Newspaper Clips
February 7-10, 2015

February 7

President asks Vice Chancellors to become 'gurus' to inspire young minds

http://indiatoday.intoday.in/education/story/president-asks-vice-chancellors-to-become-gurus-to-inspire-young-minds/1/417424.html

As the two-day conference of the Vice Chancellors of the central universities concluded, the honorable President of India, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, addressed the Vice Chancellors (VCs).

The honorable President asked the VCs to act as 'gurus' to inspire their students and guide them.

"VCs should feel empowered and use the administrative and moral authority vested in them to make these universities islands radiating excellence in their spheres of influence," he added.

He also asked the Ministry of Human Resource Development to take instant action and fill the vacancies of the VCs in the institutes. He said that the appointment of the teaching staff and other required faculties must be completed within 6 months.

He asked the HRD Ministry, UGC and the VCs to implement the changes.

Smriti Irani, Minister, Human Resource Department will conduct an assessment meeting to analyze the achievement on his proposal.

The honorable President recommended that all the activities towards National Assessment and Accreditation Council(NAAC) must be completed within the term of 6 months and the database of the alumni must be established within the next quarter.

He said that the appointment of nodal officers for the rankings must be appointed within 30 days and the construction of centers of excellence to be sent within 60 days.

Times of India ND 07.02.2015 P-17

Industry-oriented: Univs fuse engg, mgmt courses

Not All Such Courses Have Regulator's Nod

Aparna.Ramalingam@timesgroup.com

Chennai: Chennai-based B-school, Great Lakes Institute of Management (GLIM), is setting up a university to offer integrated programme in engineering and management.

Spread over 30 acres, the Great Lakes University in Sri City is expected to commence its academic year in 2017. Its first batch will have 180 students and full time faculty of 40 professors.

"During the first four years, students would do course work in industrial engineering, electronics and computer science. In the fifth year, there would be a management programme," GLIM founder and dean Bala V Balachandran said.

He added the programme would be industry-relevant. "We believe in money value of time and hence this offering," Balachandran said.

The total cost of the project is around Rs 100 crore. "Over 50% of it would be funded through internal accruals. We would also look for partnerships," Balachandran said.

GLIM has two campuses in Manamai, Chennai and one in Gurgaon. The university would offer an integrated degree. GLIM is among many reputed institutions, which have devised a unique engineering-management curriculum to suit market requirements.

VIT University (in Vellore) has started offering a double major in engineering from 2012-13 onwards. The first batch is expected to graduate by 2015 or 2016 as it's a flexible system.

"It was noticed that many engineering graduates seek their second degree in management. Hence we decided to offer a combined degree," VIT University founder and chancellor G Viswananthan said.

But many such courses are yet to receive approval from regulatory agencies like All India Council for Technical Education or University Grants Commission (UGC), which has laid down norms for integrated courses. Under UGC, an institute can start such a programme provided it ensures the syllabus is not compromised more than 20%.

For the full report, log on to www.timesofindia.com

Flip side: Few takers for grads with combo courses

The popularity of integrated courses is high among students abroad and now they are gaining acceptance here as well. Apart from the engineering-management combo, there are undergrad-postgraduate programmes in medical nanotechnology, big data management, mathematics etc on offer. The trend may well catch on provided universities and colleges tailor courses to suit the needs of potential recruiters or to develop expertise in specific fields. But the danger is the idea of an integrated programme may turn into a fad which is copied with no thought for its consequences. One of the dangers is that most universities face is the recruiter's apprehension. A senior professor from a deemed university said, "Most universities face the challenge of convincing recruiters to pick integrated students. Recruiters prefer plain graduates as they are easy to train and have to paid less." A senior academician, who did not want to be named, pointed out that some integrated courses are only created to accommodate more students. **Adarsh Jain**

Times of India ND 07.02.2015 P-19

Human evolution is still going on

Lifestyle Changes Haven't Insulated Us From Natural Selection: Study

Steve Connor

Humans are still evolving even though modern housing and sanitation, medical science and a rich and varied diet appear to have largely insulated much of the population from the life-or-death struggle of natural selection, a study has found.

Falling death rates and a decrease in family size in the western world since the start of the industrial revolution 250 years ago have not prevented Darwinian evolution from exerting its effect on the human gene pool, scientists said. They analysed church records of births, marriages and deaths for 10,000 inhabitants of seven parishes in Finland since the beginning of the 18th Century and concluded that evolution is still occurring.

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST: Experts said that falling death rates and a decrease in family size since the start of the industrial revolution 250 years ago have not prevented Darwinian evolution from exerting its effect on the human gene pool

"We are still evolving. As long as some individuals have more children and others have fewer, there is potential for evolution to take place," said Elisabeth Bolund of Uppsala University in Sweden.

"As long as there is variation in the population in terms of reproduction, there will be a difference in reproductive success, which means there's something for natural selection to work on," Bolund said.

Bolund and her colleagues at the universities of Sheffield and Turku in Finland found that cultural influences were not everything because there were small but significant effects caused by genetic inheritance.

They found that between four and 18% of the variations between individuals in lifespan, family size and ages of first and last childbirth were influenced by genes.

