The India Education Landscape Update

Role Model State

Gujarat shows the way forward in rejuvenating education at all levels

Special Report: DISMAL STATE OF ENGINEERING EDUCATION

Only a minuscule of Engineering graduates employable in IT sector

Editorial: Education dangerously a low priority?

India and Pak management bodies tie-up
THE OBEROI GROUP'S 'Systematic Training and Education Programme'

The Oberoi Group has opened applications for the latest intake of students for its 'Systematic Training and Education Programme' or "STEP" programme. This three year programme combines practical on the job training with study towards a Bachelor of Tourism Studies (BTS) degree from the Indira Gandhi National Open University. It gives graduates a real edge in the important early stage of their career. Now in its ninth year of operation, the Oberoi Group's STEP programme offers students the opportunity of acquiring specific and specialised training and knowledge either in Kitchen Operations or Hotel Operations, while having time to study towards their relevant degree.

On completion of the programme and availability of a suitable vacancy the STEP trainees are absorbed as full time employees of The Oberoi Group, in luxury Oberoi Hotels and Resorts or in our chain of five star Trident Hotels, as Operational Assistants. Alternately, as graduates, the trainees are also eligible to compete for admission to the Oberoi Centre of Learning and Development (OCLD) for a two year postgraduate level programme leading to a first Executive posting with The Oberoi Group. Graduates of the STEP programme have a good chance of being accepted to OCLD because of their familiarity with The Oberoi Group, its individual hotels and resorts as well as The Groups' distinct corporate culture and proven processes.

Details of the course:
Admission to the STEP Programme is open until 8th April, 2012. The programme commences in June 2012.
Eligibility criteria for candidates are as follows:
· be a class XII pass-out by July 2012
· be between 17 and 20 years old on 1 July 2012
· Demonstrate strong academic performance in class X and XII (minimum 50% aggregate and 55% in English in class X).

The programme equips trainees to work in deluxe and first class hotels and resorts. The students would further benefit from the expertise of the academic staff at the Oberoi Centre of Learning & Development which includes world class educationists and hospitality professionals. Oberoi Hotels & Resorts is the award-winning proprietor and operator of some of the world's most luxurious hotels and resorts.

Saltire Scholarships
Scotland's Saltire Scholarships (SSS) is a substantial programme of scholarships, offered on a matched funding basis between the Government and Scottish Higher Education Institutions. The scheme offers up to 200 awards, each worth £2000. These are towards the tuition fees, for any one year of study, on an Undergraduate, Masters or PhD course at any of Scotland's higher education institutions.

The scholarships are designed to support the promotion of Scotland as a learning nation and a science nation and are therefore targeted at the priority sectors of creative industries, life sciences, technology, financial services and renewable and clean energy (find out what study options are available). These are available across key priority countries which includes India.

The scholarships are available to students as part of a wider strategy to promote Scotland as a study destination and showcase Scotland's higher education offering in international markets.

The deadline for applications for the 2012/13 scholarships is 01 June 2012.
Gujarat shows the way forward in rejuvenating education at levels

GER of higher education in the Narendra Modi-ruled western Indian state has gone up to an impressive 13%.

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Education dangerously a low priority?

FIRST THE 2012-13 BUDGET ANNOUNCEMENTS. Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee, on March 16 presented the union budget for 2012-13, his seventh. He announced that school education will be exempt from service tax. The budgetary outlay for education sector is Rs. 61,427 crore. Of this, Rs 25,555 crore have been provided for Right To Education-Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan for 2012-13, and represents a hike of over 21 per cent. 6,000 schools have been proposed to be set up at block level as model schools to benchmark excellence in the 12th Plan beginning this year. Of these, 2500 will be set up under Public Private Partnership. Rs 3,124 crore have been allocated for Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) aimed at universalizing secondary education, which is nearly 29 per cent higher than the allocation in 2011-12.

To ensure better flow of credit to deserving students through education loans by banks, Finance Minister proposed to set up a Credit Guarantee Fund for this purpose. For 2012-13, Finance Minister proposed to allocate Rs 1000 crore to National Skill Development Fund (NSDF). The NSDC partners have opened 496 permanent and 2429 mobile centres in 220 districts across 24 states. More than 89,500 persons have been trained and almost 80 per cent employed. Under NSDC, 10 Sector Skill Councils have been sanctioned. Of these, 3 Skill Councils for Automobile, Security and Retail sectors have become operational.

Does education sector of India only deserve this much? For the last 40 years, there has been a cry of sorts for raising the spending to at least 6 percent of the GDP on education but this year, it has marginally improved and is still below 4%. Knowing fully that education could be game changer for good or worse in next decade and thereafter, the myopic vision of our leaders in government is evident from the low priority refining and reenergizing of education system gets in policy formulation, governance and financial commitment. The government is actually gradually withdrawing from social sectors without first reforming the ailing education system.

Come April 1, and country will celebrate its third anniversary of the RTE. But the issues and challenges that bother it from inception haven’t been addressed all these three years. Instead of an enabling and empowering law, it has brought in an environment of uncertainty. Delhi government on lines of JNVs in the 1990s established Rajkiya Pratibha Vikas Vidyalas to nurture talent and merit. Year after these 19 schools provided a window of opportunity for the brilliant students from the low income groups and weaker section of society (who send their children to MCD schools) to pursue excellence in these schools. Thousands of these students have made it to big institutions like IITs, AIIMS etc. It was an intervention, a country like India should be proud of and replicate. But for the last two years, admissions have been stopped as under RTE, the schools can’t hold an admission test to screen bright children. Before, some sense prevails in law makers and rule formers, this great education model would have crumbled.

But instead of allowing schools to proliferate, the RTE Act focuses on inputs infrastructure, teacher qualification and compensation, standardized textbooks and curriculum, etc. Many schools will not be able to meet these criteria by the end of three years. The private enterprise and capacity has not been factored when actually as per latest statistics private school education is on increase not only in cities but in rural areas as well. According experts The RTE Act will deter fresh investment in the K-12 (kindergarten to class XII) segment. RTE Act will neither help get significantly more number of kids into schools nor will improve the learning quality of kids drastically. It is time to take a fresh look at the drawback of the Act and make amendments in tune with the ground realities and preservation of the best practices that have come in conflict with the provisions of the Act. The parliament need to take these issues in an urgent manner and show a commitment to education needs of India.
AT A TIME WHEN THE LEADERSHIP OF NAREN德拉 MODI-LED BJP-government in Gujarat is getting noticed even internationally and a publication of the Time magazine repute has put him on cover, it is time to take a leaf from Gujarati’s achievements in education. In fact, I happened to listen to senior two officials of the Gujarat government, its commissioner of Higher Education, Dr Jayanti S Ravi, an IAS officer, who shot into fame as the collector of Godhra district during the infamous riots of 2002, and Dr Hasmukh Adhia Principal Secretary department of education of Gujarat.

Though skepticism is a journalistic rule and in particular if it comes from the mouth of agovernment bureaucrats, yet I found them very convincing in what they have done or are in process of doing in the state. They have overcome several of the difficulties by encouraging various stake holders. From primary education to higher and skills training and use of ICT, the state is setting benchmarks. 1/3rd of primary school are being rated, the higher education institutions subjected to compulsory accreditation. Teachers involved in course and content preparation, research avenues made available for them. Multiple intelligence of children across the state through saptdhara, choice based credit system, promotion of soft and communication skills, PPP and e-governance are some of the notable things about the changing face of Gujarat’s education. That is our cover story of this issue.

State education minister met in New Delhi and deliberated on several important issues. The consensus is emerging on holding a common national entrance examination for admission to professional colleges. You can catch a full report of the conference.

The issue also contains summaries two reports, which are significant in the sense that these bring out the state of our education in relation to the themes discussed in them. Aspiring minds, the assessment company has come with startling findings on the employability of thousands of engineering graduate that come out of more than 2500 engineering colleges annually. The second report discussed is a survey done by the Delhi-based Indian Institute on small graduate trend across India, which is very alarming from the point of view of educational leaders in particular and citizens in general.

Then, we have very useful and insightful columns. One by the Noble laureate Dr. R K Pachauri, who is also Director General, TERI as well chancellor of TERI university, gave an inspiring address at the fourth convocation of TERI university last month. The column is based on that address. The second column is by Divya Bawa for parents of small kids, who are finding it hard to re-educating the political starting from 3.8 million local body and panchayat members. Only then, education can become a national priority.

Do tell us your side of India education story…
91 Virtual Labs commissioned
IN 9 DISCIPLINES OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

The Union Minister for HRD, on February 23 launched Virtual Labs a collection of 91 virtual laboratories containing hundreds of experiments in nine disciplines of science and engineering.

Virtual Labs’ primary focus is to provide graduate and undergraduate college and university students with the ability to perform their required laboratory experiments using only the World Wide Web, a standard computer, and an Internet connection. Virtual Labs allow students to practice and better learn the science and engineering behind the experiments that they are required to perform. Virtual Labs also allows the sharing of costly equipment across the country, and in very rural areas, students will be able to perform experiments that they would not otherwise be able to access.

Nearly 300 department heads, faculty, and staff representing 152 institutions have been trained across India. Over 20 Nodal Centres have been created, institutions who have expressed their interest to champion Virtual Labs in their organisations and geographical areas.

