box'

Asking scientists to think "big" and "out of the box", Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today said "the time has come to produce Ramans and Ramanujams" and cross new horizons.

At the same time, he cautioned scientists on "illiberal" uses of technology and cited use of nuclear weapons, applications of synthetic chemistry in agriculture and in poison gases and "perverse use" of genetics in Nazi Germany to drive home his point.

"The time has come for Indian scientists to think big, think out of the box. The time has come to produce Ramans and Ramanujans as we usher in the decade of innovation," he said inaugurating the 98th Indian Science Congress at the SRM University campus here. He was referring to eminent physicist and Nobel laureate CV Raman and renowned mathematician Srinavasa Ramanujam, both hailing from Tamil Nadu.

He said the year 2012-13, the centenary of the Indian Science Congress, would be designated as the "Year of Science in India".

"I sincerely hope the Year of Science in India will unleash the energies of our young scientists and inspire a new generation of Indians to enter the world of science, cross new horizons and explore new possibilities," he said.

He also said that Indian universities should be more open to young people abroad, who wanted to continue their research in India. He appealed to the participants to deliberate on how to make Indian universities more open to Indian talent abroad, including for those who seek temporary affiliation. Citing the Science Advisory Council's report, he said most of the instruments available in India using Raman effect were imported, even while CV Raman

won the Nobel Prize 80 years ago. "This is not an isolated example. Many of our outstanding scientific discoveries had been converted into marketable products by technologists and firms abroad. Our universities should be more hospitable to creativity and genius, and less captive to bureaucracy and procedure. They should be more open to talent and to the challenge of established ideas. I will like the Science Congress to discuss and come out with recommendations to strengthening the link between universities, laboratories and the industry," he said.

"Unless we strengthen the base of our educational system, we can never hope to extend the height of the pyramid of excellence. We also need to create an innovation ecosystem so that innovation becomes a way of life in our knowledge institutions," he said.

Source: 04 Jan 2010 / Chennai / [The Tribune](#)

Iran altering education system to get rid of Western influence

Iran is making changes by putting in Islamic values in its education system to reportedly get rid of Western influence.

The Washington Post quoted Education Ministry officials as saying that from September onwards, all Iranian high school students would be introduced to new courses such as "political training" and "living skills" that will warn against "perverted political movements" and encourage girls to marry at an early age. In universities, the curricula of law, psychology, sociology and other studies would reportedly be altered, with officials from the Science Ministry, which has the responsibility for higher education, working to strip out what they describe as Western theories and replace them with Islamic ones.

The Education Ministry's plan, titled "The Program for Fundamental Evolution in Education and Training," envisages schools becoming "neighborhood cultural bases" where teachers will provide "life" guidance, assisted by selected clerics and members of the paramilitary Basij force. "There will be official training and on-site cultural education and an emphasis on sports, reading books and the Koran," Education Minister Hamid-Reza Haji-Babaei said in May.

Dozens of professors have already retired or been fired on the grounds that they did not sufficiently support the new policy, the paper said.

The changes are also aimed at minimising the growing influence of a middle class that increasingly embraces individualism and shares modern aspirations.

Iran's leaders partly blame contamination of the country's education system, which in the early years of the 1979 Islamic revolution was shaped by clerics and ideologues, for spreading such "Western" ideas.

Many students, professors and parents fear that the plans will undermine Iran's traditionally high academic standards.

Source: 04 January 4, 2011/ANI / [Sify News](#)

J&K to introduce grading system in school education

Jammu, Jan 11 (PTI) The Jammu and Kashmir government has decided to introduce grading system to assess performance of students

in state-run schools, in order to make the tests stress-free and reduce the rate of depression among children.

"In order to bring reforms in education system and do away with trend of demoralisation of the [students](#) due to percentage pattern, the Education Ministry has decided to introduce grading system in [academic](#) results of school education," Minister for [Education](#) Peerzada Mohammad Sayeed told reporters here today.

"This will also stop the trend of suicide bids as once grading system is in place, no one will fail and get a chance to improve," he said.

The system will be in use from the current session for 9th and 10th standards, Sayeed said, adding, there will be 9 grades as per the new pattern.

90 per cent and above would be graded as A1, followed by 80-89 per cent as A2, 70-79 per cent as B1 and marks below 20 per cent will be graded E2, he said.

Referring to accountability in [private schools](#) on fees structures, he said that a clause has also been introduced by the government under which all private [schools](#) have to get themselves registered with the JK Board of School Education.

"Constitution of Management Committees, Parents Association will be made mandatory in the private schools as it will keep check on untimely fee hike and other decisions being taken by the school authorities", Sayeed said.

In reply to a question, he said the government has issued orders to streamline the private tuition system so that tutors do not charge exorbitant fees from students while keeping necessary infrastructure.

"Deadline has been given to them for registration within the prescribed norms. He said no government teacher is allowed to teach in such private centres during official working time," he said.

Regarding the education buildings, he said Rs 36 crore have been sanctioned for upgrading schools and Rs 40 crore for opening of new educational institutions.

Source: 12 Jan, 2011/ [One India.in](#)

Vibrant Gujarat 2011: RIL inks MoU with state on petroleum education

Ambani-led Reliance Industries on Wednesday said it has signed a pact with Gujarat government to develop Pandit Deendayal Petroleum University into a top world class institute.

"In the last few years Reliance has been associated with Pandit Deendayal Petroleum University and today the

company has signed an MoU and has envisaged to develop this university into a premium world class university," Reliance Industries Chairman and Managing Director Mukesh Ambani said.

Promoted by Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation (GSPC), the university offers undergraduate and post-graduate energy education programmes and intensive research initiatives.

Speaking at the 5th Global Summit of Vibrant Gujarat here, Ambani said Reliance "has been an integral part of Gujarat's success story. Rather I would say an emotional part of its success".

Recalling his father late Dhirubhai's insistence of sustaining the spirit of being a Gujarati company, Ambani said Reliance has managed to achieve the same. "Reliance will remain involved in Gujarat and maintain the same," he added.

Already RIL has made Jamnagar in the state the petroleum hub of the world. It has two refineries there with a total capacity of 1.24 million barrels per day (MBPD) of nominal crude processing capacity, the single largest refining complex in the world.

Source: 12 January, 2011/Mumbai/ [The Economic Times](#)

Higher education for masses through hi-tech

Around 700 universities and 26,000 colleges in the country will be connected with the Internet within the next two years to improve the higher education scenario, said Union human resource development and information technology minister Kapil Sibal on Wednesday.

He was in the city to inaugurate the first Parliament of Indian Student Council leaders at MAEER's MIT School of Government.

Over 9,000 students from across the country are taking part in the event organised by the institute in association with the State Higher and Technical Education.

Sibal said, "The country has 22 crore student population, of which only 1.4 crore goes to colleges. To improve the situation and to bring the youths in the higher education, we need to take steps."

"Until our youths reach the colleges we cannot achieve the dream making India a super power. Villages will also be connected with fibre optic cables so that various courses can be taken sitting at home," he said.

According to him the Centre has implemented the right of the children for free and compulsory education to ensure that the future generation of the country is educated.

"Various other bills related to education would be passed in Parliament to bring a change in the education scenario in the country," the minister said.

He said genuine knowledge is imparted and research is done in Indian universities. But unfortunately a large chunk

of students doesn't reach to that level. "There is a need for research, new inventions so that industries are benefited, which in turn would benefit society at large," he added.

He appealed to the youth to join politics. He said, "Corruption is a social problem and we need to change people's mindset. Before joining politics, the youths must understand the Constitution of India. So, the freedom to move from one place to another, occupy any profession will be known to them."

Chief minister Prithviraj Chavan said India needs a change. "We need to change for better and the youth has the power to bring in that change. Politics is not restricted to only contesting elections. We have various tools in our hands, which can be used to correct the system," Chavan said.

State higher and technical education minister Rajesh Tope, who is the chief patron of the programme, said, "There is a need to unit and empower the youth for the country's development and progress."

Such non-political platforms can provide them a chance to become good leaders, he said. Veteran actor Nana Patekar said, "The youth must join politics, but shun caste and religion-based politics."

Source: Jan 13, 2011/[DNA India](#)

Most NGOs to run for education

Many participate in the Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon every year to spread awareness about issues. This year too, Mumbaikars will run for causes close to their hearts.

Women empowerment, environment and children have been on the agenda every year at the marathon, but for the eighth edition there are many new issues that people have chosen to highlight. Among them is the Shrimad Rajchandra Mission, which will run for the better treatment of animals. "We have heard of so many cases of animals dying after being abandoned by their owners. We aim to change the mentality," said Ratan Gunavat, a member of the organization.

Out of the 179 NGOs running this year, 73 will spread awareness about the importance of education. It is probably due to the sudden importance given to education this year, with the implementation of the [Right to Education Act](#). "This has been the maximum number of NGOs running for any cause over the years," said a member of the marathon organizing committee.