"This is exciting because if genes affected differences between individuals in these traits, it means they could change in response to natural selection," Bolund said.

The study, published in the journal Evolution, showed that the genetic influence on timing of when someone is likely to begin a family and the overall size of family has actually risen in recent times compared to 18th and 19th Centuries.

This means that modern humans could still be evolving because people are responding to Darwinian natural selection on the genetic differences between individuals within the population, the scientists said. THE INDEPENDENT

February 8

Business Standard ND 08/02/2015 P-11

Assessment-led education reform

ASHISH DHAWAN

The tenth Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) was released recently. It highlighted yet again that by the end of primary school, nearly half our children are unable to read Class 2 level text and nearly two-thirds fail at basic maths. ASER as a citizen-led survey has done an excellent job of bringing the issue of poor learning outcomes to the forefront of educational discourse in the country. However, we now need to build on it to promote large-scale student assessments that will give us useful data with which to measure and guide our education system.

Today, we evaluate our education system and formulate education policies based on input-based measures. Just as successful organisations do not evaluate their success based on input measures such as amount of raw material consumed or the qualification of employees, our education system cannot continue to measure success by the number of functional kitchens or qualified teachers in the system.

We must embrace a culture of data-driven decision making, where learning outcomes are the key indicators of quality in schools. We need standardised assessments of student learning outcomes that give us a strong, quantitative understanding of where we stand — at the national, state, district, school, student or subject topic level — and use this data to actively to measure our progress as a system and inform our education policies.

A rigorous and credible standardised assessment of student learning at the national level can provide a meaningful benchmark for our progress on education as a country and enable comparison of state performance. The National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has administered National Achievement Survey (NAS) — a full-length examination in language, mathematics and environment studies for a sample of students in Classes 3, 5, 7 and 8 in 31 states and territories — for over a decade. These surveys are conducted once every four years and presently there is a lead time of about two years in disseminating the results to the states.

Recently, in an encouraging move, NCERT enhanced the technical design of NAS as well as introduced modern analysis techniques that enable comparison of student performance over time. It is critical that we disseminate the results in a timely manner to states and districts, so this data can contribute effectively to the policymaking and planning processes.

While NAS can provide useful insights at a national level, state sample-based assessments can focus on regional nuances of each state's curriculum and pedagogical practices. The results from NAS should also be used as a credible benchmark by all states to track their relative performance.

The ministry of human resource development has taken the lead here by providing financial support to states for conducting state learning achievement surveys (SLAS). Some states such as Himachal Pradesh have conducted state-led student assessments in government schools, and have utilised this data to set learning improvement goals. However, many states lack the technical capability to build a robust large-scale assessment process and use results effectively to feed into their planning. We can further strengthen SLAS by extending it to include private schools and building the capacity of state teams to conduct, analyse and use results from these assessments to feed into their education decision making process.

Over the next five years, all states should migrate to census-based assessments that enable tracking the progress of every child while holding teachers, principals and school systems accountable for every child's learning. Simultaneously, teacher capacity must be built to use student assessment data collected periodically to guide everyday classroom instruction.

Further, we must create a culture of assessment-based reform by building the capacities of decision-makers in the education administration to understand these results and use them to create targeted improvement plans.

We can learn from Brazil which introduced Prova Brasil, a nationwide student assessment in 2005 to benchmark the performance of states, districts and schools and plan remediation strategies. Until 12 years ago, Brazil was ranked amongst the bottom of most international learning achievement surveys. Using data generated from Prova Brasil, that measures learning levels of children in Class 4 and 8 in language and mathematics, Brazil managed to break out of that norm.

We must embrace a culture of data-driven decision making, where learning outcomes are the key indicators of quality in schools. We need standardised assessments of student learning

As our nation prepares to implement *Padhe Bharat, Badhe Bharat*, which focuses on strengthening foundational skills of students such as early reading, writing, comprehension and mathematics, we should ensure integration of assessments as part of the programme. Assessment results must be used effectively to measure learning outcomes and be converted into actionable plans for improvement. It would be wonderful if the concern over our education system due to the ASER results converts into the use of data for targeted and meaningful improvements.

The writer is founder and CEO of Central Square Foundation, a venture philanthropy fund and policy think-tank focused on improving quality of school education and learning outcomes of children from low-income communities

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Deccan Herald ND 09/02/2015 p-8

IITs to help craftsmen compete with market leaders

Prakash Kumar

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) has embarked on an ambitious programme to develop "appropriate" design and technology to help Indian craftsmen compete with highly finished products of big industries, especially Chinese factories, to revive domestic market for crafts and their export.

Under the programme "Yukti", the premier technical institutes will also develop skill development and upgradation programmes for those engaged in traditional crafts and arts as a means of livelihood, to enhance their economic prospects.

The institutes have already initiated pilot projects in Uttar Pradesh and are working with Banarasi wooden toy makers, Allahabad Moonj weavers and the metal sheet workers at Kanpur.

While craft is the second largest sector in terms of employment generation in India, Indian craftsmen contribute 8 per cent to the country's GDP in the manufacturing sector. In Uttar Pradesh alone, every fourth person is a craftsperson producing for consumers at the bottom of the pyramid as well as for those at its pinnacles.

