

Newspaper Clips

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'Education reform must for growth'

AGE CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Feb. 25: The pre-Budget Economic Survey released on Friday has called for better implementation of government policies and reform in the education sector to help make the young population of India a part of its growth story.

The Economic Survey for 2010-11 tabled in Parliament calls for implementation of the Right to Education Act and for bringing about reforms in not only higher education institutes but also the regulatory structures of the education system. "The RTE Act must face no implementation deficit for it to work towards realising the demographic dividend," it said.

The realisation of the demographic dividend of having a young population is another factor that calls for reforms in the education and health sector. "Reaping the demographic dividend needs a vision, a long-term plan, and bold decisions," the survey said.

The survey called for reforms in universities and in higher education and the demand-supply mismatch in the job-market needs to be corrected. It recognised that generating funds for higher

The realisation of the demographic dividend of having a young population is another factor that calls for reforms in the education and health sector

education was a challenge and suggested a public-private partnership mode for promotion of higher education. There are also challenges for maintaining quality and excellence while ensuring rapid expansion of the sector. The survey has also pointed out that attracting good faculty in adequate numbers to meet the demands of the rapidly expanding sector would also be a challenge. Governments steps towards setting up of new higher education institutions like IIMs, IITs, NITs, and IIITs have also been lauded. Setting up of model degree colleges in educationally backward districts of the country has also been noted. The role of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in bringing down the number of out-of-school children has also been lauded which has been pegged at 81.5 lakh in 2009, down from 134.6 lakh in 2005.

Financial Express ND 26/02/2011

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Education reforms to help reap demographic dividends

fe Bureau

New Delhi, Feb 25: Emphasising that both primary and higher education should realise the demographic dividend, the Economic Survey has called for drastic reforms in the education sector in terms of achievements and speed.

Highlighting that the expenditure on education as a proportion of total expenditure has increased marginally from 10% in 2005-06 to

EDUCATION

11.3% in 2010-11 (budgeted estimates), it said, "While a skilled, trained and healthy young population with the right type of education is an asset, an uneducated or ill educated, unskilled, less healthy, and unemployed population could lead to a demographic disaster. Reaping the demographic dividend needs a vision, a long-term plan and bold decisions."

On primary education, the Survey said that the right to education act (RTE Act) should not face implementation deficit. About 60% of

THE BIG NUMBERS

96.5%

Percentage of children in the age group of 6 to 14 in rural India who enrolled in schools

71.1%

Children in rural India who enrolled in govt schools

24.3%

Children in rural India who enrolled in private schools

the 13,000 schools satisfy the infrastructure norms specified by the RTE. However, more than half of these schools will need more teachers. A third will need more classrooms, the Survey noted. In 2010, 96.5% of children in the 6 to 14 age group in rural India were enrolled in school. Of this, 71.1% were enrolled in government schools and 24.3% in private schools.

Interestingly, the best performer in terms of gross enrolment ratio (GER) for elementary education was Jharkhand, fol-

lowed by Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Gujarat and the worst performers were Haryana, Kerala and Punjab which were the best performers in many other areas. This may be due to overage children studying in primary schools in backwards states and double entry of data in some states. The GER for secondary education was highest in Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Madhya Pradesh while Bihar was the worst performing state. The Survey asked for similar reforms in university and higher education to correct the demand-supply mismatch in the job market. "Mobilization of funds for higher education is indeed a challenge for the government. The gap in available resources could possibly be met by a tailor-made Public-Private Partnership mode of funding without diluting the regulatory oversight of the government," it said.

The Survey also suggested public-social private partnership (PSPP) as a possible alternative for supplementing the government's efforts.

Call for education sector reforms

Need to partner with industry to make skills bankable for all sections of society

DEBESHI GOOPTU BAKSHI
New Delhi

“THIS young population should be considered as a valuable asset which, if well equipped with education and skills, can contribute effectively to the development of the national as well as global economy.” (Economic Survey 2010-11)

Education continues to be an integral part of the government's agenda. The pre-budget Economic Survey has called for significant reforms in the education sector, including effective implementation of the Right to Education (RTE) Act in order to make the most of the country's "demographic dividend." With a population of over 1 billion, the government has a challenging task in ensuring universal elementary education.