The Pilot Phase of the Virtual Labs project started in April 2009. During this phase, approximately twenty labs were developed as proof of concept. The Main Phase began in April 2010. So far, over 80 Virtual Labs have been developed, and are undergoing field trials in various parts of the country.

Two types of virtual labs have been developed under this project. In the Simulation Based Virtual Labs the experiments are modeled using mathematical equations. The simulations are carried out remotely at a high-end server, and the results are communicated to the student over the internet. Simulation based Virtual Labs are scalable and can cater to a large number of simultaneous users.

Using the Remote Triggered Virtual Labs the actual experiments are triggered remotely. The output of the experiment (being conducted remotely) is communicated back to the student over the internet. This class of Virtual Labs gives the student the output of real-time experiments. Typically, time-slots are booked before conducting such experiments.

All Virtual Labs can be accessed through a common website: www.vlab.co.in. At the user end, a PC and broadband connectivity enables the user to access Virtual Labs. These Virtual Labs will be very useful for Engineering College Students who do not have access to good lab-facilities, High-school students, whose inquisitiveness will be triggered, possibly motivating them to take up higher-studies. Researchers in different institutes who can collaborate / share equipment and engineering colleges, who can benefit from the content and related teaching resources.

Currently 85 Virtual Labs have been developed comprising of 769 experiments. Trainings and workshops have been held all over India to disseminate knowledge of these Virtual Labs. Future efforts will involve development of virtual labs in different subjects and wide dissemination of this knowledge.

As part of Ministry of Human Resource Development(MHRD)’s National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT), Virtual Labs is part of a comprehensive undertaking to provide easily accessible and high quality education throughout India. Two types of virtual labs have been developed under this project: Simulation Based Virtual Lab and Remote Triggered Virtual Labs.

A Collaborative Platform for Development of Virtual Labs has been created that assists the faculty with authoring and maintaining Virtual Labs. The platform hosts over 825 experiments developed by many of the partner institutions. The Collaborative Platform provides the server side architecture for ensuring that virtual labs run securely, can effectively serve thousands of students simultaneously, and reserve time slots for experiments that require scheduling. The Collaborative Platform also provides tools to help teachers monitor their students’ progress and make changes to the instructional material.

With the launch of Virtual Labs Indian students will have easy access to an encyclopedia of science and engineering knowledge presented in a way that is engaging, immersive, and enjoyable. Virtual Labs will allow students to explore, discover, and learn wherever they are and at their convenience.
Two years since the National Vocational Education Qualification Framework was announced, here is some good news. Its gradual roll out has commenced and according to ministry of HRD while the entry level higher education component has been given a green signal, aligning it with secondary school curriculum is under way. By July expect the roll out at class IX level onwards and the country may well for the first time move towards a structured and mandatory vocational education. Integrating vocational education with mainstream education is sure answer to the woes of skilled manpower deficient economy and energizing the rampant mediocre technical and professional education across disciplines and campuses.

The much anticipated NVEQF (National Vocational Education Qualification Framework) for mainstreaming vocation education (currently in abysmal shape with annual enrolment of 6 lakh students in 9583 learning places), was rolled out by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) in New Delhi on February 6, whereby a student can choose to avail of competency-based skill learning along with general education without losing the possibility of changing course and moving at any certificate level into a formal system of education and vice versa. This would ultimately provide a full multi-entry exist system between vocational education, general education and the job market.

Under this nationally recognized qualification and standards framework, seven-levels of 'Knowledge and Skill' have been prescribed starting from Grade IX to post-graduation stages. First two levels refer to standard IX and X at school level to be imparted by CBSE schools or schools affiliated to State Boards and other equivalent Boards. The other levels will be conducted by higher educational bodies like technical education boards and universities. Each level requires approximately 1000 hours of education and training taken together per annum. For the vocational stream leading to a Degree or a Diploma, these hours shall have both vocational and academic component. The vocational component will go on increasing as the level of certification increases.

Under this scheme to be implemented in polytechnics, Engineering Colleges and other colleges in the University systems from 2012-13, a student can now register with an AICTE approved technical institute or UGC approved and University affiliated Institute, for a Vocational Diploma or a Vocational Degree or registers with any other Polytechnic affiliated to any technical Board or a University to acquire the formal education credits.

The scheme also provides opportunities for training institutes, companies, workshops, etc to become Skill Knowledge Provider/Partners (SKP), whereby they train, access/evaluate the skills acquired by the student and award Skill Certificates along with Vocational skill credits. The respective board or university of the student compiles the Vocational Skill credits and the Formal Education credits and if all such credits are available as required at the respective certification level, then the Technical Board or the university shall award the certification at that level. Specialized skills in automobiles, entertainment, information technology, telecommunications, marketing, agriculture, construction, applied arts, tourism, printing and publishing sectors have been identified to be covered initially.

According to the spokesperson of the ministry of HRD, “This move is expected to cater to at least 5 million students for vocational degree and diploma every year, which can provide self-employment or being
meaningfully employed if even 1/3 of the institutions are approved to conduct these programmes. AICTE would seek to provide the requisite statutory approvals to any institutions wishing to conduct these programmes from the Academic Year 2012 throughout the country. The institutions can choose a maximum of 500 students per institute in any five sectors, 100 students per sector.”

The training industry is not taking the announcement at its face value and is closely examining its business proposition. “As one of the largest vocational skills provider, we are very keen to play a significant role in this initiative. We shall be deciding our plans once we know the details of the various aspects and implementation plans related to this initiative. No doubt, it will be a big boost to vocational education's image among students and their parents,” says Sharad Talwar, CEO of the Noida-based skill training major, IndiaCan.

The experts, however, are not convinced that the initiative would a game changer for vocational education in India in its present form. Their view is that India needs 86 lakh vocationally skilled and certified teachers to take this forward, which in turn would also mean financial commitment to pay for development and salaries of these teachers. Then unlike other countries where there is a systemic mechanism of linkage of SME section with school system like mandatory certification for all jobs, there will be no obligation on industry to incentivize vocational education. “With close to 88% school dropout rate by class VIII and projected 325 million youth in the age group of 20-35 by 2020, what are you talking. The minister wants to run education on sentiment? In 1997, cbse published 5000 books on healthcare and trust me, nothing sold, there were no takers. Why would anybody come forward? There is no certified content, no certifying or accrediting agencies, no assessor or exam system, no standard or equivalence. This is an immense challenge. Your sector skill councils are defunct; nobody is sure what skills are needed. Some NGOs are making money in its name, that's it. We need to create for profit a PPP mechanism involving reputed domestic and international organizations for creating sector specific occupational standards aligned to curriculum and train the teachers. Create government skill bond to raise funds from the market,” feels Navin Bhatia, managing director of the Delhi-based Navkar Centre for Skills.

In a country, where the government itself admits that a mere 8% of senior secondary schools impart vocational education and there are less than 3% students enrolled in this form of education against a desired target of 25%, introduction of NVEQF (endorsed by education ministers of the states on February 22 in New Delhi in their conference) in a situation where 12.8 million youth enter the workforce every year with low skills, poor productivity and poor income, may become a welcome change agent. For this the intention and policy must go well beyond the rhetoric to diligent implementation.

According to Dr Veera Gupta, secretary central board of secondary education (CBSE), the board is yet to receive any direction or report in this regard though the taskforce working on NVEQF is working out the details. “Secondary education has its own ethos and personality. On one hand it is seen as the preparation ground for higher education, but at the same time, young students move out as socialized human beings to real world from here as workers etc. Till now, the students are instinct driven but the secondary education has to make them social plus productive,” she says.

The abysmal failure of vocational education to take off the ground for so many years has been the failed approaches. First, it is was diversification, where the academic and vocational were thought of separate streams as head verus hands without having a connect. Then, there was some attempt to include competency skills courses as offerings. But there were no takers as such. “We are going through a paradigm shift. To make our curriculum truly vocational is a long drawn process, the course will have to be aligned with practical application. It is a new beginning and we would hopefully move there,” she adds.
The Government of India has set a target to skill 500 million youth by 2022. A skill development mission is functioning directly under the Prime Minister office. As part of the package, National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC) set up in 2008 is currently providing financial support to 34 skills training companies countrywide to tap private capacity and enterprise for training people in various employable skills.

According to Dilip Chenoy, CEO of NSDC, while the K-12 and higher education segments have been well-structured in the country, it is the vocational education which is fragmented. “The private sector can play role in this national mission. ISB and NIIT are examples before us. Unorganized sector is the growth engine of our economy and needs right kind of man power,” he says. The youth population, which is seen as a demographic dividend, according to experts may turn into a debt if the targets of skills development are not met.

According to projections, unorganized sector is facing an acute shortage of about 37 million people, automobiles about 35 million, construction industry around 33 million and textiles 24 million. Retail and healthcare are also hugely skill-deficient sectors.

In this backdrop, a well-intentioned roll out of NVEQF keeping in view the urgency of needs of socio-economic aspirations of the country, may realize the dream of a resurgent India to an economic emergent and empowered India.