"The sheer number of craftsmen gives craft an edge in production and supply, but not a competitive edge against the highly finished products of large industries or the quick reverse engineering of the Chinese factories. The IITs have undertaken to develop appropriate design and technology upgradation to enable them compete with such players in market," a Human Resource Development Ministry official told *Deccan Herald*.

The IITs will work with local craftsmen in their vicinity and develop innovative and effective designs and technology as an alternate to improve the production, he said.

"There is a need to envisage craft communities as alternate system of design and engineering. It is essential to revive the domestic Indian market for crafts as well as to promote their export," he added.

Utilising their expertise, the premier technical institutes will develop "modern craft workshops" with appropriate, cheap and efficient machine designs and labour intensive technologies for craft development. A tool block will be developed for craftsmen from where a community member can borrow tools and return it after use just like a book in a library.

Crafting course

The institutes will create a national knowledge resource pool of indigenous technology, design practices as well as systems of measurement and recognition.

To train craftsmen, the IITs will design flexible teaching and learning curriculum that could fit into their everyday schedule. A fresh learner may also be employed at the same time to enable him earn a livelihood.

The practice modules will be designed in a manner that it could be assimilated by even those who are not very literate. Craft course curricula will also be offered as vocational education in community colleges besides the IITs.

The IITs have planned to offer the training programmes through both online and real-time classrooms, given the dearth of trainers in the field of skill development and lack of access to remote communities.

DH News Service

Times Of India ND 09/02/2015 P-14

'Unlike medieval Europe, India's intellectual climate was free and tolerant'

*French-born academic **Michel Danino** is a specialist on Indian history and science, and currently a guest professor at IIT Gandhinagar. Speaking with **Seema Kamdar**, Danino discussed achievements of ancient Indian civilisation, why these didn't produce crucial modern research – and whether ancient Indians also knew how to fly planes:*

Q&A

■ Amidst current debates over ancient India's accomplishments, what were some key scientific breakthroughs?

Well, Indians made major contributions to a vast number of fields, especially mathematics, astronomy, metallurgy, alchemy, medicine and agriculture. India's water harvesting and management techniques are something we can still learn from. Metallurgical advancements, like the corrosion-resistant iron pillar in Delhi's Qutub complex, were other achievements. There were texts on sustainable agriculture – today, we talk of organic farming but it was practised widely.

Fields Medal awardee Manjul Bhargava recently said much of pre-modern mathematics has foundations in India. The 8th to 6th century Shulbasutras knew the Pythagoras theorem. Modern Arabic numerals originated in India. The decimal place-value numeral system evolved in India around the 3rd or 4th century AD.

Aryabhata conceived the earth as a rotating sphere in space, which causes the apparent rising and setting of the sun. Varahamihira disagreed and Brahmagupta derided Aryabhata – but unlike medieval Europe, the intellectual climate in India was free and tolerant of dissent.

Centuries ahead of Europe, Brahmagupta envisaged mathematical infinity and proposed that zero and infinity are mutually inverse notions. In fact, the concept of infinity underlies much of Indian science – also the infinitesimal.

Many of those techniques of algebra and astronomy travelled to Persia and Arabia. Some went to medieval Europe. Overall, texts suggest the flow of mathematics was much more out of India than into it.

■ But why didn't Indian science mature into path-breaking modern science?

Well, there were many complex factors at play – the destruction of centres of learning from the 11th century onward led to a fragmentation of the scientific community.

Also, there was a relative lack of royal patronage to science. And there was a lack of desire to expand beyond India's borders through conquests – let's not forget that colonialism in Europe was a prime engine for science and technological progress.

■ Speaking of technology, is there evidence to indicate ancient Indians knew how to make planes?

No – although ancient India did have the concept of flying machines. Vimanas are mentioned in the Ramayana and other texts, leading enthusiasts to confuse conceptualisation with implementation.

Greek mythology mentioned a winged stallion, Pegasus, but there was no such animal. Like the vimana, this reflects an aspiration to fly, nothing more.

■ There's debate over teaching Indian schoolchildren Sanskrit today – your take?

Students should certainly be exposed to India's knowledge systems, at least to major accomplishments – why should they not know, for example, that the decimal notation of numbers the world uses is of Indian origin?

The University of St Andrews in Scotland has an extensive repository on mathematicians of India – no Indian university offers any data.

However, there are reliable translations of original texts. So, knowledge of Sanskrit isn't necessary to introduce students to the field. Of course, it's indispensable for the serious researcher.

Times Of India ND 09/02/2015 P-8

A robot-staffed hotel in Japan to be world's first

Getty Images

AT YOUR SERVICE FROM JULY

Tokyo: A robot-staffed hotel, said to be the world's first, is set to open in Japan in July where guests checking into the futuristic facility will be greeted and served by remarkably human-like robots.

Huis Ten Bosch, a theme park in typical Dutch style in terms of its architecture in Nagasaki Prefecture has unveiled plans to open the modern hotel with robot staff and other advanced technologies to significantly reduce operating costs. The hotel will be called Henn-na Hotel, which translates as Strange Hotel.

The hotel will be partially staffed by what are termed 'actroid' androids — remarkably human-like robots who will be able to greet, carry luggage to rooms, make cups of coffee — and even smile.