The spate of student suicides in the city had invoked a lot of interest but very few took any initiative to stop them. Actor Manish Goel started Future Lies in our Youth (FLY), a movement to put a stop to suicides. "I did proper research and after a lot of thought started the movement in 2006. This is the first year that I will run to highlight the issue," said Goel, who will participate in the marathon

alongside his wife and member of Parliament Priya Dutt and her husband.

The Oxfam India NGO will run to support the cause of adaptation to climate change. "We plan to utilize funds raised in the marathon for our projects on adaptation to climate change in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh," said a spokesperson.

Members of the Pramanik Karigar foundation will participate in the marathon to shed light on traditional craftsmen and to help them collect money.

[Society for Service to Voluntary Agencies](#) (SOSVA) members will promote volunteerism among people of all ages. "We are pioneers of volunteerism. We encourage retired people, housewives, and school and college students to volunteer for any cause," said Anantharaman M, a foundation member.

He added that this year, the foundation will support 10 children from Chirner village, near Uran, to run the marathon. "They have been practicing well for the last few months. We hope they will get noticed this time," he added.

Source: 13 Jan 2011/[The Times of India](#)

Career Point to invest Rs 300 crore in formal education in Gujarat

Career Point Info-systems Ltd (CPIL), one of the leading companies that tutelage students for competitive entrance examinations has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Government of Gujarat to invest Rs 300 crore in the formal education space.

As per the MoU signed on Thursday, the Kota-based company would set up educational institutions in higher education, vocational training and skill development segment. The investment by CPIL will be made keeping in mind the specific needs of Gujarat in the perspective of growing industrialization and economic growth.

The agreement signed on the second day of Vibrant Gujarat 2011 summit at Gandhinagar has CPIL foraying in to formal education space aggressively. Mr. Pramod Maheshwari, Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer of Career Point said, "We are proposing an investment of Rs 300 crore in Gujarat over the period of 4 years. We expect to start the first institution imparting skill development courses by 2012 subjected to getting timely approval from various regulatory authorities."

A formal education program is the process of training and developing students in knowledge, skills, mind and character in a structured and certified program. Presently, CPIL provides tutorial service to High School and Post High School students for various competitive entrance examinations like IIT-JEE, AIEEE and PMT.

About Career Point Infosystems Ltd:

Career Point Infosystems Ltd (CPIL) provides tutorial services to High School and Post High School students for

various competitive entrance examinations like IIT-JEE, AIEEE and PMT. The Company provides tutorials through classroom training programmes conducted through a network of company operated training and franchisee centres. CPIL also offers distance learning programs comprising correspondence and test series courses. The Company has recently forayed into Education Consultancy and Management Services to cater to K-12 and higher education segments.

The company was incorporated in March 2000 and listed on Bombay Stock Exchange and National Stock Exchange in October 2010. CPIL plans to use the IPO proceeds to construct and develop an integrated campus, expand classroom infrastructure and meet expenses on general corporate activities.

Source: 14 January 2011/[Business Standard](#)

Plan panel not interested in insurance for teachers

Human resource development ministry's ambitious scheme of providing health and life insurance to school teachers has hit a hurdle—the Planning Commission. The planners at Yojna Bhawan have given the scheme a thumbs down suggesting that such a scheme “may not be necessary”. The Commission has argued that teachers are “knowledgeable enough” to ensure insurance cover on their own.

While the Planning Commission sought to hide behind the fact that school teachers new the value of insurance, it appears that the substantial financial outlay is the real reason for the panel's unenthusiastic response. The HRD ministry will wait for the crucial response from the finance ministry before taking the next step.

Last year, the HRD ministry formulated the scheme in an effort to incentivise young people to take up teaching at the school level as a career option. The proposal was discussed at the state education ministers' meeting in June. State education ministers present at the meeting had expressed their support for the scheme.

Shortage of teachers poses a huge challenge as the government sets out to implement the Right to Education and roll out the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan to universalise secondary education.

A back of the envelope calculation puts the shortage at 1.2 million teachers at the elementary level and nearly 200,000 for Class 9 and 10. The teacher crisis was further accentuated by the large number of under qualified teachers in the system. Under the RTE, these teachers would require to undertake adequate training within three years.

The ministry is of the view that while a hike in salary would attract new entrants, better facilities like pension, insurance and housing for teachers are also required. It was felt that life and health insurance cover for 60 lakh primary and secondary school teachers would help attract better and more talent to the field.

The two insurance schemes require financial contribution by the Centre, states and the teachers. Given the huge scope, the health and life insurance schemes would premium-wise cost much less than individual schemes or even schemes run at the state level.

The economics of scale would drive individual premiums down. The life insurance cover would guarantee a minimum of about Rs 5 lakh on retirement and Rs 2 lakh on death during service. The health cover, limited to hospitalisation of the teacher, the spouse, two children and parents, was being worked on two options—a cover of Rs 3 lakh with a higher premium or a cover of Rs 1.25 lakh with a lesser premium.

Source: 14 January 2011 / New Delhi / [The Times of India](#)

Students from polytechnics could join engg colleges

The government plans to allow lateral entry of students from Industrial Training Institutes (ITI) to polytechnics and from there to degree-level engineering colleges in order to make the technical workforce more employable and in tune with industry requirements. Around six-and-a-half lakh graduates leave engineering colleges every year, but only a quarter of them are employable and nearly two-thirds of them need to be re-skilled before they can be put on the job.

In order to upgrade their skills and improve the curriculum, the government plans to urge the private sector to participate and facilitate linkages between polytechnics and the industry. The ministry of human resources development (HRD) has set up a seven-member task force with members from the industry and academia to draw up a blueprint detailing the modalities.

In 2009-10, there were 2,872 All India Council for Technical Education- (AICTE) approved degree-level institutes with an intake of around 10 lakh students while the 1,659 AICTE-approved diploma-level technical institutions had almost 4.7 lakh students. Though there has been no mapping of the demand-supply gap in engineering, experts say the problem is not one of shortage; instead, there is an excess supply of unemployable engineering graduates.

Recently, the ministry said a separate division of 60 students per course can be started from the second year onwards in all AICTE-approved institutions for polytechnic students for lateral entry. There are almost 2,500 polytechnics in the country and their annual intake is approximately half that of degree-level engineering institutions. They offer three-year diploma programmes in engineering and technology, applied arts and crafts and other courses.

However, sections of the industry are opposed to the idea of lateral entry as it feels that students from these three categories cater to different needs of the industry.

“The ITIs have students for blue-collar jobs while polytechnics create supervisor-level officials and degree-level colleges make managers. So, lateral entry will raise

the aspirational levels of students. Besides, there is a greater need for supervisory level officials also," said an industry representative who attended a meeting on the issue recently.

A tough entrance exam is considered as a solution to this, so that lateral entry is not easily provided and meritorious students not denied opportunities.

As for the linkages with private players to encourage public-private-partnerships, the task force – which will submit its report in 10 months – may look at providing some form of incentives to the industry for upgrading the polytechnics. "For linkages with the industry, an idea is being floated on the lines of the World Bank scheme as part of which the private parties adopt an ITI and get Rs 2.5 crore to upgrade them," an official involved in the process said.

Source: 15 January,2011/New Delhi/[The Financial Express](#)

Infosys to train employees in business management

With Infosys Technologies gearing up for a larger share of business from consulting to compete with global giants, the IT major is looking at training and hiring more people with business management acumen.

In the next fiscal, it plans to start a 4-months residential programme on business management and consulting at its Mysore campus for employees who wants to move from technology to consulting side of the business.

Infosys HR chief TV Mohandas Pai said, "About 25.7% of business comes from enterprise consulting and it can grow to 30-35% in few years. We have to increase number of people with business acumen.

As a HR strategy we are hiring at the top level with business management knowledge. We plan to hire over 1,000 people for the consulting business from the top 25 MBA colleges of the country by the end of 2011. We already have hired 100 and this quarter we will get 100 more," Pai said.

"We lose a lot of people who want to do MBA so now we are creating an eco system within the organisation to enhance training and certification to do the work," added the HR chief. Engineers who have a knack for consulting can do a test and get into enterprise solutions and lead business units creating groups of domain consultants, he added.

As a part of the training, Infosys plans to conduct internal entry test like the CAT, followed by an interview, after, which the selected candidates have to go through an intense programme. During the 4-month training period candidates will be de linked from their current assignments.

The training will be mainly based on lot of case studies and practical approach and not just theory.

Source: 15 January 2011/Bangalore/[The Financial Express](#)

Govt moots proposal to enhance educational standards

New Delhi, Jan 17 (PTI) Government today mooted a proposal for an "institutional framework" to strengthen Centre-state collaboration in raising educational standards under the RTE regime with the involvement of key education regulators.