**NCOMPUTING latest 3-IN-1 THIN CLIENT**

**delivers a rich pc experience at 1/3rd the cost of pcs**

NComputing, end-to-end desktop virtualization solutions for small to midsize enterprises (SME) and education major, on March 6, in New Delhi revealed an entirely new virtual desktop device called M300 capable of providing a rich PC experience to 3 users simultaneously at 1/3rd the cost, using 1/3rd the power and 1/3rd the networking ports compared to PCs and other thin clients. Customers can now deploy more computing per rupee, spend less on power and facility upgrades, and manage with fewer IT resources. Available immediately worldwide, the M300 is targeted at local workgroups from 3 to 45 users in environments like classrooms, labs, libraries, shared office workspaces, business centers and call centers.

The M300 was built to be a simple, incredibly powerful, and highly affordable thin-client deployment option. Working in tandem with NComputing’s vSpace Server 6.6 software, the M300 3-in-1 thin client kit allows an organization to add virtual PC desktops for a fraction of the cost of a PC. Customers can lower cost of acquisition and energy costs by more than 75%, networking costs by 67% and support costs by up to 75% -- with no compromise in the quality of the computing experience for users. For the M300, vSpace Server software enables up to 45 concurrent users to be hosted on a single operating system instance and on a single host computer. An entire deployment can be measured in hours and managed by either IT professionals or those with only basic PC skills and time. With these capabilities, the M300 3-in-1 thin-client kit multiplies the benefits of thin client computing in a virtual desktop environment. “The new 3-in-1 M300 is a game changing product and will further strengthen our position in the thin client segment in India. International Data Corporation (IDC), a leading provider of global IT research and advice, has ranked NComputing as the largest provider of enterprise client devices in India, with an unbeatable market share of 89%, as per the last tracker report, “ says Manish Sharma, Vice President Asia Pacific, NComputing Inc.
**AIMA signs historic pact with its Pakistani counterpart**

In order to facilitate the interaction between management professionals of India and Pakistan, the national apex body of management professionals in India, All India Management Association (AIMA) on February 22, signed a memorandum of understanding with the Management Association of Pakistan (MAP). Valid for two years, the agreement was signed between the two on the 56th Foundation Day of AIMA by Rajiv Vastupal, President AIMA and Kamal A Chinoy, President of MAP.

Elaborating on this historic tie up, Vastupal said, “With a mutual desire of developing a strong partnership between the management fraternity of India and Pakistan, under this MoU, the two organisations will exchange information and add value to each other to be able to raise professional competence of individuals and organisations in both countries and enhance their contribution in building and developing the nation and the society. The agreement will see both actively leveraging resources to promote, facilitate and support development of professional management in both countries.”

The MoU will enable both the organisations to share and transfer best practices as learnt from counterparts abroad and it will inform and share any foreign eminent speaker/expert who may be available for visit to both countries. The two associations have also agreed to participate in each other's flagship events by sending speakers/experts and delegations. The two have agreed to promote amongst themselves exchange of knowledge, experiences and ideas on sound management principles and practices through discussions, research projects, seminars, publications, abstracts, journals, etc.

All India Management Association celebrated its 56th Foundation Day and National Management Day on 21st of February. On this occasion AIMA honored corporate excellence and public service in various spheres as well.

**Portal for implementation of NSIGSE**

Dr. D. Purandeswari, Minister of State for Human Resource Development launched

A web portal for implementation of the National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education (NSIGSE) has been launched by MHRD. The portal will facilitate on line submission of data of the beneficiaries and on line disbursement of the amount on the day of the maturity into their accounts directly after certification by the State Nodal Officer on line that the beneficiary is 18 years old and passed class X examination. With the operationalization of the web portal, the proposals under the scheme will be submitted by the State Governments on line. This will eliminate the possibility of feeding incorrect data and bank account numbers which was the major cause for delay in the processing of the proposals and ensure error free entry of data and timely release of funds. The on-line system will also ensure total transparency and quicker disbursement of benefits to the beneficiary girls and on time submission of proposals by the State Governments.

The Centrally Sponsored Scheme was launched in May 2008 with the objective to establish an enabling environment to reduce the drop-outs and to promote the enrolment of girl child belonging mainly to SC/ST communities in secondary schools. As per the scheme, a sum of Rs. 3,000 is deposited in the name of eligible girls as fixed deposit, who are entitled to withdraw it along with interest threan reaching 18 years of age and after passing out in 10th class examination. The scheme covers (i) all girls belonging to SC/ST communities, who pass class VIII and (ii) all girls who pass VII examination from Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (irrespective of whether they belong to SC/ST) and enroll in class IX in Government, Government aided and local Body schools. 100% funds are provided by the Central Government for the Scheme. Canara bank is the implementing agency for the scheme.

**Mushrooming of Media Schools to be curbed**

The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting in consultation with the HRD Ministry is in the process of constituting a committee to review the mushrooming of media training institutes across the country. I & B minister Ambika Soni said that the committee would comprise of key stakeholders associated with the issue. The Government in order to promote the excellence in journalism had initiated measures to establish Regional Centres of IIMC at four Centres viz. Aizawl, Amravati, Kerala and Jammu. The Minister said she was confident that by the end of the year, an Act of Parliament could be enacted whereby IIMC would become an institute of excellence. Elaborating further, the Minister said that she was confident that the ongoing debate in the country on the issue of regulation and self-regulation in the electronic and print media, would help in bringing about a consensus and a new perspective on issues related to the freedom of press.

Lauding the development of the media and entertainment industry in the country, the Minister said the media landscape had placed India in an
exciting position globally where growth was robust with over 82000 publications and 800 channels in the broadcast media. While the M & E Sector in India grew at 11.2% in 2010, the developed countries in the same period grew on an average less than 4%.

**Saakshar Bharat Yatra**
President Pratibha Devisingh Patil on February 18 flagged off the Saakshar Bharat Yatra at Rashtrapati Bhavan. ‘Saakshar Bharat Yatra’ organised in collaboration with non-government organization Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti (BGVS) aims to reach out to all the stakeholders and generate a sustainable demand for literacy, which may not exist uniformly in all parts of the country. A country wide jatha is covering 22 States, 180 districts, 1000 blocks, over 16,000 panchayats. The broader themes of the yatra will include: literacy, empowerment, development, gender issues, Right to Education (RTE), Right to Employment etc.

The yatra would include kala-jathas, audio-visual programmes, road shows, stakeholders meetings etche yatra will move across the country covering all major states and it will pass through some of the backward and left wing affected districts like Gaya, Jamui, Rohtas in Bihar, Hazaribagh in Jharkhand, Balaghat in Madhya Pradesh. The Yatra will also cover some of the difficult areas like Senapati in Manipur, Anantnag in Jammu and Kashmir, etc.

**Five sub-committees for improvement of minority education**
In order to address various concerns and issues related to minority education institutions particularly madrasas, the union MHRD is构成five sub-committees. These will be in the spheres of Vocational and Skill Development in Minority Concentration Districts (MCDs); Implementation of Schemes in MCDs and addressing grievances relating to education of minorities; Promotion of Urdu and enhanced English learning for employability of Minorities; Promotion of girls education at all levels and Mapping of educational requirements of minorities region-wise and district-wise and creating of a database to track access and coverage of education. The Sub-Committees will meet in April-May, 2012 and present their reports in the next meeting of the National Monitoring Committee for Minorities Education in June. The decision was taken at the meeting of the National Monitoring Committee for Minorities’ Education (NMCME) held on march 5. In addition to ministers and officials of the ministry of HRD, H.B. Sarma, Education Minister of Assam, Bratya Basu, Education Minister, West Bengal, Moinul Hassan, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha). Mabel Rebello, Member of Parliament, (Rajya Sabha) and 51 other Members of the NMCME representing the Minority Communities from all over the country participated in the meeting.

The Members raised concerns regarding the delays in implementation of the various schemes at the field level by the states. Some of their recommendations were that the schemes should be given wider publicity, the Mid-Day-Meal scheme should be extended to all schools, more Urdu teachers should be appointed, the requirement of NOCs from states for opening new minority educational institutions should be dispensed with, the number and quantum of scholarships aimed towards minorities should be enhanced.

The Members also welcomed the instructions issued in respect of equivalence of certificates/qualifications of the Madrasa Boards. Those certificates which have been granted equivalence by the State Education Boards to that of their Secondary and Senior Secondary qualification have been equated with corresponding levels of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Council of Board of School Education in India (COBSE) and other School Examination Boards, for the purpose of employment and entry to higher levels of education.

**Edexcel and WLCI forge alliance to address skills gap**
Edexcel and MLCI, one of the largest professional training institutions in India, announced a strategic partnership that would provide WLCI students an opportunity to access BTEC High National Diploma in Fashion, graphic Design & Advertising, Media and Business Management. Addressing a press conference, Ranu Kawatra, President and CEO, Pearson Education said, “We believe it will become one of the most high profile partnership. Having an edexcel BTEC certification whether achieved abroad or through quality assured institutions in India always bestows a high standard to student.” The principal of Wigan & Leigh College UK, Ms Cath Hurst, OBE who was on a visit to India said, “WLCI & Wigan & Leigh College UK have been academic partners for over 16 years. The industry oriented curriculum, systems and processes used by WLCI for training have enabled WLCI to excel professionally. The WLCI and Edexcel partnership will help further enhance the quality of our delivery.” Speaking on the occasion, Ms Malobika Sengupta, CEO WLCI said, “our alliance with Edexcel would help us benchmark our programmes with international standards and enable our students to access further education opportunities.”
A proposal for holding a common national examination with effect from 2013 with weightage to State Board results, normalized on the basis of percentiles formula, has been agreed upon as the same was endorsed “in principle” by States during the conference of State & UT Education Ministers' held on February 22. The States of Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh, Odisha, Puducherry and West Bengal sought more time to study the proposal in detail. The States may decide on adopting the same pattern for admission to State-level engineering institutions with appropriate weightages as States may think fit. It was decided that the details for the common examination process would be finalized in the next two months in consultation with States.