The robots will be able to speak Japanese, Chinese, Korean and English.

According to the park, the first phrase of the two-storey hotel will open on July 17 with 72 rooms. The second phrase will be completed in 2016 with an additional 72 rooms. The hotel will have three robots that will act as receptionists apart from four service and porter robots, and others engaged in menial tasks such as cleaning.

"We'll make the most efficient hotel in the world," boasts Huis Ten Bosch president Hideo Sawada.

Guestroom doors will be accessed by facial-recognition technology. Guests can request items through a tablet when needed. Instead of air-conditioning, a radiation panel will detect body heat in rooms and adjust the temperature. Solar power and other energy-saving features will be used to reduce operating costs.

The hotel says room fees at opening will be from 7,000 Yen ($60) for a single room to 18,000 Yen ($153). PTI

Times Of India ND 09/02/2015 (Education times) p-1

CONFUSION REIGNS

DU's BTech students are confused as the status of the degree is unclear

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Students pursuing BTech courses at the University of Delhi's (DU) affiliated colleges remain confused as the status of their degree is unclear. When the BTech reverted to the three-year BSc model in 2014, the HRD minister had said that it would need to be approved by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

However, about six months on, the degrees are still not approved even as the application deadline for the AICTE process is February 20.

According to a recent AICTE notification, institutions conducting technical courses, such as the BTech and MBA, must seek its approval by February 20 for the degrees to be valid. Several DU colleges and departments introduced four-year BTech courses in 2013. However, not many principals knew if individual colleges needed to apply or if the university would apply on their behalf.

"We were informed by the university about this regulation some time ago but we have not received any update since then," said Babli Moitra Saraf, principal, Indraprastha College for Women. "We were hoping that the university would act on everyone's behalf and be a collective representative of all colleges. But as of now, the situation remains unclear."

V K Kwatra, principal, Hans Raj College added that the approval was needed for only one batch enrolled on the four-year undergraduate programme (FYUP). "It is not always easy to seek approval because one needs to fulfil all the demands pertaining to infrastructure and facilities. Moreover, if a college has advanced facilities and qualifies for approval, then it should perhaps be allowed to continue with the BTech programme. Otherwise, the council could exempt those colleges, with just one batch graduating with a BTech degree," he said.

GANESH CHANDRA

Unlike affiliated colleges, the Cluster Innovation Centre (CIC), which offers a BTech degree, does not need AICTE recognition, according to Madan Mohan Chaturvedi, director, CIC. It is directly under the university and the UGC Act covers such departments, thereby exempting CIC from seeking approval, he said.

The Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) has written to the vice-chancellor demanding action at the earliest given that the deadline is approaching.

"Individual colleges seem confused at this point. Hence, we have sent a written request to the university urging it to take action on behalf of the colleges. We will follow this up in a meeting with the university officials in the near future," said Mohit Nagar, president, DUSU.

Times Of India ND 09/02/2015 p-10

Govt clears 1,745 new MBBS seats across India

ADITI TANDON
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

Good news for medical aspirants. A government panel, set up to recommend ways of enhancing human resources in heath, has approved the creation of 1,745 MBBS seats in seven new medical colleges across India and 14 existing government medical institutes.

Of these 1,745 MBBS seats, 700 will be created in the seven new medical colleges approved recently by the Health Ministry's Empowered Committee on human resources in health.

The remaining 1,045 seats will be added to the existing pool at 14 government medical colleges whose upgrade the committee has approved.

In this category, Punjab will get an additional 100 MBBS seats with the Health Ministry approving the state government's proposal to enhance intakes at Government Medical College Patiala from 150 to 200 and Government College at Amritsar from 150 to 200.

Among the 14 colleges to get the nod for additional MBBS intake is Government Medical College, Haldwani, (Uttarakhand) which will be allowed to add 50 MBBS seats. The state's proposal to enhance college intake from 100 to 150 seats has been approved.

The new medical colleges will come up where government district or referral hospitals are already functioning. The seven district hospitals that have been approved for the establishment of new medical colleges with 100 MBBS seats capacity each are GB Pant Hospital, Port Blair; District Hospital Kohima; District Hospital Almora, Uttarakhand; District Hospital Datia and District Hospital, Khandwa in Madhya Pradesh; and District Hospitals at Churu and Dungarpur in Rajasthan.

Among the 14 existing government medical colleges approved for the upgrade of capacity, two are in Punjab and one in Haldwani.

Of the remaining 11, four in Tamil Nadu have been allowed an additional intake of 345 MBBS seats; four in Madhya Pradesh have been approved to add 350 MBBS seats and three in Rajasthan to add 200.

The Health Ministry has sent its recommendations to the Medical Council of India (MCI) for approval and once MCI inspects the identified facilities, enhanced intakes will come into operation.

"States will be advised to plan for infrastructure and other facilities as per MCI norms for medical colleges so that statutory approvals can be obtained," minutes of the meeting of the Empowered Committee chaired by former Health Secretary Lov Verma say.

Though MBBS seats will be added to the identified colleges, medical aspirants all over India will benefit as 15 per cent MBBS seats in each state medical college will go into the All-India PMT pool and the remaining will be available to students of the respective states.