Such a framework would include educational bodies like NCERT, State Councils of Educational Research and Trainings(SCERT), CBSE, Council of Boards of School Education in India(COBSE) and National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE).

The proposal was mooted by HRD Minister Kapil Sibal at the meeting of central and state education regulatory bodies with an aim to ensure "constant coordination, continuous flow of information and dialogues between them", said an HRD Ministry official.

Sibal also said that the institutional mechanism between NCERT and SCERTs should also work towards developing question banks which could be used by states for their Teacher Eligibility Test.

He said that while the NCTE is developing the standards and benchmarks for the eligibility test, State Governments would be responsible for administering these tests and ensure that these tests conform to high standards.

During the meeting, Sibal also underlined that the effort of the educational administrators and curriculum developers should be to maximise standards rather than settling for mediocre standards.

The NCERT in its presentation at the meeting said the Government was proposing to set up a 24 hour Channel for teaching through ICT.

The NCERT would be the nodal agency for this channel and the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) would be the collaborating agencies.

The target audience for this channel would be school students in the 5-18 years age group, open education students and neo-adult literates.

Talking about the proposed National Vocational Qualification Framework, Sibal said the Government has begun a series of consultations with different industry groups to facilitate development of vocational curriculum as demanded by the needs/job requirements of these industry groups.

The state education ministers are also expected to meet in this regard here this week.

Source: 17 Jan/[News One India](#)

RTE holds good for private schools

The Centre on Monday asserted before the Supreme Court that the Right to Education Act (RTE) applied to private

unaided schools, including minority schools and it did not violate any rulings of the top court. "The provisions... regarding grant of admission by private unaided schools, to the extent of at least 25% of the strength of class-I to children belonging to weaker section and disadvantaged group in the neighbourhood and provide free and compulsory elementary education till its completion, in no way curtails the right or autonomy of the private unaided institutions," the HRD ministry said in an affidavit.

The affidavit has been filed in response to a petition filed by Independent Schools' Federation of India challenging the Constitutional validity of inclusion of unaided schools in RTE on the ground that it violated their right to practise any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business under Article 19(1)(g).

Minority schools are also opposing their inclusion in the Act on the ground that it violated their right to establish and administer educational institutions under Article 30 of the Constitution.

"The Act is anchored in the belief that values of equality, social justice and democracy and the creation of a just society can be achieved only through provision of inclusive elementary education to all," the affidavit sworn by department of school education and literacy director Vikram Sahay said.

The government said even before the enactment of the RTE, unaided schools had been providing free education to children belonging to economically weaker section.

It gave the example of Delhi, where all unaided schools were required to admit 15% children from the economically weaker section and provide them free education.

The Delhi HC had upheld the provision, it added.

The government said in the original RTE Bill, private unaided schools were not included but the government reversed it to include them on the recommendations of a parliamentary standing committee and the Law Commission

Source: Jan 17, 2011/[Hindustan Times](#)

V-C takes a class amid laughter, education

On Monday, a group of engineering and architecture students of Jamia Millia Islamia attended a class on spirituality and Indian philosophy. Last week the topic was Indian democracy and how fair the Indian judiciary system is vis-a-vis the common man. Apart from their usual classes where they deal with facts and figures, they eagerly await these special classes held once a week.

Besides the interesting and thought-provoking topics, the classes gain special significance since vice-chancellor Najeeb Jung himself conducts these classes.

In a unique initiative, the vice-chancellor has been holding lectures as part of what he calls a 'knowledge lecture series' since the past two months. The subjects vary from

history, philosophy, science, political science and current affairs and are aimed at final year students.

"I choose the topic spontaneously; it is not pre-meditated. In our country the education system is only geared towards giving degrees. In the process acquisition of knowledge has taken a beating. Somehow students remain insulated from what is happening around them. These students will soon pass out of the university and I believe they should be sensitive and aware about things other than what they are taught as part of their syllabus," said Jung.

The students, too, seem very excited about the classes.

"Vice chancellors generally address students during university functions but to teach in the classrooms is a one of a kind initiative. What is amazing about the classes are that they are more like informal discussions, which gives us a fresh perspective on issues," said Ariba Batool, a final year B.Tech student.

Students from economics, political science, history and English belonging to MA final year form one group while the undergraduate students from final year of engineering and architecture form the other.

Among other measures taken by Jung to reach out to his students personally is an email account, accessed only by him. The students can also meet the V-C without any appointment everyday between 3pm and 4pm.

Source: January 18, 2011/[Hindustan Times](#)

TeamLease to set up vocational education university in Gujarat

Staffing company TeamLease Services Pvt. Ltd announced on Monday it is setting up a vocational education university in Gujarat to help plug an increasing skill gap in India's labour force.

This comes after the Union government recently announced its intention to set up a national vocational education framework to cater to millions of students who cannot, or do not, take up higher education.

TeamLease has entered into an agreement with the Gujarat government to set up TeamLease University (TLU), comprising 22 community colleges across the state. Though there are several skill training institutes in the country, this will be the first university for vocational education.

"We have a very small vocational training sector in India. Only 5% of students go for vocational training while the number is nearly 80-90% in developed countries," said Pawan Agarwal, a civil servant and author of the book, *Indian Higher Education: Envisioning the Future*. "While a direct comparison doesn't make sense because agriculture is a dominant occupation in India, the difference is still very significant."

While developed countries give a lot of focus to vocational education, a lack of sufficient skilled labour is a major worry in India, the second-fastest growing major economy.

According to data available with the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), the country has around 7,500 technical institutes for higher education and only 2,500 polytechnic institutes. "A large number of students in countries like the US and Singapore go for vocational education. Perhaps, India needs to do that as skill is very important while landing a job," said Mona Mourshed, partner (education), at consulting firm *McKinsey and Co.*

"Youth unemployability is a bigger problem than youth unemployment," said Gujarat principal secretary (education) Hasmukh Adhia, who signed the agreement on behalf of the state government.

Manish Sabharwal, chairman, TeamLease Services, said his company is adopting the university system because global experience shows that community colleges improve accessibility, increase inclusiveness, lower costs and create vertical mobility.

"Community colleges in the US typically provide skill-based training and are integrated into the formal higher learning system. This has been successfully emulated elsewhere in the world in what is called 'short cycle higher education', that has a shorter duration, mobility into higher education, and is held in good regard, socially. In contrast, vocational training in India is being catered to by the unorganized training sector," said Agarwal.

TLU will offer what it calls an "associate degree", rather than a diploma, which will confer credits recognized by degree programmes.

"After a student passes a diploma programme, he typically has to start afresh if he wants to pursue a degree. A student passing out of TLU's accounting technician course, on the other hand, will be able to join a BCom programme in the third year," said Sabharwal, although this will apply only in Gujarat for now.

"When we look at expansion on the national level, going forward we will approach the UGC so we can plug into their credit transfer system," he said. UGC, or University Grants Commission, is India's regulator for higher education.

Some institutes already offer associate degrees in India. Among them are Delhi's Indira Gandhi National Open University and a network of community colleges in Chennai run under the Indian Centre for Research and Development of Community Education.

Each of TLU's 22 colleges will look at enrolling 300-700 students.

Human resource development (HRD) minister Kapil Sibal recently announced plans for a vocational education framework for millions of students who either drop out of schools or don't pursue higher education for socio-

economic reasons. While 220 million students pursue school education, fewer than 15 million take up higher education. The ministry has set up committees comprising experts from the information technology, telecom and automobile sectors to devise model curricula for vocational education in the relevant fields.

India pegged its unemployment rate at 9.4% in 2010, an increase of 1.2 percentage points over 2004-05, when the previous comprehensive survey was done.

Source: Tue, Jan 18 2011/[Live Mint](#)

ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

Connecting two Indias

What are the prospects for the expansion of liberal space in India over the next two decades? To me this desirable objective requires both growth and equity. It's happening, but there's still a lot that needs to be done before we get there.

The benefits of economic growth must reach all Indians — the majority of whom are young, and the majority of whom are poor. Statisticians tell us that the current proportion of the total Indian population under 25 years of age is 51 per cent and the proportion under 35 is about 66 per cent. This predominance of youth in the population is expected to last until 2050, with the average age of an Indian in 2020 expected to be 29 years.

This is both good news and bad news. The good news is that this means we will have a productive, dynamic, youthful population of working age for decades while the rest of the world, including China, is ageing. We used to bemoan our failures at population control, especially in contrast to China; but when one single Chinese, born from his country's one-child policy, is desperately trying to support four grandparents, his Indian counterpart, the child of our country's population-control failures, will be riding the cusp of a demographic boom.

But then there's the bad news. The availability of a human resource of such magnitude only means anything if we can feed, house, clothe, educate and train these young people so they can actually contribute to socio-economic change. If we fail to provide them the opportunities to make something of their lives in "new India", the same population could be not only a burden but even a threat, since so much of terrorism and extremist violence in our country is carried out by embittered and unemployed young men.