On the reforms proposed in the entrance examinations for admission to engineering institutions, States felt that there is a need to limit the multiplicity of entrance examinations thereby reducing stress on students and parents. It was clarified to States that the reform would not, in any way, affect reservations followed by States and the Centre. It was also clarified to North-Eastern States that the special pool made available by the Ministry HRD would not be affected. It was clarified to that the States could adopt their own weightages for State Board marks and the National examinations for admission to State-level institutions. Accordingly, States could adopt 100% weightage for State Board results as in the State of Tamil Nadu which would not be disturbed by the proposed arrangement. It was informed that the academic component of the Main and Advanced examinations would be handled by IITs whereas the management and conduct of the examination would be done by CBSE in collaboration with State Boards. It was informed that the IITs and other Central Educational Institutions were proposing to adopt a weightage of 40% for State Board marks. Certain States raised the issue of conduct of examination in regional languages. It was clarified that the examinations would be conducted in English and Hindi and where States intend to use the same examination for admission to State engineering institutions, the examination could be conducted in the regional language of the State too. Issues on validity of scores for two years, involvement of the private engineering institutions and revenue sharing with States were also raised.

NVEQF

While welcoming the development of NVEQF, the State Education Ministers felt that NVEQF will be an important landmark in improving the skills and employability of the youth of this country. The report of State Education Ministers headed by the Hon'ble Education Minister of Bihar on NVEQF was unanimously accepted. After deliberations, NVEQF and the concept on community colleges was unanimously endorsed by States. The need to have a dialogue at the State level with School Boards, Boards of Technical Education and universities to provide a seamless pathway for vocational students was stressed. It was decided to start 100 Community Colleges on a pilot basis in 2012-13 and then scale up gradually. The States were requested to identify local skill requirements linked to local needs which could form the basis of opening community colleges and forward proposals to the Central Government. It was decided to constitute a Committee of State Education Ministers headed by Archana Chitnis, Minister of School Education of Madhya Pradesh, to finalise the scheme of community colleges.

RTE

The State Education Ministers agreed that the issue of quality of Elementary Education is a matter of deep concern. While many States have developed state vision of quality and also initiated some curricular reform, but a lot of age-inappropriate material continues to form part of the textbooks and teaching learning material used in classrooms. States were requested to initiate steps to formulate age-appropriate curricula and syllabi in keeping with the principles of section 29 of the RTE Act and NCF-2005. States were also requested to institute CCE from the child's perspective to show progress that the child has made with respect to his or her performance. State Governments were also requested to put in place the Grievance Redressal and appellate mechanism taking into account the guidelines prescribed under the RTE Act.
Delhi Govt’s nine RPVV Schools get smart

Rajkiya Pratibha Vikas Vidyala (RPVV), the 19 schools of Delhi government meant for bright students from government primaries, are adopting interactive white board technology. SMART Technologies Inc. has won the contract for nine of these schools and teachers have been using the interactive whiteboards for over four months now, across a wide range of subjects including Maths, science and environmental studies. Educators at RPVV have found that SMART Notebook™ collaborative learning software making lessons more engaging for the learners and allowed for better comprehension of abstract concepts.

Linda Thomas, Vice President, Products, SMART Technologies led a showcase visit to the Rajkiya Pratibha Vikas Vidyala (RPVV) schools on February 29, along with a panel of dignitaries including K.S Yadav, Deputy Director, RPVV, Department of Education, Govt. of Delhi and Renu Sharma, Deputy Director, Education East Zone. Commenting on the successful implementation of SMART solutions in Indian classrooms, Linda Thomas, Vice President, Products, SMART Technologies said, “We are delighted to see how enthusiastic teachers and administrators at the RPVV schools have been regarding the use of SMART education solutions in their classrooms. This successful adoption and the results that teachers and students have enjoyed, clearly show how SMART solutions can work in Indian schools. SMART Technologies is committed to effective technology implementation and professional development for teachers to deliver improved learner outcomes.”

Elaborating on her experience with adopting SMART solutions in her school, Renu Sabharwal, Principal, RPVV School, Surajmal Vihar said “Integrating SMART solutions in our classrooms have made a significant impact on the students’ engagement in the class. The teachers have highly benefitted from using interactive learning tools, especially while teaching abstract concepts of Maths and science which can now be easily taught with the aid of graphs and diagrams. We are very pleased with the outcome and would recommend other schools adopt technology solutions in teaching.”

IIT-D alumni set up innovation centre

The IIT-D Innovation Centre, a brainchild of a group of 40 alumni of 1986 Batch, is designed to help students from different disciplines to work on innovative projects, mentor them on socially and commercially relevant projects, support co-curricular activities like the Robotics and the SAE Clubs and develop cross-linkages with other innovation programs, was inaugurated on February 14 by MHRD, Kapil Sibal during the concluding function of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of IIT, Delhi, quite appropriately by one of the most ardent proponents of the 'spirit of innovation'.

It was during the Silver Jubilee Reunion of the IIT, Delhi Batch of 1986 in 2010 that an Innovation Fund was launched and a sum of Rs 50 lakh was pledged to build this Innovation Centre. Designed with a vision to set the students of IIT-D on the path of innovation and encourage them to take up creative work outside their curriculum, the Centre promises to be one of its kind. “This is our way of giving back to our Alma Mater,” says Ejaz Hoda of the '86 Batch. “The Innovation Centre will foster the spirit of innovation among students of IIT Delhi and provide the perfect springboard for entrepreneurial activity,” he adds.

According to S K Gupta, another alumnus behind the project, “These initiatives are the result of a new collaborative relationship between IIT Delhi and its alumni. We have a great academic team at IIT Delhi that is keen to forge new paths and take the Institute to new heights.” The centre will provide space, tools and more importantly, the mentorship to students to think out of the box and come up with “something new.”
IN A STARTLING REVELATION, A FIELD STUDY IN PATNA, the capital city of Bihar, has concluded that about two-third (65%) of schoolchildren are attending classes in private schools; half of them in low cost private schools as against 34% in government schools. Moreover, the study also says that there could be missing education information on at least 2,38,764 children of the 3,33,776 students enrolled in primary and upper primary schools. Actually, DISE (district information system for education) data of the government doesn't include unrecognized schools and therefore a large number of children are missed out. If Patna could be taken as a sample, it is feared that there will be millions of schoolchildren in the country, who are not accounted for in official education records.

The survey report was released in New Delhi by Rajya Sabha MP N K Singh and columnist Gurcharan Das. Singh, a member on the parliamentary standing committee on HRD and a prominent economic analyst who served as finance secretary in the union government before joining Janta Dal (united) made his dismay evident on the state of primary education especially in context of RTE in the country. Expressing his views, he said, “In the debates and discussions, I did point out that this legislation (RTE) was drafted in a hasty. If the objective is to place all children in school, then the high dropout rates and out of school children as revealed by this survey is clearly a mismatch and upturns the thrust. This asymmetry is a reality. I am sure this is a sample, mirroring all cities and towns across India. Government falsely believes that by including a clause on universalizing elementary education they can put all children in schools. The ASER report tells us what is happening in government schools. Now with universalization of secondary education on anvil, this government continues to ignore entrepreneurial skills and role of private sector in education and have not factored it in its vision. It undermines some of the settled paradigms and the large pool of teachers in private schools in absence of training will remain untapped.” Gurcharan Das, who is authoring a book titled ‘India Grows at Night' said he is convinced of the peoples’ enterprise as the government sleeps during the day.
unrecognized schools cannot send students to sit for board exams, their class 10 and 12 students must be enrolled in a government school or a recognized private school or NIOS,” the authors suggest, thereby lending credence to high levels of double enrolments. Another important observation was that these schools have been in existence for long without recognition. Around half of the low cost private schools are English medium, while 43% a mixture of English and Hindi. Only 6.5% were in Hindi. The teacher salary in these schools ranges from Rs 1250 to Rs 3500. 95% of these school operate in pucca buildings, 6 in open and four in mud huts. Importantly, 42.70% of the schools had a library, all but 2 had drinking water available, majority had separate toilets for boys and girls as against state's average of 37.75%.

Quality and English medium were given as the key reasons for parental choice of these schools. 40% of the parents of children in government schools said they were drawn by the mid-day meal scheme. About 19%, said that they chose a government schools because they did not see any benefit accruing from education. In other words they were sending their children to school for non-educational benefits.