The committee was formed to consider proposals under the government's two new centrally sponsored schemes namely – Establishment of new medical colleges attached with district or referral hospitals; and strengthening /upgrade of existing state government/central government medical colleges to increase MBBS seats.

At present, the annual MBBS intake in India is around 40,000 seats and the doctor patient ratio a dismal 1:2000.

The decision to allow new colleges in the vicinity of district hospitals was taken to ward off the challenge of land and infrastructure availability for colleges. "It is easier to get a college going alongside a hospital because infrastructure and patient load is already available," a Health Ministry official said.

Bonanza for region

- Govt panel okays establishment of seven new hospitals, including one in Almora, Uttarakhand, with 100 MBBS seats each
- 1,045 new MBBS seats to be added to 14 existing government medical colleges, including two in Punjab (100 more seats) and one in Uttarakhand (50 more seats)

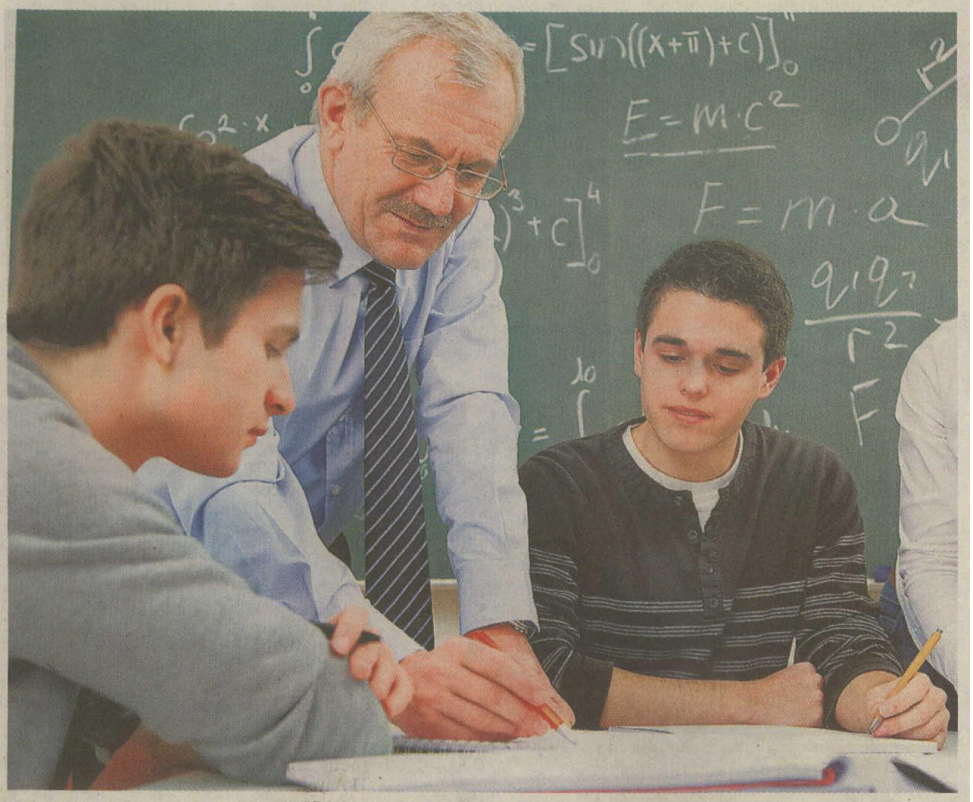
> "It is easier to get a medical college going alongside a hospital because infrastructure and patient load is already available."
>
> A Health Ministry official

Deccan Herald ND 09/02/2015 p-6

Reinventing classes to keep science alive

AN OVERHAUL

Multiple studies have shown that students fare better with a more active approach to learning. So, is it goodbye to the traditional classes, where students often learn less than their teachers think, asks **Richard Perez-Pena**



Hundreds of students fill the seats, but the lecture hall stays quiet enough for everyone to hear each cough and crumpling piece of paper. The instructor speaks from a podium for nearly the entire 80 minutes. Most students take notes. Some scan the Internet. A few doze. In a nearby hall, an instructor, Catherine Uvarov, peppers students with questions and presses them to explain and expand on their answers. Every few minutes, she has them solve problems in small groups. Running up and down the aisles, she sticks a microphone in front of a startled face, looking for an answer. Students dare not nod off or show up without doing the reading.

Both are introductory chemistry classes at the University of California, but they present a sharp contrast – the traditional and orderly but dull versus the experimental and engaging but noisy. Breaking from practices that many educators say have proved ineffectual, Uvarov's class is part of an effort at a small but growing number of colleges to transform the way science is taught.

"We have not done a good job of teaching the intro courses or gateway courses in science and math," said Hunter R Rawlings III, president of the Association of American Universities and a former president of Cornell University and the University of Iowa. "Teaching freshman and sophomore level classes has not had a high enough priority, and that has to change."

Multiple studies have shown that students fare better with a more active approach to learning, using some of the tools being adopted at Davis, while in traditional classes, students often learn less than their teachers think.

The University of Colorado, a national leader in the overhaul of teaching science, tested thousands of students over several years, before and after they each took an introductory physics class, and reported in 2008 that students in transformed classes had improved their scores by about 50 per cent more than those in traditional classes.