How are we going to give them these opportunities? Plainly not through agriculture alone, because rural India already cannot sustain the 700 million people currently trying to live off the land. That is why India is suffering the painful tragedy of farmer suicides every time the monsoon disappoints and the harvests fail to sustain a debt-ridden farmer's family. Over the next two decades India will witness a massive migration from the rural areas to the urban, both to existing cities and towns and through the

transformation of rural centres into urban townships. In turn this will have an impact on other vital aspects of Indian life. First, on our education system, which will have to cope with hundreds of millions of young people who no longer intend to be farmers and peasants, but will want the education that will equip them to lead viable urban lives. Second, on our demand for and consumption of energy, which will multiply exponentially as new infrastructure is built and as urban dwellers seek electricity, water, drainage, roads, telephone connections and mass transit. Today, 600 million Indians, overwhelmingly in rural areas, are not even connected to the electricity grid. Tomorrow they will be. Our government aims to increase power generation in India by seven times — 700 per cent — over the next 25 years.

If, say, 300 million Indians were to move from the villages to the towns in the next two decades or less, can we absorb all of them, educate all of them, employ all of them? If India succeeds in accommodating and absorbing these young people, we can enhance their life chances by enabling them to seize the opportunities of the 21st century. This is a task that must be taken on by a society that only this year passed a Right to Education Act embracing all children everywhere in our country. Right now, desperately poor parents in India, working as rickshaw-pullers and domestic servants, are scrimping and saving to send their children to private schools that they can ill afford, because they see a decent education in English as the best guarantee of their child's future. Now the state is stepping in to ensure that their dreams do not have to constitute an impossible burden on them.

If that works, and we bring the benefits of education to every illiterate child in India today, then perhaps 200 million of the 300 million people I spoke about will suddenly be able to compete with the rest of the world. I say to Westerners: These Indians tomorrow will be able to answer your phones, make your airline reservations and pursue your credit-card defaulters, but they will also be able to read your MRIs, design your automobiles, write your legal briefs and invent your next gadgets.

That is if we succeed. What if we fail? As a political representative in India today, I certainly do not take the prospects of success for granted. The process of doing what I have described is not just huge in itself, it also involves something no society, not even China, has yet attempted. And that is to connect millions of citizens in a functioning democracy to their own government: not just to announce entitlements that they are expected to grasp for themselves, but to create delivery mechanisms that ensure that these entitlements are not just theoretical, but real and accessible.

This is essential in all societies, but it is indispensable in a democracy. As a Member of Parliament, I am struck by the fact that a majority of the voters in every Indian constituency are, by international standards, poor. The basics — food, clothing, shelter, roads, electricity, drinking

water, jobs — dominate our politics. This is why my party has focused on inclusive growth — the combination of economic development and social justice — as the lodestar of its work.

If this is important enough when voters are poor, it is deeply significant when they are both poor and young. Young people in India are now asking that their voices be heard, that their issues be addressed and that their roles be recognised. They want to be accepted as partners for development, helping to chart a common course and shaping the future for everyone.

As young India grows into and demands change, our national politics is undergoing a vital shift as well. I believe that a major reason why my party won last year's General Elections is that our political leadership was able to delink the national polity from the incendiary issues of religious identity and caste denomination that other parties had built their appeal upon. Instead, we put the focus on what the people needed — more development, better governance, wider socio-economic opportunities.

And yet, paradoxically, the stresses of economic development have created disparities which risk becoming centrifugal forces, dividing our society between rich and poor, urban and rural. To counteract this, we need to devise creative, ambitious responses to deal with the challenges faced by our people — to connect them to the opportunities the 21st century offers.

One such response is the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), another is the expansion of micro-credit to the rural poor, and a third possible response in the near future will be the Food Security Act my government is currently working on.

The objective of such measures is inclusion and connection — inclusion in the great Indian 21st century story, and connection to the institutional structures within which that story unfolds. In my visits to the poor and dispossessed when I am in Thiruvananthapuram, I am acutely conscious that the opposite is still the reality for millions of my fellow Indians. They face exclusion and disconnection for a variety of reasons: their place in the traditional social structure, their caste, their poverty, but also because our country has not been able to build the physical means — the roads, the highways, the power-transmission lines, the telephone systems, the schools — to connect them. Rahul Gandhi rightly speaks of two Indias — one connected, one not. Establishing the connection between the two Indias is vital to our country's place in the world, and vital to developing a convincing sense of liberal India.

And if we succeed — when we succeed — we will be connecting 500 million Indians, over the next two decades, to their own country and to the rest of the world. Half-a-billion villagers will join the global village. That is an exciting prospect. But only then can we truly speak of an India ready to fulfil its liberal potential.

Source: January 1st, 2011 / [Deccan Chronicle](#)

Education should be made a priority

Human resources development minister Kapil Sibal seems to have got it right.

The government has agreed to allow corporations to set up educational institutions as not-for-profit companies, in a bid to cater to India's rising demand for education.

So far, the educational institutions could only be run by trusts. The hope is that without having to go through the process of setting up trusts, firms will be quicker off the starting block in creating educational institutions.

The new rule says that while such educational institutions can make a profit, they must be ploughed back into the institutions. This can be used to build more infrastructure or expand existing facilities. It can also be used to fund a corpus to help economically weak students and create more scholarships for deserving students, so that no talented but poor child is ever deprived of the chance to study further.

It is true that companies might be more interested in the tertiary end of education (colleges, technical or management institutions), rather than primary or secondary education. But what this means is that it will allow the government to concentrate on primary and secondary education. India has a decent enrolment rate but a horrendous dropout rate. For every 100 students who join primary school (and not every child gets into school yet), less than 10 graduate. This has to change, and fast. Every child, even a pavement-dweller's child, must get into school and get education till Class X for him or her to become a useful citizen; and those desiring higher education must have the opportunity to do so.

Moreover, much as the move is laudable, there are reasons for concerns. Last year, some 30% (60,000 out of 200,000) of engineering seats in private colleges remained vacant, unfilled because they were too expensive. In a country where thousands of students yearn to study engineering, such waste is criminal.

There is no point in expanding capacity or setting up educational institutions if students simply cannot afford the fees. Sibal's real task will be to ensure that this doesn't happen. Otherwise, his new idea will simply waste away.

Source: Jan 2, 2011/[DNA India](#)

Safeguarding a sacred space

Netas who haggle over 'secularism' have much to learn from two backwater schools in Uttar Pradesh for their stellar role in upholding moral values above sectarian interests and in working out a model of communal harmony, writes Ardhendu Chatterjee

Religion is essentially the art and the theory of the remaking of man. Man is not a finished creation. ~ Edmund Burke

LONG back Gandhi observed, "Those who say religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion is." But the present breed of Indian politicians often invoke religion recklessly, not only in their electoral battles but also in the academia to consolidate their support base without serving any educational objective whatsoever.

Consider the stand off between West Bengal's ruling combine and its arch rival the Trinamul Congress over Aliah University students' demand for including the word "madrasah" in the name of the university. They began a fast in support of their demand, and subsequently broke it at the request of the railways minister assuring them that if Trinamul Congress came to power in 2011, it would definitely meet their demand.

Does Mamata Banerjee consider the electorate morons or nincompoops, unable to see through her grand plan to woo the minority community? Of course, one would argue, if the Left Front could stoop to conquer Muslim voters by setting up this university, and if the Union Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee could open an Aligarh Muslim University campus in Murshidabad, can the Trinamul Congress be left behind?

Indian political leaders tie themselves up in knots trying to prove their secular credentials or projecting themselves as the messiahs of the minorities; they usually end up sowing seeds of communal hatred. Appeasing the minority communities without any justification, doling out sops like promise of reservation in government jobs or in educational institutions on the eve of elections (the Left Front government's recently announced overture to the Muslims is a case in point) without doing anything substantial and compromising on many issues for the sake of electoral gains, like why painter MF Hussain or fire-brand writer Taslima Nasreen cannot be accommodated into the Indian mainstream, are a few instances of political chicanery indulged in by almost all political parties in India.

What, however, particularly peeved West Bengal's Minister of State for Minority Welfare Abdus Sattar was Banerjee's presence in his own fiefdom. He lambasted the Trinamul supremo for her support to the students' "strange" demand — a typical example of the pot calling the kettle black. The term "madrasha", according to him, being synonymous with "school", the change would be "a misnomer if used while referring to a university". By the same logic, would he explain how could Calcutta Madrasah be upgraded to the Calcutta Madrasah College? If a college had so long no problem with the word "madrasha", what problem would it cause if it were retained when the same college was upgraded to Aliah University? Sattar must be knowing that an academic discipline in a university is sometimes styled as a school, like the school of humanities and languages, the school of economics and social sciences etc. How can Sattar disown the tradition of the parent madrasha that evolved into a university? What's in a name?