The RTE Act makes it compulsory for every child in the age group of 6-14 years to get at least eight years of elementary education. The survey also called for more reforms in the higher education sector and



stated that the demand-supply gap in the job market needs to be rectified.

Referring to the Human Development Report (HDR) published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the survey said that though India ranks lower in the human development index ranking (at 119 out of 169), it has performed much better than most emerging countries, except China.

As per the report, the country's life expectancy was 64.4 years in 2010, which is less than the global average of 69.3 years. It also said the performance of India in terms of schooling is not much below that of countries such as Sri Lanka, China, Egypt and Vietnam.

According to the survey, there should be greater focus on public-private partnerships which will help mobilise funds for higher education. Says Arun Ni-

gavekar, former UGC chairman, VC of Pune University "The government needs to have an open policy regarding investments in education. There has to be a balance between public-private partnerships. The government cannot abandon its own responsibilities."

The survey emphasises on "making skills bankable for all sections of society including the poorest of the poor." Skill development and innovation should be

Future focus

■ Effective implementation of the Right to Education Act in order to make the most of the country's "demographic dividend."

■ There should be greater focus on public-private partnerships which will help mobilise funds for higher education

■ NSDC has been mandated to achieve the target of creation of skilled workforce of 150 million people by 2022

focus areas, according to the survey. The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), set up in 2008 as a non-profit public-private partnership (PPP) in skills development for co-ordinating as well as stimulating private-sector initiatives, has been mandated to achieve the target of creation of skilled workforce of 150 million people by 2022 under the National Skill Development Policy.

HR services provider Tal-

ent Management International (TMI) and the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) have collaborated to create jobs for over five lakh employable graduates in the country over the next 10 years. "Approximately 2 million graduates pass out every year, of which only 20 to 25 per cent are employable," says T Muralidharan, MD, TMI e2E Academy and executive chairman, TMI Group.

Says Kiran Karnik, ex-president of Nasscom (The National Association of Software and Services Companies), "This is a significant step, and I am hoping to see a large outlay for skills development in the budget.

The larger portion of investments should come from the government and the private sector can help make sure the outlay is utilised effectively by helping make more people industry ready, in training individuals with relevant skills and making them employable." Agrees Nigavekar, "The government needs a multi-layered skills development strategy."

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They studied in jail, keen on new life now

46 Interviewed, Jail Says All To Be Employed

Indrani Basu | TNN

New Delhi: Tihar Jail was witness to a unique placement drive where eight companies interviewed as many as 46 inmates for placement. "We are expecting 100% placement. The rest should be given letters in the next couple of days," said Tihar law officer Sunil Gupta. Among the companies which agreed to be part of this exceptional recruitment drive was Agarwal Packers and Movers, one of the country's largest companies in their field.

Many of the inmates who sat for placement completed their education, from schooling to multiple graduation degrees, in jail. "After I was sent to jail, it was a painful and stressful time for me as I had no clue what to do next. However, I was motivated inside the jail by officials and NGOs. I studied day and night to finish 10 years of education in five years. Now I am assisting a Supreme Court lawyer Michael Peter and preparing for civil services. Michael fought my case and has been a great help," said 26-year-old Dilip Kumar, who was booked under the narcotics Act in 2005.

Photos: Prem Bisht



A NEW BEGINNING: Gaijaomei George Kamei (top) will be a research assistant while Sandeep Bhatnagar has been offered the job of a marketing executive

Dilip came to Delhi from Madhubani in Bihar as a youth who had studied up to Class V. He worked as a subcontractor at a parking site in Sarojini Nagar when he was arrested. Now acquitted after fighting the case as an under-trial for years, he is about to complete his Bachelors in Tou-

rism Studies from IGNOU and is planning to pursue LLB.