Work in progress

At the University of North Carolina, researchers reported recently that an overhaul of introductory biology classes had increased student performance overall and yielded a particularly beneficial effect for students, whose parents did not go to college.

Given the strength of the research findings, it seems that universities would be desperately trying to get into the act. They are not. The norm in college classes – especially big introductory science and math classes, which have high failure rates – remains a lecture by a faculty member, often duplicating what is in the assigned reading.

There are many explanations, educators say, including the low value placed on teaching, tradition, pride and the belief that science should be the province of a select few. "What drives advancement at universities is publishing research and winning grants," said Marc T Facciotti, an associate professor who will teach a revamped biology course here in the winter quarter. "Teaching isn't a very high priority."

Noah Finkelstein, a physics professor and the director of Colorado's overhaul efforts, added: "Faculty don't like being told what to do, and there are people who push back and say they can figure it out on their own and they know what works for them. There's plenty of data that says they're mistaken."

Employers and government officials have spent years complaining that there are too few people – and especially too few women – with degrees in math and science. In fact, there is no shortage of interested students, but failure rates in the beginning classes are high. At four-year colleges, 28 per cent of students set out as math, engineering and science majors, but only 16 per cent of bachelor's degrees are awarded in those fields.

Self-assigned gatekeepers

The attrition rate is highest among women. "A lot of science faculty have seen themselves as gatekeepers," said Marco Molinaro, an assistant vice provost here at Davis and director of its effort to overhaul science courses. The university has received grants from the Association of American Universities, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Helmsley Charitable Trust. Rather than try to help students who falter in introductory classes, he said, "they have seen it as their job to weed people out and limit access to upper-level courses."

The project here borrows elements from many sources, including more than a decade of work at the University of Colorado and other institutions; software from the Open Learning Initiative at Carnegie Mellon University; Carl E Wieman, a Nobel Prize-winning physicist at Stanford who founded Colorado's project and a parallel effort at the University of British Columbia; Eric Mazur, a Harvard physicist and author of the book *Peer Instruction*; and Doug Lemov, a former teacher and author of *Teach Like a Champion*.

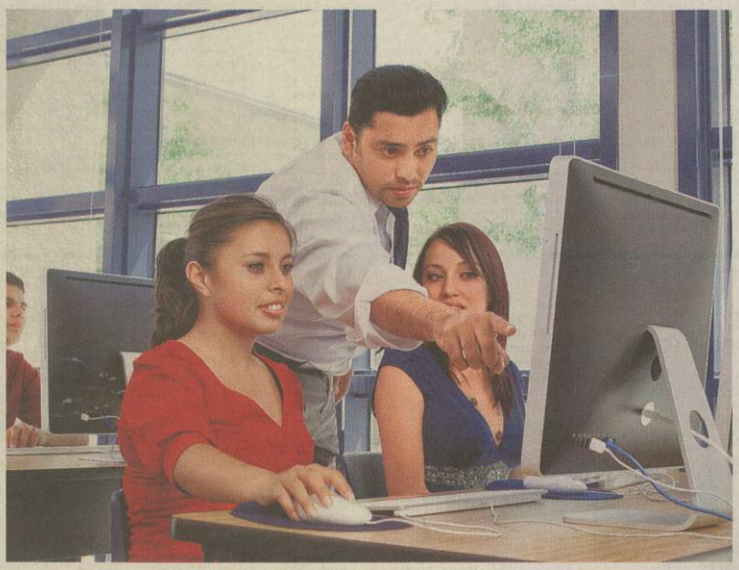
Many of the ideas – like new uses of technology, requiring students to work in groups and having them do exercises in class rather than just listen to the teacher – have caught on, to varying degrees, in grade schools and high schools. But higher education has been slower to change, especially in giant courses with hundreds of students. While teachers at lower levels receive training in educational theory and teaching methods, most college instructors acquire none. "Higher education has this assumption that if you know your subject, you can teach it, and it's not true," Catherine said. "I see so much that I was missing before, and that was missing in my own education."

NYT

Deccan Herald ND 09/02/2015 p-6

Changing nuances of new age education

TECHNOLOGY IN CLASSROOM Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has revolutionised the process of teaching and learning in the 21st century. Both teachers and students are making the best use of it, says Jayasree N



With so much technology in today's world, there is a burning question on everybody's minds: "Can a computer replace a teacher?" The answer lies in the fact that technological gadgets like mobiles, computers, tablets, radio and TV have invaded the educational sector in a big manner. These tools also form the base of ICT-Information and Communication Technology. Modern educators support the use of ICT in education as it has a student-friendly outlook with its 'new generation' image.

Youngsters today, are far more comfortable using these hi-tech devices and applications. While the older generation of teaching community is apprehensive about the effectiveness of technology in education, the younger generation is warming up to it and accepting it as their own.

Technology should be used to supplement the main stream process of education. A resourceful teacher may use a digital lesson for pattern practice or for reteaching a difficult concept for the slow learners. The digital lessons may help the students follow their own pace as they can access it from anywhere at any time.

On the other hand, when the teacher spends time with slow learners, other students can get engaged with a digital lesson or an online worksheet. They can also listen to a virtual teacher online.