An educational institution is the best place to teach religious tolerance and inculcate moral values. In his recent lecture,

titled “Human Values: A Necessity for Sustainable Development” delivered at the Indira Gandhi National Open University Convention Centre, eminent spiritual leader and founder of the Art of Living Foundation Sri Ravi Shankar rightly observed, “If we do not stand up for the cause, how can the change happen? There shouldn’t be any mismatch between the values which govern an individual and society. It is thus necessary to increase accountability for sustainable development of human values.”

This accountability to maintain not only religious but also cultural, social and human values is sadly missing in our political leaders leading to unrest and turmoil in every sphere of national life. Two Uttar Pradesh schools can be an eye opener for them that have shown how to create a climate of communal and social harmony. Bengal’s leaders will be surprised to learn that even a madrasha (also spelled as “madrassa” in English) could be a very liberal learning centre. The Imadul-Jamia-Uloom Madrasa, established in the 1960s in Karari town under Kaushambi district, has taken a bold decision in introducing yoga lessons for its 600-odd students from Class VIII to the undergraduate level. Learners recite Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim from the Holy Quran — an improvisation to avoid embarrassment and replace “Om” that precedes every Yoga lesson — and then receive the first lesson of the day, yoga, and that too under the guidance of a Hindu teacher! Every day the two-hour yoga session is conducted in two slots.

According to Mohammad Imran, principal of the Islamic seminary, the yoga lessons are imparted not only to make students “mentally and physically fit” but also to spread a “message of communal harmony.” He finds nothing wrong in embracing something from another religion if “it’s aimed at serving society and betterment of human beings.” It was an outstanding feat on his part to convince the people belonging to his community that yoga did not go against the basic tenets of Islam. The yoga teacher Kuldeep Khare, however, looks at the whole exercise from a health angle. He believes yoga lessons improve students’ “concentration level and de-stress them so they can perform efficiently in whatever task they take up in their daily life.”

What is unique about the second institution is that for the last 75 years it continues to prescribe the Bhagavad Gita both as a compulsory moral science textbook as well as a compulsory subject for learners. At present the school has 200-odd students out of which 30 happen to be Muslims who, like their Hindu classmates, study the Gita ungrudgingly and keep “the tradition alive”. Established in 1935 by three deeply religious friend — Hanuman Prasad, Jai Prakash and RS Kotwal — in the Babujanj area of Lucknow, Gita Vidyalaya, despite being affiliated with the Uttar Pradesh Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad since 1947, started receiving government grant only in 1973. The school has a glorious past, and in its early years eminent personalities like patriot-poet Sarojini

Naidu and former union minister Govind Ballabh Pant visited it.

Principal of the school UP Mishra thinks “Holy scriptures like the Gita guide human beings, their behaviour towards individual, family and society. So by teaching lessons from the Gita we, in a way, are teaching students of the importance of their life and making them realise their responsibilities.”

Every day students learn five slokas on an average, “understand their meaning and relate them with the day-to-day activities of their lives.” They are required to take a written annual examination paper having 10 questions from different chapters of the Gita. Questions are objective in nature for Classes VI to VIII and subjective for Classes IX and X.

We must salute the unsung heroes of these two schools — the authorities, the teachers and the guardians — for upholding moral values above sectarian interests and working for communal harmony so badly needed in our national life. Taking a cue from them our political leaders should eschew their politics of religion by desisting from fishing in troubled waters and thinking of the religion of politics that will inspire them to work for the cause of education. The Dalai Lama has rightly said, “There is no need for temples, no need for complicated philosophies. My brain and my heart are my temples; my philosophy is kindness.”

The writer is assistant professor of English, Durgapur Institute of Advanced Technology and Management, Rajbandh

Source: 03 January 2011/Campus/ [The States Man](#)

An educated population is the nation’s greatest asset: Kapil Sibal

If there’s one sector that’s at the cusp of massive growth, it’s education. According to an Ernst & Young study on the higher education sector in India, spends on higher education stand at Rs 46,200 crore. The growth rate for this segment is projected at 12.8% and is expected to touch nearly Rs 150,000 crore in the coming decade, the report says. Right from kindergarten to PG, there is an influx of players who are looking to create a niche through various marketing and branding initiatives. In an exclusive with ET, Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Kapil Sibal, dwells on the role of private sector in the education space and how an education brand should be marketed as ‘a social or a public good’.

What role can private sector play in enhancing quality in education? What according to you is the best example of public-private sector cooperation you have seen in the education sector?

Let me at the outset place a few facts for you to clarify the issues involved. We all recognise that an educated population is the nation’s greatest asset. The government

has accordingly set the goal to achieve near universalisation (100% enrolment and attendance) for primary education, enhance the gross enrolment ratio in secondary education from 50% to 75% and in higher education from 13% to 30% within this decade. The task is unprecedented in the annals of human history and beyond the capacity of either the government or private sector alone.

We thus need both government and private players to work with each other in a synergistic and symbiotic relationship rather than in an antagonistic mode. The government has the advantage of existing infrastructure, credibility and scale, whereas private sector is innovative, dynamic and has a strong management culture. Private sector can thus help to bring in competitive merit and to force periodical changes in curriculum, pedagogy, delivery mechanisms, examination system remuneration and governance across the entire educational sector.

One measure to harness the strengths of both is through government-owned private managed educational institution albeit with pre-specified conditionalities, including outcomes and performance. Several successful examples of such co-operation are there in the vocational education sector.

With the huge demand for education across levels—from pre-primary to post-graduate—education is being marketed aggressively. What do you think of this trend?

Today most private sector players treat education as any other product to be packaged and marketed as a 'private good', however I would like to consider it to be a 'social or a public good' and thus to be marketed appropriately and responsibly.

What according to you constitutes an education brand?

An education brand arises from five attributes: quality, value for money, USP, social recognition and acceptability.

What are some dos and don'ts that education institutes should keep in mind while they embark on marketing themselves?

Dos: observe complete truthfulness, transparency and clarity in regard to infrastructure, faculty, financial integrity, fees/ charges, accreditation/ recognition, performance and placement.

How can quality be maintained even while the quantity i.e. the numbers of education brands are increasing?

Evidently different measures will need to be adopted to ensure quality of education at different levels and sectors of education. At the primary school level under the RTE Act, we have made provisions for a local school management committee, comprising a majority of stakeholders that has been assigned the role inter alia of monitoring school performance. At the secondary level, we are making a beginning by bringing about uniform curriculum for board exams on pan- India basis.

At the higher education level, we seek to ensure quality through two overarching bodies: The National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) to regulate (all) higher education and research and the National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for Higher Educational Institutions are being set up with the objective for regulating the higher education space and mandatory assessment and accreditation in higher education.

However, the philosophy for regulation is to move from an inspection-approval process to a verification-authentication mechanism. For vocational education, we are putting in place a National Vocational Education Qualifications Framework in collaboration with the National Council for Vocational Training and State Boards of Vocational Education and Training which would interlink academia with the skills councils to prescribe the academic curricula, structure of delivery of vocational education and an accredited system acknowledged by academic institutions and industry.

Which are some of the most successful education brands that have been created—in India and globally?

Globally, the IITs and IIMs whose alumni occupy the highest positions internationally in R&D, business, industry and even government are a respected 'brand'. On the research education front, IISc is well known globally. At the school level, the Kendriya and the Navodaya Vidyalayas have over the years carved out a name for themselves in the field of quality education, accessible and affordable to diverse sections of our society and not merely to the privileged, the affluent and the urban children. There are many other educational brands that are well respected amongst their potential audience-base.

Source: 05 December 2011/[The Economic Times](#)

B-schools see technical council suggestions as 'threat to autonomy'

Management and business schools across the city have strongly opposed a recent notification issued by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) claiming some of the suggestions "threaten the autonomy of B-schools."

The notification dated December 28, 2010, states that "admissions to all PGDM courses shall only be done through common entrance tests such as CAT/MAT or examinations conducted by the state government" and B-schools should conduct admissions only through a state government-operated process. "Admission to PGDM courses shall be conducted by the respective state governments through their competent authority designated for such purpose (such as Directorate of Technical Education in Maharashtra)," the notification states.

The notification calls for all existing AICTE-approved B-schools and MBA institutes to file comprehensive

information, keeping the new notifications in mind, by February 28, 2011.

Dr Suresh Ghai, Director, KJ Somaiya Institute of Management Studies and Research, said, "The notification, if it comes into effect, would be a threat to our autonomous status and would take away our freedom to conduct admissions for PGDM programmes. We will have to abide by the formulae put forth by the state body and we will have to give admissions to candidates selected by the government-appointed body. AICTE should have considered the views and opinions of all stakeholders before coming up with such a notification."

Dr R Gopal, Director and Dean of Padmashree Dr DY Patil University's Department of Business Management, said: "Admissions through a government-appointed body and fixing fees is a bad idea. These issues should be conducted by institutes based on the market developments."