On Friday, the action started around 11am at jail number 3 of Tihar. The excitement was palpable. "I am extremely nervous. I am willing to take any type of job offer I get. This placement drive may just help me regain some of the acceptance and prestige that I lost after coming to jail," said 23-year-old Gaijaomei George Kamei.

George is undergoing trial for criminal conspiracy for murder. He was the first inmate to be given an appointment letter — as a research assistant for JRA & Associates. He also received an offer to be a marketing associate for ASP Sealing Products. "Two years in jail have taught me to be careful and not make rash decisions," he said, beaming. Siddharth Bhatnagar, 29, an under-trial for murder, was offered a marketing executive's position.

While Agarwal Packers and Movers picked up seven inmates, Vedanta Foundation and Good House Keeping recruited two inmates each. JRA & Associates and ASP Sealing Products made an offer each.

AICTE takes a giant step back

AMIT KAPOOR & SHIVI GOEL

Higher education is no more a mere matter of national policy and government regulations. Not only have private companies long entered and established themselves in the education sector, even government-associated institutions have been moving towards a regime of greater autonomy. Higher education is a globalised affair now and is highly commercialised. Universities are transcending geographical and political boundaries. Educational institutions are tailoring their courses to match international standards in terms of curriculum and structure.

India's higher education policy of the 1950s, which envisaged schools of excellence, has paid rich dividends. Institutes like the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) are now globally recognised. The main governing body is the University Grants Commission (UGC), set up under the UGC Act 1956, and it is responsible for the coordination, determination and maintenance of standards and the release of the grants to universities and research organisations. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) is a statutory body, under the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development. AICTE is responsible for proper planning and coordinated development of technical and management education in India. The AICTE accredits post-graduate and graduate programmes under specific categories at Indian institutions according to its charter.

Though we have been trying to move towards a system of more liberalised education, the presence of a large number of statutory bodies in higher education has resulted in a highly bureaucratic system with multiple controls and regulations.

On December 28, 2010 AICTE issued a notification for regulating the Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) courses in the country. The notification includes eight points; most of them leading towards the greater role of respective state governments in the running of AICTE-approved PGDM/PGCM courses. The first point of the notification says, "All Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) shall be of duration of not less than 24 months."

Management courses all over the world are offered in formats typically ranging from 12 to 21 months for full-time programmes. In a typical MBA programme, students are exposed to a common body of knowledge in basic accounting, economics, finance, human resources and organisation design, marketing, operations, policy and quantitative methods and statistics in the first year. And in the second year, students take specialised courses according to their preferences and strengths. MBA programmes tend to get shorter when incoming students have more managerial experience. Universities offer accelerated 12- to 15-month programmes for candidates who are already proficient in some of the industry-specific areas and have clearly-defined career paths.

AICTE's recommendation of 24-month PGDM courses doesn't base itself on valid rationale. There are many points that we should consider before jumping to such changes.

One of the underlying challenges is that the fee structure of all the institutes will be affected if such a change takes place because operating costs for three more months will have to be factored in. This is not feasible unless there is a fee increase.

Almost nowhere in the world is a full-time MBA course of 24 or more months offered. When we are trying to move towards a globalised and international education system, this will be an obvious digression. It might end up discouraging foreign students from taking up PGDM courses in India and will also affect the international brand and reputation of Indian colleges.

In many institutes, students go on exchange programmes to foreign institutes in the corresponding semesters. A 24-month programme in the home country and a 21-month programme abroad will clearly create a mismatch and impact the effectiveness of such exchange programmes.

Business schools are trying to pull in more and more work-experienced students; a longer-duration MBA course will significantly raise the opportunity cost associated with postgraduate courses. Students are likely to prefer some shorter-duration courses abroad or executive programmes in the country.

The present structure of PGDM courses is sufficient in terms of content and intensity. The 21 months even encompass a two- or three-month summer internship that gives students hands-on industry experience and helps them make more informed career decisions.

A shorter duration course always holds the incentive for the graduate that he/she will get back to work earlier and start earning earlier.

Last but not the least, a 21-month course gives the graduates a buffer period of one or two months before they actually enter industry. Such a break is sometimes necessary after a gruelling time at B-school.