With closure dawning upon them as the 2013 deadline of RTE for unrecognized school nears, about 60% of the city's children could well be out of school. If these schools were to just implant the PTR of 40:1, they will have to increase their average fees by 294% to meet the increased salary expenses. It is an extraordinary situation waiting to unfold.

The Victoria Trade Mission to India: HIGHS IN EDUCATION

10 Ph D scholarships presented 10 more announced; 7 institutional partnerships forged

Premier Minister for the Arts of Victoria (Australia) Ted Baillieu and the Director of the Australian Indian Institute, Professor Amitabh Mattoo, awarded seven of ten Victoria India Doctoral Scholarships to leading Indian PhD students in New Delhi on Feb 21. The ten recipients of the Victoria India Doctoral Scholarships are: Sathish Thirunavukkarasu, Monash University, Sayali Shah, University of Melbourne, Buvaneshwaran Venugopal, Deakin University, Sreejoyee Ghosh, Deakin University, Abhishek Suresh, RMIT University, Jyotsna Naggpal, La Trobe University, Rohan Shah, Swinburne University of Technology, Vignesh Rathinbasamy, La Trobe University, Hitu Sood, Australian Catholic University, Debabrata Sikdar, Monash University. Each scholarship is worth $90,000 over three years for doctoral research at one of Victoria's leading universities that will waive tuition fees for the successful recipients. Mr Baillieu also announced an additional ten scholarships for the commencement of study in 2013.

To strengthen Victoria-India education sector seven partnerships between Victorian and Indian institutions were signed between Deakin University and the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Indore; La Trobe University and HCL; La Trobe University and Birla Institute of Technology (BITS) Pilani; The University of Melbourne and the University of Calcutta Partnership University of Calcutta; The University of Melbourne and the University of Delhi joint-teaching program; Swinburne University and AutoCRC Jaypee University of Information Technology Research Project Launch; and Victoria University and Ganpat University expansion of twinning programs.

The Victorian trade mission comprising 200 Victorian companies and institutions visited India from 21 February 2012. Apart from New Delhi, the trade mission went to Bangalore, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai, Ahmedabad and Pune showcase the best of Victorian industry capability.
New courses for Apparel professionals

Institute of Apparel Management (IAM) has launched two courses aimed at upgradation of management skills in setting up fashion Business and on strategic Fashion & Luxury Retailing. Both these contemporary courses have been introduced for shaping industry professionals who are working in multi-brand luxury retail and aspire to achieve significant positions in the sector. This announcement was made at a workshop “Innovative Strategies for Success in Retail” on February 29, in Gurgaon. The occasion was used by experts and practitioners including Kishore Biyani, MD & Founder, Future Group, Sanjeev Mohanty, MD, Benetton, Subhinder Singh Prem, MD, Reebok India, Dr. Darlie Koshy, DG & CEO, IAM & ATDC, Dr. Harish Chaudhry, DMS, IIT, Delhi, Rahul Mehta, President CMAI & Vice-Chairman, IAM, to address important issues pertaining to the fashion retail like fashion and innovation for exports and retail, challenges and opportunities in Indian Retail industry and what can be done to improve the conditions etc.

Highlighting the current situation of the retail sector, Dr. Darlie Koshy, DG & CEO, IAM & ATDC said, “The retail sector has favorable demographics as Indian retail sector has shown a boom in past 2-3 years. Consumer trend is also showing a paradigm shift as Indian consumers are becoming aware and understand the market well.” Also talking about the trend in retail sector, Mr Rahul Mehta, Vice Chairman IAM said, “The current trend is about living brands. Earlier the primary business goal was expansion but now is the time for strategic growth. The vision of the people for fashion has changed and they want fashion at value.”

Speaking on the occasion Padma Shri Dr. A. Sakhivel, Chairman, AEPC, ATDC & IAM said, “This important workshop is the sequel of cumulative efforts highlighting and focusing upon the most dynamic and vibrant force of business change. We need to design our retail business for sustainable profit year after year. This conference has brought together the prominent industry leaders and participants’ in a common platform to share their insights and visions on managing the retail turbulence ahead through innovative strategies for success.”

Emphasizing the need of a well organized retail sector in India, Mr. Kishore Biyani, MD & Founder, Future Group said, “Earlier market share in retail sector was only western but now fashion has gone global. Retail sector has a major contribution in the economy. We also need to connect with the consumers balancing logic and emotion. And consumption is the way to grow.”

NIIT IFBI to offer Diploma program in Retail Banking

Axis Bank, India's leading private sector bank and NIIT Institute of Finance, Banking & Insurance Training Ltd. (IFBI) - India's largest Banking training institute, on March 7, announced the launch of Post Graduate Diploma in Retail Banking (PGDRB), an exclusive career program designed for Axis Bank. A first of its kind the program aims to build a pool of modern banking professionals for Axis Bank.

Admission to the PGDRB Program will be through Admission test and Interview. The selected candidates will be provided with Provisional Appointment letters at the time of enrolment, and after successful completion of the program will join Axis Bank at the officer level.

According to S. Venkatesh, President, NIIT IFBI, “This is a unique initiative where we have partnered with Axis Bank to design a program that will exclusively cater to the growing needs of professionally trained and job-ready manpower of the bank. Having empowered over 18,000 professionals to take on exciting careers in banking, we continue with initiatives to develop a trained resource pool for the fast evolving BFSI industry.”

After completion of the program students will join Axis Bank as Front Desk Officers (FDOs), who are the first point of contact for existing and potential customers. FDOs play the crucial role of representing the bank to first time customers and hence need to have a pleasant personality, good communication skills and...
thorough knowledge of the bank's offerings along with an understanding of the customer’s requirements. This Program enable students to understand the concept of money and banking, the role of banks, various verticals in the banking industry, various products and services offered by them and the channels used to deliver the same. It also enables the learner to understand the functions of the RBI, impact of globalization on the banking sector and the role of technology in the banking industry, among various other topics.

**Online Agri-Business Management Program**

XLRI School of Business & Human Resource, Jamshedpur, a premier B-School in India, and Ikisan-an Agri Portal promoted by Nagarjuna Group, have joined hands to launch a unique ‘Certificate Programme in Agri-Business Management’. The six-month online self-learning program is aimed towards helping students identify with as well developing an exciting sales and marketing career within the dynamic and fast growing agri-business. The course fee is Rs. 75,000. The course, which kicks-start in May this year, is designed to allow the participants to learn at their own pace on a self-learning basis. The program begins with one week induction programme at XLRI Jamshedpur Campus followed by study of course modules and working on independent projects. The course modules consist ten courses covering managerial, technical and professional skills. After these, candidates will have to work on an Independent project where they will have to identify an issue in agribusiness and study that in detail to give their recommendations after analyzing the problem using the concepts learnt during the programme. The content of the course is jointly developed by XLRI and Ikisan, and would be available on www.Ikisan.com. Announcing the development, Fr. E. Abraham, S.J. (Director) said that, ‘We have introduced this programme keeping in mind the plethora of opportunities within the dynamic and fast growing agri-business sector’. He further added that ‘The course will supplement candidates' agricultural knowledge with business skills further enhancing their effectiveness'.

**Selection and Certification:**

The students who are pursuing final year of B.Sc/M.Sc (Agriculture or Allied subjects), working professionals in Agri-Business sector and graduates from other streams of science with at least two years experience in agri business will be eligible to enroll for this specialized course. After successful completion of the programme candidates would be issued certificates jointly by XLRI School of Business & Human Resource and Nagarjuna Fertilisers and Chemicals Ltd (NFCL) during the graduation ceremony held at XLRI Jamshedpur. The last date for applying to this programme is March 24, 2012.

**10 million pound boost for neglected tropical disease research**

The University of Dundee has received over £10 million from the Wellcome Trust in the fight against some of the world's most neglected parasitic diseases, including support for a multi-million pound partnership with GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) to discover new drug treatments. The goal of the collaboration is to develop safe and affordable treatments for Chagas disease, leishmaniasis and African sleeping sickness. These are neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) which kill tens of thousands of people across the developing world every year and are caused, in some cases, by parasites called kinetoplastids. The partnership's aim is to deliver at least one treatment against one of the diseases in the next five years. It is being supported by a grant of £8.6 million from the Wellcome Trust. “These parasitic diseases, which afflict millions of people worldwide, are collectively responsible for about 150,000 deaths every year in Asia, Africa and Latin America . The drugs currently used to treat patients are often difficult to administer, have toxic side effects and are not always effective due to drug resistance” said Professor Alan Fairlamb, an international expert on parasite biochemistry, based in the Drug Discovery Unit at Dundee.

**SmartPrep aid in career choice**

With focus on four segments viz. Undergraduate Programs (BBS, BFIA, BBE/BBA, BCA, D.U. English (H) Exam CATE, LAW, Hotel Management, NIFT/ NID, BJMC), Post graduate Programs (CAT, XAT, SNAP etc. and MCA Entrance Programs), 'Study Abroad' options GRE, GMAT, IELTS, TOEFL and SAT) and General Entrance Examinations (IAS-CSAT, Bank PO and Clerks), the SmartPrep brand of competitive test preparation institute with centres across NCR has developed a unique methodology and delivery system through its programs that changes the way one looks at career oriented entrance exams. “As part of our core philosophy, we will constantly work towards providing a comprehensive bouquet of education support systems to choose from, and deliver the best quality of counseling and training within the industry”, says Nitesh Gupta, CEO, SmartPrep Education Pvt. Ltd.
Gujarat shows the way forward in rejuvenating education at levels

Everyone knows of Gujarat as a very progressive and highly industrialized state. But very few know that Gujarat has got 15% of tribal population because of which it lags behind in some of the key social indicators such as education and health. From introducing ratings in primary schools to compulsory auditing of higher education institutions and use of ICT in a big way, Gujarat’s healing education system may provide many answers to vexing questions on education challenges facing the country. Shashank Bhatt analyses the factors that led the gross enrolment rate of higher education in the Narendra Modi-ruled western Indian state going up to an impressive 13%.