"AICTE must seriously rethink the notification. After this they may also ask institutes to have various quotas in admission process. We just conducted a meeting with the institutes on January 12. We are meeting more institutes soon and after getting their response on the issue we will send the suggestions to the HRD minister," added Dr A K Sengupta, founder and convenor, HEF.,

AICTE officials say the notification will regularise institutes. Dr P K Sahoo, Regional Director, AICTE (western region) said, "Since only CAT, MAT and state CETs will be allowed as entrance exams, all B-schools, except those affiliated to deemed universities will have to consider scores of the three exams. For autonomous institutes offering AICTE-approved PGDM, the admissions will be conducted by a state-appointed body." The move will check institutes that have arbitrary rules and charge exorbitant fees, he added.

Source: 17 Jan, 2011/ [India Express](#)

Fee increase formula for IIT autonomy

The tuition fees in the 15 IITs could increase five-fold, from Rs 50,000 a year now to nearly Rs 2.5 lakh, if the expected recommendations of a committee are accepted.

The elite tech schools should raise the money to run undergraduate courses entirely through tuition fees and not depend on government grants, the committee headed by IIT Bombay chairman Anil Kakodkar is likely to suggest.

However, the committee is unlikely to recommend raising the postgraduate fees, a source told *The Telegraph*. The IITs want more students to join their postgraduate courses, hoping some of them might later take up teaching jobs at the institutes whose faculties are short-staffed by over 30 per cent.

The Kakodkar committee, formed to suggest a road map for the IITs' autonomy and growth, will submit its report on

Friday at a meeting of the IIT Council, the apex body that decides matters relating to the institutes.

The committee believes that increasing the undergraduate fees would make the IITs more self-sufficient and pave the way for more autonomy. The institutes will no longer depend on government grants for their recurring expenses, and would be able to create faculty and non-faculty posts on their own without having to seek government clearance.

If the government grants that the IITs receive to run their undergraduate courses are divided among the 10,000-plus students, every student will have to pay around Rs 2.5 lakh a year.

In February 2010, IIT Kanpur had proposed raising the tuition fee, suggesting a gradual hike to Rs 4 lakh a year over a period of 10 years. The government had not accepted the report.

The Kakodkar committee is expected to cite the IIM fee structure while pitching its fee-hike formula for the IITs.

At present, the IIMs charge fees ranging from Rs 3 lakh to Rs 6.5 lakh a year per student for their postgraduate programmes. This allows the IIMs to pay the faculty salaries on their own; so they can create posts and fill them without having to approach the government.

The five-member Kakodkar committee is also likely to suggest an easy-loan scheme for the poorer students. The human resource development ministry has plans to set up a National Education Finance Corporation to facilitate loans to students at low interest.

HRD minister Kapil Sibal had set up the Kakodkar committee in October 2009. Its other members are T.V. Mohandas Pai, director (human resource), Infosys; K. Mohan Das, vice-chancellor of the Kerala Health and Allied Sciences University; Ashok Jhunjhunwala, IIT Madras; and Hari Bhartia, chairman of the Confederation of Indian Industry.

IIT Guwahati director Gautam Barua, IIT Mandi director T. Gonsalves and IIT Kanpur chairman Anandakrishnan were special invitees.

The committee had a series of meetings with IIT directors, faculty and industry representatives. Its members visited five universities in China last November to familiarise themselves with the best practices in science education and research.

According to sources, the members credit the Chinese system with boosting the number of undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programmes and also improving the quality of higher education in that country.

Overhauling their higher education programmes has been a challenge for India and China, both developing economies with large populations.

The committee visited Fudan University and Jiao Tong University in Shanghai, Zhejiang University in Hang Zhou,

Tsing Hua University in Beijing and Tianjin University in Tianjin.

On Friday, the IIT Council is also expected to discuss the format of the IIT Joint Entrance Examination. A committee headed by science and technology secretary T. Ramasami is likely to hand in a report suggesting ways in which candidates' Class XII scores can be made to count while preparing the merit list. This is not done now.

Another committee, under IIT Kharagpur director Damodar Acharya, had suggested a two-tier format for the entrance exam — a screening test followed by the main test. Sibal did not approve this format and set up the Ramasami committee to suggest a better system.

Source: 17 Jan, 2011/ [The Telegraph](#)

Looking ahead

[Narendra Jadhav](#), member, planning commission, on the agenda for the Indian Higher Education sector in 2011. He talks to Reema Kaur at a National Conference hosted by the All [India](#) Management Association ([AIMA](#)).

What will be the priorities in 2011?

2011-12 is the final year of the 11Five-Year Plan. We will try our best to implement the reforms that were mentioned in the planned documents but are yet to take off. Clearing the five major bills — Foreign Education Providers Bill, Educational Tribunal Bill, Accreditation Bill and Prohibition of Educational Malpractices Bill and the bill to set up the National Commission for [Higher Education and Research](#) (NCHER) — will be our priority. All these bills are at various stages of finalisation. Once implemented, they will make a big difference to India's higher education system.

The Foreign Education Providers Bill has been delayed considerably. Don't you think it will lose its impact if delayed any further?

The Foreign Education Providers Bill is currently with the standing committee. Standing committee members will give their recommendations. Their recommendation will further be considered before the bill is presented in Parliament. Once it is discussed across parties in Parliament we hope that it will be approved and passed with due amendments in the coming budget session in February.

Once the bill is approved, do you think foreign universities will take over the Indian education system?

Such apprehensions are baseless. Today, we have about 550-560 Indian universities. In the next 10 years we would have 1,500 universities, out of which not even 20% share would go to the foreign universities. Further, foreign institutions will be allowed to set up campuses in India only after they fulfill certain criteria. Their entry will promote healthy competition and make domestic universities more efficient education providers. Also, research-oriented foreign universities can take up joint research with

domestic universities. This will boost research opportunities in India.

What about the National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER)?

The third draft of [NCHER](#) is with the Prime Minister. Some issues are being sorted out, but it will soon be in cabinet and later tabled in Parliament, which may decide to send the bill to the standing committee for suggestions. However, I am hoping that in the next one and a half years all these proposals, in whatever shape and form as decided by Parliament, will become operational.

The 11Plan promises to build on ongoing efforts to strengthen elementary education. Any concrete developments to look forward to?

Following the success of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the focus is now on the mid level school education, which is the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan. The 11Five-Year Plan contains a proposal to establish 6,000 model schools for secondary education, out of which 3,500 schools are supposed to be in the Economically Backward Blocks (EBB), owned by the government. The remaining 2,500 schools would be in public-private partnership. We are giving the proposal final touches and it is expected to go on floor in the next few weeks.

Any developments on the proposed National Skill Development Mission to expand and restructure the public sector skill development efforts and to support private skill development initiatives in several high growth sectors of the economy?

Our target is to equip 500 million people who would be fully skilled by 2022. The percentage of people receiving formal vocational education in 2006-07 was only two percent. Eight percent more got on the-job training, making it a total of 10%. For a country which is hoping to become an economic super power, this is not enough.

Source: Jan 17, 2011/[The Times of India](#)

Lancet for joint action in education & health

NEW DELHI: The human resource development ministry's hopes of bringing medical education under the ambit of the proposed National Commission for Higher Education and Research received a boost from an independent global report by The Lancet Commission . The ministry has been locked in a turf battle with the health and law ministries over the ambit of the proposed regulator.

Sources said that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has been appreciative of the suggested framework of the National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER). However, despite the merits of the framework proposed by the ministry-appointed taskforce, the Prime Minister is understood to have suggested further consultation with stakeholders like the law and health

ministries. The HRD ministry appointed NCHER taskforce is expected to hold consultations with the other ministries .

In this context, the Lancet Commission's report "Education of Health Professionals For the 21st Century" serves to strengthen the argument made by the NCHER taskforce. The report clearly calls for aligning national efforts through joint planning in the education and health sectors . It has suggested engaging all stakeholders in the reform process and developing global collaborative networks for mutual strengthening. It has suggested establishment of joint planning mechanisms in every country to engage key stakeholders, especially the ministries of education and health, professional associations, and the academic community, to overcome fragmentation by assessment of national conditions, setting priorities, shaping policies, tracking change and harmonising the supply and demand for health professionals to meet the health needs of the population.

The ministries of human resource development , health and law are caught in a turf war, with each having drafted bills to regulate respective professional education . The taskforce set up by the HRD ministry has drafted a bill for establishing the NCHER, which would replace all existing regulatory bodies in various disciplines like medical, engineering, legal and other professions. Agriculture, which is a state subject, has not been brought under the proposed overarching regulator.

The health ministry has refused to give up medical education. It has taken refuge in the announcement made in the President's Address to argue that medical education can't be brought under the NCHER.