This technology also helps students to go beyond their textbooks with the help of well-prepared lessons available on the net. Students can always seek the help of their teachers to choose the best from the vast repertoire of information available online. Online coaching is another boon of ICT. These days many agencies offer online interactive coaching for various subjects at affordable fees. This is perfect for students who cannot afford to attend regular coaching classes. Mock tests held online help students train themselves in time management. ICT method of learning also underlines group activity, which makes children accountable and responsible.

Regressive usage

When ICT was introduced in education 10 years ago, there were high expectations and the excitement was palpable. But at present, all we see is an unhealthy addiction to the technology. What more, teachers, who followed the traditional method, are looked down upon. A classroom without any technology is termed ancient. Parents too, get carried off with the shiny gadgets advertised in school brochures. Most of these glossy leaflets shadow the real concept of learning.

Yes, ICT is a breakthrough, that science has offered to us on a silver platter. But, there is a fine line between utilising it and utilising it for the better. We all remember those simple powerpoint presentations, that enchanted us with their simple graphics and text. It soon became an essential tool for everyone in every field. Many teachers relied on the attractive visual appeal to reduce their burden. But what they didn't realise was that this practice took away their creativity, originality and spontaneity. Even students, who depended on such technologies lost out on their original creativity and critical thinking abilities. It also became very hard for teachers to ascertain the originality of the work of students. The classroom, now looked like a different place under the bright lights of the projector with monotonous teaching and passive students.

A generation which prefers an e-book to the traditional printed book has already been evolved. It might affect the faculty of memorisation since people addicted to digital content are habituated to an easy click of the mouse for retrieving information whenever required.

But most of the examinations are conducted in conventional ways that demand high levels of memory and understanding. Hence, as far as possible, at least in the main subject areas, traditional printed books should be given preference. Printed books can provide a concrete feeling, a tangible dimension to the concepts while e-books fail miserably in that field.

When the world is shrinking to few icons on a three or four inch high definition screens, teachers should also change intelligently. They should be updated from time to time. A 'new version of teacher' with advanced features of flexibility and understanding is in demand. It is true that the traditional methods have their own time-tested positive aspects. A proper balance of old and new methods is the need of the hour.

Financial Chronicle ND 09/02/2015 P-10

Canada gains over Australia as Indian students look for safety

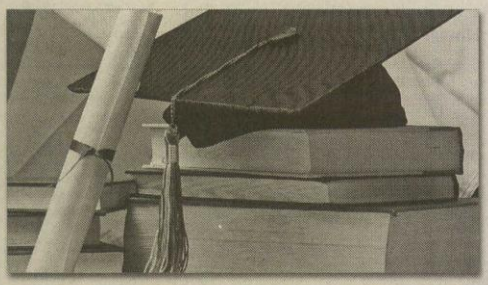
SANGEETHA G
Chennai

SECURITY and easy migration norms seem to be the primary concerns of students while choosing a foreign country for higher studies. While the acts of violence against foreign nationals has led to a steady decrease in the number of Indian students opting for Australia, more peaceful Canada has been increasing its share over the past few years.

The number of students packing their bags for Australian universities has been declining since 2008. In that year 28,411 Indian students were studying in Australia and this came down to 12,629 by 2012, a drop of 56 per cent. Australia's share of Indian students was 14.8 per cent in 2008 and it has dropped to 6.4 per cent in four years, as per a study by Technopak Advisors.

"There were incidents of racial discrimination and young boys being killed in Australia a few years back and all these made headlines. Families were scared to send their children and several agencies, which were providing migratory services shut down. Some of the dubious Australian universities were also providing courses just for the sake of migration. The Australian government had come down heavily on them," said N Chandramouli, CEO of TRA (formerly Trust Research Advisory).

Meanwhile, Canada has been registering the fastest growth in attracting Indian students during the same period. Its share went up from 4.3 per cent to 14.7 per cent during this period.



Triumph of Toronto: Between 2006 and 2013, the number of Indian students going to Canada has risen by 357 per cent

Between 2006 and 2013, the number of Indian students going to Canada has risen by 357 per cent. In 2006 it was just 6,927 and has grown to 31,665 by 2013. Canada generated around $860 million in 2013 from Indian students staying in the country.

"Reputation of education system in Canada and safety are two important factors that beckon Indian students to the country. The society is tolerant and non-discriminatory, and summer jobs and opportunities after completion of study are available for foreign students," said Aurobindo Saxena, associate director, education, Technopak Advisors.

The tuition fees and living expenses are less in Canada compared with the US and other countries, while students also have opportunity to get residency. "While both Canada and Australia promote migration, the norms are easier in Canada and the society too has a cosmopolitan structure," said Chandramouli.

Once a student migrates to Canada, he need to pay the tuition fee applicable for local students and this is half of what an international student has to pay.

Meanwhile, the macro-economic concerns have been leading to a gradual decline in the number of students opting for the US since 2008. The numbers have dropped from 1,04,897 in 2009 to 96,754 by 2012.