The over-all literacy also increased by 10.17% in the last decade as compared to 7.85% in the previous decade in spite of a higher base. The net enrolment of students in Standard 1 in primary schools increased to 100% and the drop-out rate in Standard 1 to 5 decreased from 17.83% in 2002-03 to 2.09% in 2010-11. Similarly the drop out rate in standard 1 to 7 decreased from 33.73% in 2002-03 to 7.95% in 2010-11. Some of the tribal districts such as the Dangs showed unusual increase in their literacy rate. The female literacy in the Dangs increased from 48.51% in 2001 to 68.75% in 2011.

The strategies adopted:
The Kanya Kelavani Praveshotsav came out of the vision of Gujarat Chief

IN TERMS OF OVERALL LITERACY as well as female literacy, Gujarat was only marginally better than the national average in the 2001 Census. Fortunately, the new government which came to power in 2001 realized this fact and started addressing the issue in a comprehensive way. We are delving into the strategies adopted in Gujarat to promote female literacy quality of education in primary schools over the last decade.

Two main instruments were used for this. One was a programme called “Kanya Kelavani Praveshotsav” and the second was “Gunotsav” a programme of quality rating rate of schools and teachers. Also about 1.8 lakh new class rooms were constructed in primary schools; Drinking water facility and separate sanitation facility for girls, construction of compound wall, electrification and computer were given to all the schools. Vidya Lakshmi Bond was created to attract girl students to enroll and stay in the school. Along with this more than 1 lakh teachers in primary schools were appointed over the last 10 years through transparent ‘online’ procedure.

Let us examine the results achieved because of these interventions. Between 1991 to 2001, the female literacy rate in Gujarat had increased by only 9.16% (48.64% in 1991 and 57.80% in 2001), but between 2001 to2011, the female literacy rate increased by 12.93% (57.80% in 2001 and 70.73% in 2011) despite the fact that available population to be made literate was relatively less in the last decade as compared to the previous decade.
results are achieved in the Census figures itself stand as an independent testimony of the fruits of this programme.

The change in literacy rate, particularly in female literacy rate being more than 40% more as compared to the previous decade shows that this effort of promoting girl literacy has paid off in a big way.

SECONDARY EDUCATION:
In secondary school also, the GoG improved access to secondary schools by opening new schools in rural areas. The GoG also created Gujarat State Open School. A wide range of examination reforms were introduced to improve the quality of education. The secondary teachers were given extensive training.

Two separate societies viz. SCOPE and GKS were created to take care of extra coaching of English and other skill respectively.

HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION:
Over the last 10 years, 31 new private and public Universities were created, many of them catering to specialized field such as defense, forensic, teachers, education, animal husbandry, sports, Sanskrit and law management, bio technology, etc.

The number of seats available for degree engineering increased from 9,041 to 47,296 in the last decade. Ditto, for the number of diploma seats: rose from 10,490 to 51,327. The number of MBA seats also went up from 1,241 to 13, and 340.

From 2011-12, choice based credit system is being implemented at under graduate as well as post-graduate level in all the universities of Gujarat. This offers a wide range of choice to students for studying subjects other than core ones.

As a part of industry academic tie up, a programme of internship for final year students of engineering in municipalities called “Techno Seva” is being implemented. Similarly, the science college students were given the work of preparing soil health card in their laboratory that helped them earn extra. No wonder, the gross enrolment rate of education in Gujarat has gone up to 13%.

Kanya Kelavani Praveshotsav:
The programme came out of the realization that social factors are responsible for rural population not sending their children to school. Praveshotsav is a massive annual awareness drive in which during the admission season in June every year, the entire bureaucracy that includes officers of all departments of the government go to each and every primary school and village to solicit the parents to send their children to school. This programme was started in 2003, and is successfully on. We can list objectives of this programme as follows:

a) To make the people aware of importance of girl child education
b) To have 100% enrolment of children in Standard 1
c) To reduce the drop-out rate particularly of female child by creating awareness about importance of their continuation in school
d) To give bureaucracy a first-hand exposure of problems of education at the primary level in villages and in cities/ rural and urban areas

e) To get first-hand feedback from the people of the village about quality of education, quality of mid-day meal, teachers' absenteeism, infrastructure in education, etc
f) To make teachers conscious of the fact that some high-level official visits them every year and giving them an opportunity to show case whatever good work they may have done

Analysis of the impact of Kanya Kelavani Praveshotsav:
The strategy of social awareness which was created because of Kanya Kelavani Praveshotsav worked very well, which is obvious from the results achieved. Also infrastructure in primary school was never lacking. However, social awareness about importance of girl child education among certain casts and tribes was lacking. This issue could easily be addressed by focusing attention of the entire bureaucracy by sending them to each and every school every year in the meeting with the villagers. This programme was one of the most favorable programmes of none other than the CM. Then, the emphasis of some aspect of social change comes from the top, and the whole machinery is galvanized as this programme illustrates.
Gunotsav:
The greatest challenge in primary education is to improve the learning level of primary children. Very often there are allegations made by various sections of the society, including media that the students studying in Standard 3 or 4 also do not read and write or do not know do basic calculations. This may be true of those students who are very irregular in school because of their poor socio-economic background. It is also true that the teachers of primary schools need to be made accountable for the learning outcomes.

Gunotsav is a programme of annual rating of each and every primary school as well as each and every teacher. It uses a unique methodology of self-appraisal by the school based on the test of the student taken by the teacher himself as well as independent appraisal by officers of all departments of the government.

Objectives of Gunotsav:
1. To bring into focus the quality of education in government primary schools.
2. To create greater awareness among teachers, educational administrators and the community about the need for quality education.
3. To measure the learning levels of student every year and check where any improvement is taking place.
4. To create accountability of teachers by giving a specific rating to the school in which they are teaching as well as to individual teachers.
5. To link reward and punishment of teachers with the grades obtained in Gunotsav.

Methodology of Gunotsav:
1. Every year, a self-appraisal format is prepared for every school to be filled up in August. This format is to be filled up after taking internal test of all the students of the school in all the subjects. The format has also got questions of maintenance of facilities in the school.
2. Then, a group of 3000 government officers of all departments in the rank of Class II and above are given intensive training on assessment of each school in a training programme which is conducted through satellite communication in which CM himself remains present.
3. Each of these officers is then expected to visit one primary school per day in span of three days, which are pre decided as Gunotsav Days for the entire state. This way, within three days, 9000 primary schools, out of total of 32000 schools, are randomly assessed by external observation.
4. The officer visiting a school spends whole day right from morning till late evening in the school. They observe the way in which prayer meeting is conducted in the school and then start assessment of learning level of each class by giving all students a test of reading and writing as well as mathematics and science. Individual marks obtained by the students are then recorded in the appraisal sheet given for each primary school.
5. The independent officer also observes other amenities of the school with reference to its maintenance and records his observations in the format.
6. In the evening, a meeting of the parents of the primary school students as well as citizens of the village is organized in which the students of the school are asked to present an in-house cultural programme. Also PTA, MTA, SMC Meetings take place in the presence of the external observer.
7. After returning from Gunotsav the officers are supposed to make online data entries of the format filled up by them.
8. Based on the self-assessment as well as independent appraisal every school is assigned over all grade as well as grade for performance in various parameters. Similarly every teacher is given his/ her performance card.
9. Based on the results of Gunotsav remedial classes are organized for those individual students whose performance is weak/ below the expected level. After remedial classes, re-test of these students is taken to find out whether they have improved or not.

Outcome of Gunotsav:
This programme was organized for the first time in 2009 and it was repeated in 2010 and 2011. In a period of two years, the change in learning level is noticeable. In 2010, the percentage of school getting more than 6 out of 10 points increased from 26.22 to 43.91%.
DISMAL STATE OF ENGINEERING EDUCATION

A study of 55,000 engineering graduates of 2011 by a private assessment company says only 17.45% of them are employable for the IT services sector, while a dismal 3.51% are appropriately trained to be directly deployed on projects. Further, only 2.68% are employable in IT product companies, which require greater understanding of computer science and algorithms. The findings are based on the results of students from 250+ engineering colleges across multiple Indian states who participated in AMCAT: Aspiring Minds Computer Adaptive Test, a standardized employability test. AMCAT covered all objective parameters for determining employability in the IT/ITeS sector such as English communication, Quantitative aptitude, problem-solving skills and Computer Science and Programming skills.