So, just as we are trying to match international standards and make higher education more global, AICTE's recommendations take us a step backward in the direction of regulations and control. Before taking any such steps, the long-term effects on the brand and quality of management education in India must be analysed. We are still far away from realising the dreams envisaged in 1950s.

Dr Amit Kapoor is Professor of Strategy and Industrial Economics at MDI, Gurgaon & Honorary Chairman, Institute for Competitiveness, India; Shivi Goel is participant in the PGPM programme at MDI, Gurgaon

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**A pitch for
reforms in
education**

Our Bureau

New Delhi, Feb. 25

Mobilisation of funds for higher education is a big challenge for the Government, notes the Economic Survey 2010-11. Its solution: a tailor-made Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode of funding to bridge the gap in available resources, without diluting the Government's regulatory oversight.

NEW IITS

For instance, the Centre has recently given its nod to set up 20 new IITs on a PPP basis.

The project which envisages a project cost of Rs 128 crore for each IIT with the HRD ministry, State Government and industry chipping in three ways at a ratio of 50:35:15, is targeted to be

► *The Government plans to set up an autonomous overarching authority that will prescribe standards for higher education*

completed by 2019-20.

The survey also calls for reforms in the education system to not only meet the demand-supply mismatch in the job market, but to exploit India's demographic dividend advantage accruing from a young population.

"While a skilled, trained and healthy young population with the right type of education is an asset, an uneducated or ill educated, unskilled, less healthy, and unemployed population could lead to a demographic disaster," it notes.

REFORM INITIATIVES

Among the reform initiatives that the Government has already set in motion include a proposal to set up an autonomous overarching authority that will prescribe standards for higher education and research and will subsume bodies like the University Grants Commission, All India Council for Technical Education and National Council for Teacher Education.

On the National Skill Development Mission, the survey notes that while it is a step in the right direction, "much more is required both in terms of achievements and speed."

The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) was set up a couple of years ago to achieve the target of creation of skilled workforce of 150 million people by 2022.

Rising costs, talent shortfall are challenges for IT

Our Bureau

New Delhi, Feb. 25

India will have to tackle future challenges, such as rising costs, talent shortfall, infrastructure constraints, increasing risk perception, protectionism, and deteriorating business environment, in order to maintain its current competitive streak and dominance in global IT outsourcing landscape, according to the Economic Survey 2010-11.

Highlighting the role of IT-BPO in projecting India's brand identity as a knowledge economy, the pre-Budget document also drew attention

to other issues as well.

"These include shifting from low-end services to high-end services...in the light of competition in BPO from other countries and policies in some developed countries like the UK to employ locals; addressing data protection issues as half of off-shore work does not come to India."

The observation comes at a time when countries such as the Philippines and even South Africa have upped the ante in attracting BPO investments. As it is, the Philippines has cornered a fair share of new investments in voice-

► **Countries such as the Philippines and even South Africa have upped the ante in attracting BPO investments**

based BPO services.

TOTALISATION AGREEMENTS'

The Survey further states that other measures which need to be looked at include "concluding totalisation

agreements with target countries to resolve the social security benefits issue as is being done now; and increasing the coverage and depth of IT and BPO services in the domestic sector."

When contacted, Nasscom President, Mr Som Mittal, said, "As far as some of the issues are concerned, the industry and academia are already taking the necessary steps, and for other issues it would hopefully trigger action at the Government level."

Mr Mittal was referring to issues pertaining to the domain of the Central Government (say, tax incentives and

educational reforms) and State Governments (physical and social infrastructure).

For the record, IT-BPO exports are expected to grow by at least 18 per cent in 2010-11 to reach \$58.7 billion as against \$49.7 billion in 2009-10.

The survey also noted that the cumulative export figure in electronics during 2010-11 (April to July) is estimated at \$1.36 billion (Rs 6,259 crore) whereas during the same period in the previous year, exports of electronics amounted to \$1.92 billion (Rs 9,339 crore).