Source: 18 Jan, 2011/[Economic Times](#)

Below standard

Is the right to education merely the right to schooling? That is the question raised by the Annual Status of Education Report 2010, and it comes out of some disturbing statistics. The survey, which covered seven lakh children in 14,000 villages, found that while 96.5 per cent of children in the six to 14 age group in rural India are enrolled in school, the quality of their education left much to be desired. When only half the number of students surveyed in Class V can read a Class II text, when nearly 30 per cent of Class V students can do neither subtraction nor division, it is time to seriously ponder the slow decline in the quality of education in our rural areas and assess why we are going wrong at the very basic level.

It's not that there aren't any positive developments. Thanks to the standards imposed by the Right to Education Act and the far-reaching effects of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, there are more children in school: the percentage of five-year-olds enrolled in schools has increased from 54.6 in 2009 to 62.8 in 2010. The girls in the 11-14 age group still out of school has come down,

too. Now, the imperative should be on providing them with the kind of education that is their right.

Infrastructure is essential. Students need classrooms and blackboards. They need drinking water and warm meals. They also require qualified, enthusiastic teachers — for the quality of education a student receives depends on the quality of her teachers. And that's where Punjab, where its children have shown a marked improvement in basic arithmetic, has scored. The survey points out how the state is focusing on teachers as much as it is on students. It has schemes intent on upgrading pedagogy. And that can be a lesson for everyone. Let us start with better pay for schoolteachers, followed by incentivising them to deliver the best and then make them accountable for the results. Only then can children get the kind of education they deserve.

Source: Jan 18 2011/[Indian Express](#)

Business schools need to fulfil corporate expectations

B schools have literally sprouted all over India in recent years and the options available have multiplied exponentially. However, what management aspirants need to realise is that the bookish knowledge that is typically imparted can only take a management career so far.

In fact, chances are that it may not even get aspirants a basic campus recruitment interview.

With the post recession recovery process in full swing, corporates are in fast forward mode and no longer have the time to groom management interns the way they used to earlier.

They are clearly seeking people who understand the industry mindset, have a good grasp of the deliverables expected and can contribute right from day one itself.

This is why Mumbai's leading B schools score over most of their counterparts across the country when it comes to providing a strong foundation for fast track management careers. They facilitate the transformation from college studies to the corporate world and provide management aspirants with an edge.

Multiple benefits

Faculty members having vast industry experience ensure that the knowledge imparted is not just theoretical in nature, but also relevant and in tune with the current corporate scenario.

Their excellent infrastructure in terms of comfortable classrooms, libraries well stocked with reference materials, updated curriculum with real case studies, personality growth and soft skills development plus above all prime placements, make for a winning combination.

Flexible options

Similarly, while typical distance learning programs in India comprise a set of thick books delivered by mail, the lack of

interaction and resulting inconvenience forces a substantial number of students either drop out of the course or give exams half-heartedly.

In comparison, Mumbai has B schools, which offer a variety of programs under the distance learning mode, using technology to make the process more student-friendly.

Even working management aspirants can get a comprehensive management education by attending weekend lectures either in person or virtually. Since the study topics and themes are in sync with the working environment, the scope for fresh entrants as well as existing employees is vast.

Corporate city

Dr Debashis Sanyal, Dean, NMIMS, points out that the first advantage of having a business school in Mumbai is that being a corporate city, there are plenty of industries and companies in and around it.

"We take our students for industrial visits so that they can have a good experience of the corporate world. Our B-School provides among the best faculty. We also invite experienced people from various industries at the CEO level for guest lectures to our management students. Being in Mumbai, they also get to see a lot of live projects.

"We also provide mentors from various industries in some of the courses. A number of NGOs are working for social development; our students also work and interact with them. Mumbai provides a wide range of facilities and it is a cosmopolitan city. In addition to our existing MBA and weekend Diploma programmes on Saturday, we also have management courses for family business. We have also introduced an innovative programme in 2011," he shares.

Easy access

Prof. P L Arya, Director, N. L. Dalmia Institute of Management Studies concurs.

"Mumbai is said to be one of the most corporate cities so management aspirants have greater access to a wide number of industries here. We provide regular industrial visits to our students so that they can gain a better experience, observation and actual feel of the corporate world. We also have courses for working executives who have started their career after graduation without completing MBA. Most of the B schools in Mumbai provide part time MBA programmes, which are based on industry requirements. Mumbai is a city where everything required for a management career is easily accessible," he emphasises.

Natural anchor

Ranjan Sarkar, Head Corporate HR, CEAT Ltd., underlines that Mumbai, being the biggest business hub of the country, is a natural anchor to management education.

"However, for bigger infrastructure needs, today campuses are shifting to suburbs, satellite towns or B-class towns around Mumbai. Traditionally, we at CEAT have been recruiting from top tier colleges like IIMs, XLRI, MDI, etc., irrespective of the day status at the campus. But we also experienced that top 20% from tier 2 management schools, are also great talent. After all, management is not just about IQ but also EQ," he says.

Entrepreneurial hub

Mumbai offers an environment that is conducive to entrepreneurial efforts. This has enabled many people to develop and grow their business, which in turns, opens up additional jobs and scope for aspirants.

Rishi Jain, Managing Director, Rajesh Metal Industries, explains, "Our business has moved from the traditional B2B approach to branding, product management, retail, merchandising, etc. This has necessitated recruiting management graduates. Mumbai B schools have provided an ideal platform for us to recruit because the students' exposure and adaptability as well as go-to-market potential are much better."

So be it fresh management graduates or existing managers looking to upgrade their skills, Mumbai is an established centre for education of the highest calibre. Its leading B schools adhere to enviable quality standards, benchmarking themselves on par with the best globally.

Source: Jan 18, 2011/[DNA India](#)

RESOURCE

Now, rating for B-schools

As credit rating agencies get ready to grade business schools, the jury is out on whether the process will be of much use.

In December 2010, Mumbai-based Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS) received an A*** grading by credit rating agency Crisil. The institute is now all set to adorn it. "We will tell the world about it. Its already on our website and now all our advertisements would carry this. We have already communicated it to all our stakeholders. It has reassured that we are on the right track," said Rajan Saxena, Vice Chancellor, NMIMS University.

Ditto with S P Jain Institute of Management and Research (SPJIMR) which has also received A*** grading from Crisil. SP Jain's Dean M L Shrikant, says it was expected and the institute will post the grading on its website for visitors to see and know of its credibility.

As Crisil, the Indian arm of global ratings major Standard & Poor's, gears up for a formal launch of its B-school Grading this week, many management institutes are in the wait and watch mode. Credit Analysis and Research (Care Ratings), another rating agency will also formally launch its services soon.

The gradings, which B-schools have to volunteer for, will be valid for a year. The B-schools will be evaluated on an eight point scale including factors like faculty, infrastructure, curriculum, research standards, curriculum and interaction with the industry. The grading, says Care, would be at the national and state levels, with A*** being the highest, B*** being average and B being the lowest grade.

These agencies have well known academicians and scientists on board to advise them on the grading mechanism. Care says engineering institutions would be rated for their various degrees or courses. For instance, an institute may get an A*** for its course in chemical engineering but a B*** in mechanical engineering.

At a later stage medical, law and agriculture institutions may also be included. The Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) however, are not enthused. "IIMs are a brand which no credit rating agency can promote. We were approached by these agencies but we do not think we need a rating," said director from one of the IIMs who did not wish to be quoted.

Rating of B-schools is a unique phenomenon in India. Internationally, B-schools go for accreditations, a trend that is catching up in India too. Accreditation in India, like the world over, is voluntary.

"Even though international accreditations are a time consuming and costly affair, Indian B-schools, including the IIMs prefer to go for it as it puts them among the international B-schools," said the director of a Mumbai-based B-school who has applied for an Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accreditation.

Internationally, there are five recognized accrediting bodies. These include: US-based, Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International; European Foundation for Management Development; Association of Management Development Institutions in South Asia (AMDISA) and Association of MBAs. AMDISA has formulated the South Asian Quality Accreditation System, Asia's first global accreditation system. However, getting accreditation from AMBA, EQUIS and AACSB is considered the ultimate goal.

Global accreditation helps B-schools notch up global placements; tie-up with international management schools; get potential international recruiters; student exchange programmes and recruit internationally qualified faculty.

In India, at present, there are two government-run accreditation bodies – the National Board of Accreditation (NBA), constituted by the All India Council for Technical Education and National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), an autonomous institution established by the University Grants Commission.

Crisil will also shortly begin the grading process for Great Lakes. When contacted, Crisil however, could not share the number of B-schools it has approached so far.

"Ratings from such independent bodies will strengthen our credentials. It will help in popular perception. Other rankings merely confuse you," said Professor S Sriram, executive director, Great Lakes Institute of Management, Chennai.

The process of grading will involve the officials of rating agencies spending time on the campus and interacting with faculty, students, alumni and recruiters before coming out with a grade.