The study found that the candidates strongly lacked the required skills: around 92% of graduating engineers do not have the required programming and algorithm skills required for IT product companies, whereas 56% show lack of soft-skills and cognitive skills. One may note that the skills required by the IT product companies at the entry-level are very much a part of the curriculum of engineering colleges, which is a worrying sign for higher education.

The report found that the top 100 colleges have higher employability as compared to the rest of the colleges (as much as two to four times). Despite this, more than 70% of employable candidates for any sector are in campuses other than the top 100. It was found that 50% of employable candidates for IT services companies and 28% of employable candidates for IT product companies are not even in the top 750 colleges, and students enrolled in campuses ranked beyond the top 750, thus forming an invisible pool to most employers in India. This signals that a large proportion of employable engineers are ending up without any opportunity, which is a dangerous trend for higher education. With regard to employability distribution among campuses, it was found that the quality of education falls steeply among the top-ranked colleges, implying that even colleges ranked very closely have very different quality of education. A large number of colleges are at exceptionally low employability: bottom 45 percentile campuses have less than 1 in 100 candidates employable in an IT product company, while the bottom 20 percentile campuses have none. This means there is an urgent need to reduce the quality-gap between colleges and get them above a minimum threshold. Government-run colleges show much higher employability than private colleges, with skill differences in all areas, including English, cognitive skills and domain skills.

The employability in IT services companies is 17.45%. It should be noted that this has been calculated according to the current hiring philosophy of IT services companies, where the candidate is not expected to already possess the required software skills or soft skills, but is imparted the training over a period of 3 to 6 months. The hiring criterion for this industry, thus, is that the candidate should be trainable in technical and soft skills. This requires both a basic command of language and technical skills, together with requisite cognitive skills to respond to training in a short period of time. Considering these rather lax requirements, the fact that only 17.45% of the graduates are trainable into software engineers within a period of 3 to 6 months, is alarming to say the least.

The research further shows that approximately 54% engineers are rejected because they are not soft-skill trainable in a short period of time, whereas around 46% lose on technical trainability. Apart from focus on core technical skills, technical trainability can be improved by adopting a quantitative approach to engineering problems. Bridging courses to hone English skills of the candidates is a definite step toward improving soft-skills trainability.

At the same time, whereas large companies invest considerably in trainings, small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) do not find it viable to build training facilities or invest time in it. They want to hire ready-to-deploy manpower. For them, the engineering graduates should be able to learn on the job and start contributing effectively as soon as possible, typically in a month's time. This requires substantial competence in domain skills. Whereas these companies do not expect the person to bring in in-depth knowledge of computer science, the minimum expectation is to be able to write a decent piece of code for a given problem, and the ability to debug and submit a working program. Such candidates, who are software-industry ready, are just 3.25%. This explains why SMEs find it so hard and time-consuming to hire.
If not corrected, this trend is poised to become a major impediment to the growth of entrepreneurship and IT companies in India. One may recognize that the best economies in the world are sustained by a strong SMEs sector, which in India is likely to suffer because of the lack of right skills.

An economy with a large percent of unemployable qualified candidates is not only inefficient, but socially dangerous. The right training, at one end, and employability assessments acting as feedback at the other, will help both in goal-setting and tracking progress to make a larger proportion of engineers in India employable.

As revealed by the research, the Knowledge Process Outsourcing industry is likely to find 9 out of every 100 engineers employable. Highly developed written communication and analytical skills are a must for this sector. Though most engineers do not exhibit the required competence in English communication (78% do not), a considerable number (56%) miss out on analytical and quantitative skills. However, a large proportion of candidates (40.69%) are eligible for the BPO industry, both in tele-calling and backend processes. However, graduate engineers do not form the preferred employable group for these companies due to the belief that these roles cannot match their expectations, both in terms of remuneration and job satisfaction. This calls for a fundamental shift in college instruction and assessment methodology, which should be more inclined to developing analytical thinking and critical reasoning than learning.

Contrary to popular opinion, English language skills do not create the major difference in employability. It is rather the quantitative ability and analytical skills, which make these students ineligible for employment. This points towards better teaching practices through problem solving and analysis. It is also surprising to see that the difference in ability in Computer Programming and Algorithms is not too much. Teaching in colleges across tiers of cities though similar, but is inadequate as far as Computer Programming and Algorithms is concerned.

English language skills are very important for Knowledge Process Outsourcing companies, and candidates born and brought up in metros seem to acquire better English skills due to day-to-day exposure to a larger English speaking population. This clearly shows that students coming from non-metros are disadvantaged to a certain extent. Thus, there is a requirement of better school education and exposure to computers and English to students in non-metros.

"In absolute terms India has between 6 lakh and 8 lakh engineering graduates from 2500+ campuses of which about one lakh are employable, which is a dangerous scenario. Ideally, the situation should be having 70-80% employable graduates which works to be in the range of 6 lakh. There is need to quickly bridge this gap. The hiring practice in India is that companies go to first 50,000 students and ignore the rest. If there is rethink and industry goes beyond its set notions, it will provide a healing touch to engineering education and students," says Varun Aggarwal Co-founder and Director Aspiring Minds Assessment Pvt. Ltd, who conducted this survey.

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**Year-Long Programme for empowering Women teachers**

IIM Kozhikode announced a year-long empowerment programme for high potential women who would assume leadership roles in different sectors in the future. To begin with, IIMK in collaboration with the Malabar Gold Group is planning a series of Leadership Workshops targeting the best Secondary / Higher Secondary Teachers of the country in multiple sectors, and 100 teachers will be offered scholarships to participate in this prestigious programme.

Speaking on the occasion of the International Women’s Day, IIMK Director Prof. Debashis Chatterjee said “This is IIMK’s modest contribution for making the better half of India take their rightful place in the growth and progress of the country.” The IIMK believes that management is not simply about number crunching but also about a collection of competencies and having a balanced batch contributes to a better learning experience. “Women make better managers. Women in our country have learnt to be more competent in a diverse set of skills and attitudes things that are required of managers of this country. We acknowledge skills such as networking, social intelligence, empathy and environmental sensitivity that women bring to the repertoire of management skill sets.” said Prof. Debashis Chatterjee.

Giving due importance to female students has become a trend in the Institute. However, IIMK wishes to make it clear that there is no quota or reservation for women however, and the Institute is able to achieve the gender diversity by adopting a suitable admission policy and criteria.
Dr. R K Pachauri
Director General, TERI
and chancellor TERI university
New Delhi

Focus on Global Commons, linkages must to meet New Challenges in Higher Education

concerns and national goals and objectives we now have to create a body of citizens who carry a global vision of the problems that humanity is facing today and solutions which work. At the core of this vision has to be the protection of our planet and the preservation of our ecosystems. For much too long human activities and economic objectives have ignored the vital role and immeasurable value of the global commons.

Higher education must create the ability for the youth of today to innovate in every sphere of human endeavour. Innovation applies not only to the development of technologies, but also in the building and evolution of institutions, policies and human behavior. We see the material world around us changing rapidly and unless we seize the implications of this reality we would fail to remain masters of our own destiny. Our actions and perceptions will be swayed by forces which we do not understand and much less have the ability to control. Given these two sets of realities, higher education must be research based. Lessons that were imparted in the classroom twenty years ago would be totally outdated not only in content but in their relevance if they are not refurbished through adequate and continuous research. The effectiveness and value of knowledge imparted would remain undiminished only when we create the ability of our graduates to inculcate a spirit of inquiry, a desire to research on the fundamentals of what they encounter throughout their lives and most importantly a strong desire and ability to learn each minute and each day of their existence.

I believe the global agenda that we see unfolding before us as the defining challenge of the 21st century requires development of linkages with institutions round the world, and such that as Gandhi ji said we should keep the windows of our house open without being swept away by the winds that we allow inside. I believe we also have much to offer to other parts of the world.

It is heartening that there is a major effort in hand now to build the Nalanda University at the same site of the original institution, with values and aims derived from the well-known original university. We extend our hand of cooperation to that institution and others round the world. Indeed modernity needs to blend with tradition and while knowledge has to be contemporary, values must be based on time tested principles of human behavior.

Proper ethics, unfortunately, are a casualty in several parts of the world today. We have seen the effects of abandoning ethical standards in the form of the economic crisis that grips the world today and in decision making as well as the exercise of power by those whose actions carry a great deal of weight worldwide. It would not be over-ambitious to believe that a small fledging institution like the TERI University can establish benchmarks that others would accept and perhaps take full cognizance of. But that should be our vision. That should be our ambition. We, therefore, must strive to get students as well as faculty from across the globe. We want to be an important element in the global commons which not only inspires others to cherish and uphold what happens to be our overall raison d'etre, but we also want to practice fully what we preach.
Identifying a Preschool for Your Child

When your child is ready for a preschool, as a parent, you will want to assess how well a preschool program satisfies your needs and preferences.

First decide what your priorities are: should the preschool be near your workplace or closer to home be more convenient? Look for a preschool program with a clear structure and an identifiable content philosophy. Get hold of the schedule of daily activities and see if the activities will support your child's development. The program should be such that it apportions plenty of time for indoor and outdoor play; quiet time; group and individual activities; snacks; and free time for children to be involved in creative and imaginative play. TV and videos should have a small part in these activities. If there is a programme that involves television and videos, content should be age appropriate. Look for a preschool program that is well equipped with a wide variety of toys and equipment that could stimulate creativity and imaginative play. Does the school organize field trips? If so, what are the transportation arrangements like? Are field trips appropriate to your child's age group?