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STAGE PRESENCE

Jamia VC's tryst with history: To play Akbar

HT Correspondent

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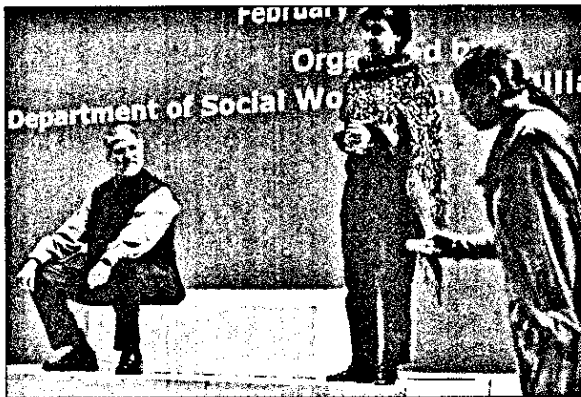
NEW DELHI: Jamia Millia Islamia vice chancellor Najeeb Jung is all set to play a 'historic' role, literally. For some minutes on Sunday evening, Jung will become Mughal emperor Akbar, in the play *Anarkali-Akbar-Salim* written by noted playwright Imtiaz Ali Taj.

The play is being organised by the Outreach Programme of Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI), in collaboration with the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA), Delhi.

"It is the same script from which *Mughal-e-Azam*, the movie, evolved," said Jung.

For Jung, who usually wears the vice-chancellor's robe, donning Akbar's mantle is a different ballgame altogether. "I have been having problems learning my lines. I have such a tight schedule that I just can't find time for it," he said.

"Everyone else on the cast is a professional actor. I am a little nervous," said Jung, who has



■ Najeeb Jung (extreme left) rehearsing for the play *Anarkali-Akbar-Salim* on Friday.

RONJOY GOGOI/HT PHOTO

been spending most of his free time rehearsing for the play.

Jung says he's nervous about "forgetting the lines. Everyone else knows all the lines — theirs as well as mine. I hope I don't bring down the quality of the play." The roles of Anarkali and Salim will be played by Ankita Gisain and Jitin Gaur, under the direction of eminent actor and stage personality Aziz Quraish.

In a break from the usual, *Anarkali-Akbar-Salim* focuses on what happens after Anarkali is killed. The play depicts how Anarkali was killed to preserve the Mughal lineage.

In that sense, it was like an honour killing.

The 80-minute-long play will be staged at the MA Ansari Auditorium in the university campus at 6.30pm on Sunday.

Hindustan Times ND 26/02/2011 P-12

IIT-Kgp gets stay against liar tag on registrar

NEW DELHI: The Indian Institute of Technology-Kharagpur (IIT-Kgp) has obtained a stay order from the Calcutta high court against a controversial order of the Central Information Commission in which the IIT registrar was dubbed a 'liar' for providing misleading and incorrect information.

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Tatas enter digital classrooms

Rachit Vats

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MUMBAI: Tata Interactive Systems (TIS), a subsidiary of Tata Industries, has joined the ranks of firms such as Educomp to digitise Indian classrooms across the country. With an investment of ₹100 crore, TIS aims to digitise 1,000 classrooms in the first phase of its operations and triple the number in the next three years.

"Schools are increasingly going digital and they are making investments as they see value in this. We see the business turning profitable in the third year," said Sanjaya Sharma, chief executive, Tata Interactive Systems.



■ Tata group chief Ratan Tata

Seeing business, more players are entering the space. "We get calls from various players on a daily basis. This is an interactive and user-friendly technology and keeps the students active, helping them benefit in studies

and overall growth," said Nandan S Dikshit, founder and chairman, City International School.

After an interaction with parents, Dikshit adopted the technology in three of the six schools he runs and is now gearing up to introduce the same in the other schools as well. The supplemental education business in India offers a \$15 billion opportunity.

In case of City International, the difference in fee is an additional ₹200. It is likely to be the same for other schools as well.

"We have entered the market just in time. Companies in these space are growing at 60% a year and we see a much rapid growth for ClassEdge," said Sharma.