"Ratings will provide parents and students value added information to zero in on good institutes on specific course basis. Care ratings will offer ratings to an entire gamut of education institutions," said Rajesh Mokashi, Deputy Managing Director, Care Ratings. Care has been rating maritime training institution for the past five years. Crisil and Care would be charging anywhere between Rs 5-10 lakh to these management institutions for the grading process. The agencies however, say management institutes, are providing discounts at present.

"The charge quoted to us was around Rs 8-10 lakh. But we had to bargain hard with the agency that approached us. We finally managed it all in Rs 3 lakh," said the director of an institute who did not wish to be quoted. Cost aside, experts say pitfall of this process is its voluntary nature. "Since its not mandatory, it may end up as another NBA or NAAC," said a Delhi-based education analyst.

Source: 10 January,2011 / [Business Standard](#)

Proposal to promote rly study submitted

To spread awareness on railway safety, authorities have submitted a proposal to the Union Education Minister to include a study about tracks and safety rules in the school curriculum.

Officials hope to bring down the accidents on railway tracks that happen due to negligence. Authorities added that commuters have become used to trespassing and jump tracks to save time.

Officials have demanded that subjects like environmental education should contain lessons on rail safety and students should be encouraged to use over-bridges and should be careful when driving over crossings.

The divisional railway manager of the Ferozepur division, Vishlesh Chaubey, said that teaching students at an early age would help them become law abiding citizens.

Railway authorities had collaborated with around 1,000 schools in Ludhiana, Amritsar and Jalandhar, under the Ferozepur division and officers visited these schools for the purpose. Street plays were also organized at the railway stations for the public.

In the last two years, over 2,000 people have died on railway tracks and railway officials' attempts to spread awareness has yielded no results.

Source: 12 January,2011/Ludhiana/[The Times of India](#)

Funky fonts make learning easier: Study

Having difficulty learning something? Then try some funky fonts, suggests a new study.

The research has shown that fonts, or styles of typeface, that are relatively difficult to read help people learn new information.

The font effect works both in lab experiments and in real classrooms, perhaps by forcing students to work harder to process the information.

"We weren't sure if our findings in the laboratory would hold up in the classroom, so we were pleasantly surprised," Live Science quoted lead author Connor Diemand-Yauman, who was a Princeton University undergraduate when he conducted the research, as telling Live Science.

People generally assume that the easier it is to learn something, the easier it will be to remember the information later. But education research has shown that in many cases, it's the struggle that makes information stick.

Such "desirable difficulties" include practices such as self-testing, varying how information is presented, and even leaving out letters in words.

Dieman-Yauman and his fellow researchers were interested in whether switching from easy-to-read fonts to more-difficult ones would create a desirable difficulty and improve learning.

The results were published in the January issue of the journal *Cognition*.

Source: 15 January 2011/Washington/[DNA](#)

In India, 96.5% kids go to school: Survey

India took another step towards universal elementary education last year, with 96.5% of all children aged 6-14 years being enrolled in schools, an extensive private audit has revealed. NGO Pratham's Annual Survey of Education Report says the proportion of girls in the age group of 11-14 years too increased to 94.1% although quality of education remained a big concern.

The survey, the only private audit of elementary education in the country, found an increase of half a percentage point in enrolment over 2009. But it said there was an overall decline in students' ability to do basic mathematics and only 53.4% of children in Class V could read Class II level textbooks.

Teacher attendance also showed consistent decline which could be one of reasons for a big increase in enrolment in

private schools and tuitions. Bucking the trend was Punjab, where students showed an exceptional improvement in mathematical ability.

Overall, Bihar emerged as a star performer with steady improvement in enrolment. Enrolment of boys in the state was 95.6% and that of girls 95.4%. In 2006, 12.3% of boys and 17.6% girls in Bihar were out of school.

Among states continuing to return poor numbers in girl's education, Rajasthan had 12.1% girls aged 11-14 years out of school and Uttar Pradesh 9.7%. In both states, there has been no change in the percentage of out-of-school girls.

The survey conducted in all the districts of the country shows a large number of schools in the country fulfilling norms laid down in the Right to Education Act.

At the same time, the report showed a big increase in enrolments in private schools — from 21.8% of all school-going children in 2009 to 24.3% last year. The trend has been holding since 2005. Southern states have more students going to private schools. In Andhra Pradesh, enrolment increased from 29.7% in 2009 to 36.1% while in Tamil Nadu it jumped from 19.7% to 25.1%. Kerala had 54.2% of children in private schools, up from 51.5% last year, and Karnataka 20% (16.8% in 2009).

Among northern states, enrolment in private schools grew rapidly in Punjab — from 30.5% in 2009 to 38% in 2010.

Mathematics proved to be a big bugbear for students across the country. The proportion of Class I students who could recognize numbers fell from 69.3% in 2009 to 65.8%. Barely 36.5% of Class III students could handle two-digit subtraction problems, as compared to 39% in 2009. The proportion of children in Class V who could do simple division dropped from 38% to 35.9%.

Notably, Punjab bucked the trend. While 56.3% of students in Class II in the state could recognize numbers one to 100 in 2008, the figure jumped to 70.4% in 2010. Similarly, the proportion of Class IV children who could do subtraction went up from 66.9% in 2008 to 81.4%.

In Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana and Rajasthan, there was a perceptible rise in the proportion of children studying in Class I who could recognize letters.

West Bengal led in private tuitions with the survey showing more than 75% of Class V students in government schools going to private tutors. In Bihar, the proportion was 55.5% and in Orissa, 49.9%.

A positive feature of the report was the increasing number of five-year-olds in school. Nationally, it increased from 54.6% in 2009 to 62.8%. Karnataka emerged as an big achiever on this score with enrolment of five-year-olds jumping from 17.1% in 2009 to 67.6% in 2010. Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Assam also showed healthy increases in enrolment.

Source: 15 January 2011/New Delhi/[Times of India](#)

Vocational education in the country needs a fillip

An analysis carried out recently by the Symbiosis Centre for Distance Learning (SCDL) on vocational education in India indicates that in spite of growing demand in the market for skilled manpower, the country lacks a well-defined pathway, qualification framework and a national and state-level policy for vocational education and training.

Director of SCDL, Swati Mujumdar, who led the team that conducted the six-month research study said, "We have initiated the concept of a vocational university for the first time in India. It will offer opportunities for higher education in the vocational stream and create a defined vertical mobility path for vocational students."

While stressing that there is no recognition for skills gained through vocational courses, Mujumdar said, "There are no equivalent bachelor's, master's and doctoral programmes in vocational education in India. One has to completely change the branch to get an undergraduate degree. Presently, vocational training is imparted at Industrial Training Institutes (ITI) and is available in the form of certificate courses. Students pursuing standards XI and XII in the vocational stream do not have any vertical or lateral mobility for higher education in the same stream."

On Symbiosis' plans to start such a vocational university in the city, Mujumdar said it would be left to the state government to decide. "We have forwarded the proposal to the state government and minister for higher and technical education, Rajesh Tope, is keen on it. If Maharashtra takes the initiative, it could become a model for other states to follow," she said.

"Teachers in vocational training institutes require a mandatory qualification like BEd with specialisation in vocational education. The skills taught at these institutes are not theory-based that they can open books and start teaching the subject. The teachers themselves have to be skilled in what they teach," added Mujumdar.

The SCDL's comparative analysis with other countries shows that Sri Lanka, Germany, France and Australia have well-established concepts of vocational universities, which are a popular choice among students in these countries.

Source: 17 Jan 2011/[DNA India](#)

High inflation to weigh on real income growth, says survey

MUMBAI: Income disparities in India are likely to widen further in view of the high inflation, which the government has so far failed to arrest, according to a survey conducted by global financial institution, Credit Suisse.

High inflation has weighed on real income growth over the past year and looks set to do so again over the next year, the survey said.

Income disparities--that are already wide--are set to increase as the high-income brackets are expected to continue to see much greater growth than the low-income brackets in all markets, the survey conducted across four core BRIC markets (Brazil, Russia, India and China) besides Egypt, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia said.

According to Credit Suisse, food price inflation has been a major negative while the current spending and spending intentions remain heavily skewed towards essential items.

However, a priority that stands out for the Indian consumer is education, it said, adding household spending on education is by far the highest within the survey at around 7.5 per cent (more than twice that of Russia, at 3.1 per cent).

This, partly reflects that the household has to compensate for low public sector spending on education as well as the relatively high school-age population in India, but it also reflects the importance attached to education by households.

According to the survey, savings are clearly another important part of the allocation of Indian household income as despite relatively low average GDP per capita only 2 per cent of the respondents in India suggested they had no extra income available for savings, compared to 72 per cent in Egypt and 52 per cent in Brazil.

Source: 17 Jan, 2011/[Economic Times](#)

Contribute

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

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

Please email your contributions to aserf@apeejay.edu

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