Does the program continually introduce new learning materials to keep the children interested? Besides these the group- size and the teacher child ratio is very important. As a parent it is essential to ascertain if the school is equipped to handle medical emergencies. It will be a good idea to check whether the program and practices keep children safe from illness and injury.

What learning- milestones and goals does the school have for the kids; do they match your needs? What is their method of teaching; is it compatible with what you want and desire from the school. For example, story reading, free play, role play, circle time, art and craft, music, social skills, verbal skills, etc. How experienced are the staff, and how long have they been with the program? If the program boasts of some specific philosophy such as Montessori, Waldorf or Reggio Emilio ensure that there are qualifications supporting this specific training.

A good preschool program has a clean facility. Everything about the facility needs to be clean: walls, floors, bathrooms, toys and equipment; food preparation areas if the children are given food at school. Find out if appropriate attention is given to details regarding allergies particularly with regard to food.

Try and observe how the staff are with the children. See if they encourage healthy habits such as: hand washing; covering mouths when coughing; and using tissues for running noses.

See if the classes are well equipped to handle the different weather conditions-airy and bright, with furniture that is age appropriate. Is the preschool a secure place? Can people walk in from the street and have direct contact with children? What is their policy regarding releasing children once the school is over.

Most preschool programs must conform to state regulations and satisfy minimum standards of health and safety. Even so, it is a good idea to ask the staff whether the program is up to date and reviewed? Studies suggest that preschools are more likely to offer high-quality programs when the number of children is small enough to allow the staff to get to know all the children and their families. Whenever possible, it is helpful to speak to other parents who have children in the program about their experiences and recommendations.

In the end, parents want what is best for their child, and this includes a preschool program. To find the 'right' preschool program for your child will take some time, research, and interviewing to determine if this is what is in the best interest of your child. So start your search by knowing what you want for an outcome, know the child's individual learning style and find a preschool program with a philosophy and program that supports all these things. Most importantly, will your child be happy and develop a curiosity and love of learning? If the answer is yes, then you know this is the right preschool program.
Indus World School, Gurgaon, celebrated the 3rd edition of Indutsav on March 5. The mood was set with a short film on the making of Indutsav. The short film displayed all the hard work that went on behind the scenes. The most unique feature of Indutsav was that it was truly participatory nature, the entire Indus community, of students, teachers and even parents participated enthusiastically to present a truly breathtaking programme. The theme for this year was The Five Elements. The centrepiece of the evening was a drama on the five elements of nature designed and performed by students, parents & teachers. A truly thought provoking drama that left an indelible mark on the audience.

Uma Ramachandran, principal, IWS Gurgaon said, “Indutsav’ our Annual Cultural Day is in an essential part of school learning. We believe music, arts, craft and dance are not extra-curricular activities, they are, in fact an integral the part of the Indus curriculum. They teach children essential life skills like teamwork, appreciating others and gaining knowledge outside classroom. I would like to thank students, parents and team Indus who tirelessly worked from last 45 days to make this event a success.”

IWSB hosts San Diego varsity team
A delegation from San Diego University in early March visited the Indus World School of Business as part of the later’s India Immersion Program where delegates from across the globe visit and give an opportunity to the students to understand the global market perspective. Both B Schools explored opportunities for research collaboration, academic association and student exchange. “The India Immersion program is a unique initiative by IWSB to sensitize the visiting students and industry leaders to India in every sense - social, cultural, economic, ecological-diversity. Additionally, we are also exploring opportunities for research collaboration, academic association and student exchange with them,” said Rajeev Ranjan, Professor of Entrepreneurship, IWSB.

Campus Buzz

MDI collaborates
Richard Ivey School of Business

In its endeavor to forge linkages with leading Business Schools, Management Development Institute (MDI) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Richard Ivey School of Business, the University of Western Ontario. The MoU was signed by Prof. Mukul P Gupta, Director MDI and Carol Stephenson, Dean Ivey School of Business at MDI, Gurgaon campus on Feb. 22.

Speaking on the occasion, Carol Stephenson said, “Providing business case studies with a global perspective, Ivey publications will now develop India-based case materials for business education to be taught in India as well as abroad. The partnership will not only give Indian students exposure to Ivey’s real-world, field-based cases, involving actual interviews with businesses from around the world, but even benefit foreign students who garner knowledge about Indian cases.” This collaboration has 2 components: (1) CASE WRITING AND TEACHING TRAINING, and (2) CASE PUBLISHING. Both Ivey and MDI will share their knowledge base, expertise and accumulated intellectual capital, recognizing the broad spectrum of skills and business experience that students need to tackle challenges in today’s complex business world.
Caterpillar Foundation joins India's war against hunger

The Caterpillar Foundation has made a grant of US $441,000 grant to the Akshaya Patra Foundation and thereby reaffirmed its commitment to support access to education and basic human needs in India. The grant will help Akshaya Patra to acquire much needed capital equipment that will enhance the efficiencies of its large kitchens that produce above 100000 meals for children who study in government schools. The Caterpillar grant will be used to upgrade the facilities of the kitchens at Assam, Karnataka, Gujarat, UP and Orissa. The grant released in February this year, will have a positive impact on the lives of 1.1 million children, who hail from these states by addressing hunger and enabling education for them. Akshaya Patra is in a public-private partnership with the Central and eight state governments to implement the mid-day meal program, and currently reaches out to about 1.3 million children across the country.

Innovation is the engine for Growth

Conditioned, structured, rational and standard solutions to problems can not work in today’s competitive and ever changing world. A person has to be his natural self and work with an open mind. Only then he can appreciate new ideas given by others and also share his own innovative ideas without hesitation and inhibitions. This was the message given out at the JK Padampat Singhania Institute of Management and Technology, & JK Business School Gurgaon organized two days International Conference on Creativity & Innovation: “Breaking the barriers to reach the bottom of the pyramid on 17-18 February 2012 in New Delhi. “We should look at things from different perspective to develop a fresh approach and also to stop looking for perfect solutions to problems. Solutions might not be perfect but even they can be marvelous ones, suggested,” Dr. Devi Singh Director IIM Lucknow.

According to Govind Hari Singhania, Chairman JK Education Foundation said “The Bottom of the Pyramid (BOP) is being heralded as the biggest potential opportunity in the history of commerce and, at the same time, a troubling future discontinuity for many incumbent players. The BOP concept champions new thinking and new ways of doing business in the world’s poor markets. This conference has come up with many suggestions emerged out from the discussion in these two days and has also provide a learning platform to the business management students.”

5th YES Awards

Honda Motor India Pvt. Limited (HMI) on February 28, announced the winners of the fifth Young Engineers and Scientists’ (YES) awards in India and presented awards to 12 students from India’s premier institutes for science & technology - IITs. The YES awards were instituted in 2007~2008 to encourage and support young Indian engineers and scientists. A cash scholarship of US $3000, was presented to 12 students selected from seven IITs - Delhi, Bombay, Roorkee, Madras, Kharagpur, Kanpur & Guwahati on the basis of their Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA), technical papers, essays and finally their performance in one-on-one interviews. All the YES Award recipients may claim US $7,000/- for 2 months Summer Training in Japan or ‘Yes Award Plus' scholarship of US $10,000 if they are admitted to, and join postgraduate (master or doctoral) study in the designated Japanese universities, within three years of having received the YES Award. YES Award India program is designed to strengthen Japanese ties with India with financial aid to young Indian researchers and engineers.

Professional Development Program for Teachers

SMART Technologies Inc. a leading provider of interactive whiteboards, on March 2, launched ‘SMART Professional Development Program for Teachers India’. The program was unveiled by Linda Thomas, Vice President, Products, for SMART Technologies and is focused on addressing the need for training teachers in the use of interactive educational technology tools. The aim of the program is to help educators acquire technology skills enabling them to actively integrate digital learning tools in their teaching process for improved learning outcomes. The company aims to train up to 8,000 teachers in 15 major cities across India in the first wave of the program.
Kinder Plume schools celebrate their 1st annual Day

Children from the newly set up three Kinder Plume pre-schools put up a heartwarming performance in their stage-musical adaptation of famous children's author Eric Carl. Titled, 'House for the Hermit Crab', the play was scripted and the music for it composed in-house in New Delhi. This was their first coming together for celebrating their annual day. The audience that included the Chief Guest, eminent educationist Rita Kaul,(Principal, Millennium School Noida) and proud parents of the little ones, was spellbound by the performance of the little ones. Taking justifiable pride at successful staging of the show, the Director, Kinder Plume Schools, Divya Johar Bawa was all praise for the creditable performance by the small children, “It is heartening to see such talent in children so small. At Kinder Plume we ensure that their tender minds are exposed to the best books; which are kept in the school library.”

Craft work by the participating children tastefully displayed in the auditorium added to the charm of the evening. All in all it was a fun morning for the children, teachers and guests.
Come to us. We are empanelled with the national broadcaster, Doordarshan for its programming content, and have all that takes to make a good quality film for you.

Also, depend on us for Audio programming and studio facilities. Soon launching football training video…

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