Around 2,00,000 Indian students go abroad for higher education spending close to $15 billion annually. The US, the UK, Australia and Canada are the four major countries, which attract Indian students. The number of such students reached a peak in 2009-10, but has steadied since then.

sangeethag@mydigitalfc.com

Financial Express ND 09/02/2015 P-12

Let's make 2015 the year of skilling

After all these years of trial and error, the government is right in realising that we need to massively scale up our skilling efforts

SACHIN ADHIKARI

ILLUSTRATION: ASIT BAGCHI

After 'Digital India' and 'Make in India', the government will be launching yet another programme called 'Skill India' in March 2015. Like all other programmes, 'Skill India' too is a dream project of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the work to launch this programme has already begun.

India has one of the youngest populations in the world and a very large pool of young English-speaking people. Thus, it has the potential to meet the skills needs of other countries and also cater to its own demand for skilled manpower. Ironically, most industries in India are struggling with scarcity of skilled labour. Skill India is the government's answer to bridge this gap by providing training to all sections of our workforce in order to optimise their productivity.

The current education system does not focus on training young people in employable skills that can provide them with employment opportunities, and a large section of India's labour force has outdated skills. With the expected economic growth, this challenge is going to only increase further, since more than 75% of new job opportunities are expected to be skill-based. The government, thus, is strongly emphasising on upgrading people's skills by providing vocational education and training to them.

The goal of Skill India is to create opportunities, space and scope for the development of the talent of Indians and identify new sectors for skill development. It aims to provide training and skill development to 500 million youth by 2020. It also aims to set up 1,500 new ITIs and 5,000 skill development centres across the country as well as a National Vocational Qualification Framework for affiliations and accreditation in vocational, educational and training systems. Needless to say, it is a herculean task and requires collaboration with various stakeholders.

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) can act like the glue that links education and employers and takes them to new heights in a way that neither of them can achieve if working singularly. With a shared goal of tightening the level of communication among educators and employers, PPPs can efficiently implement public policies, funding systems and curriculum frameworks, and help bridge the employability gap. Also, government-run training institutes are often plagued by an array of problems such as faculty shortage and obsolete curriculum due to which most students passing out of educational institutions remain unemployed. These challenges cannot be met alone by government initiatives, and for a strong link between industry and training institutes, private involvement can help by providing funds, better infrastructure and more exposure.

Government budgets, so far, have clearly reflected the focus on enhancing the PPP model in training and skill up-gradation, but through the Skill India initiative, we see it taking a more concrete shape and direction. First, a lot more private organisations that offer trainings in both urban and rural India are being invited to establish a rapport to work with the government as it can make the task of penetrating even into the deepest rural areas easier. Second, a number of voluntary organisations and NGOs are being included to reach out to all corners of the country. Global Success Foundation is one such NGO that is working on creating awareness and training modules in collaboration with the National Skill Development Corporation to provide vocational training in semi-urban and rural areas. These trainings are unique in the way that they equally emphasise on providing soft skills so that the candidates have a holistic development that helps them deliver their best in whatever they do. The organisation has successfully trained and provided employment to 200 villagers in Dholka, in Ahmedabad district of Gujarat, and will reach out to communities in all parts of the country this year. Such initiatives are a positive step towards skilling the untapped potential that can be utilised to make Skill India a reality.

Tailor-made, need-based programmes—language & communication skills, life & positive thinking skills, personality development skills, management skills, behavioural skills, job & employability skills—have to be initiated for specific age-groups

After all these years of trial and error, the government is right in realising that we need to scale up our skilling efforts if we want to include our rural and semi-urban youth (Bharat) into the national development process; remember, they are far greater in numbers than their urban counterpart. The emphasis is now to skill them in a way that they get not only employment but also improve their entrepreneurship skills. Thus, trainings are no longer going to be restricted to vocational ones but also micro-entrepreneurship trainings that can encourage them to start their ventures independently or improvise if they already have any. Tailor-made, need-based programmes—language and communication skills, life and positive thinking skills, personality development skills, management skills, behavioural skills, job and employability skills—have to be initiated for specific age-groups.

We have to design training programmes on the lines of global standards so that the youth of our country can not only meet the domestic demands but also of other countries such as the US, Japan, China, Europe and those in West Asia. This is getting increasingly important with the government's agenda of turning India into a manufacturing hub for the world. It will take more than cheap labour to pull global companies to use Indian resources and services for their products; it will need good quality manpower that can deliver at par with standards in their nations.

It's not that we do not have any skill development programmes. The government has always considered skill development as a national priority but earlier the emphasis was on traditional jobs whereas Skill India will focus on all kinds of jobs. Structurally also, the government has made changes; for instance, earlier the responsibility was divided among various ministries but this time these are being clubbed together, only to make the system more efficient and transparent. The course methodology of Skill India is hopefully going to be more innovative, which could include games, group discussions, brainstorming sessions, practical experiences, case studies, etc, to ensure that candidates are job-ready by the time they complete the courses.

According to Modi, 2015 will be when Skill India won't be just a programme but a movement, embracing youth who are jobless, college and school dropouts, along with the educated ones, giving them a chance to be a part of our workforce and add value to our economy in a more organised and productive manner.

What shape Skill India will take, only time will tell. But with this approach, India can move towards its targeted goal of providing employment to all its citizens. Let's start by making 2015 the year of skilling.

The author is founder & chief mentor, Global Success Foundation

February 10

Times Of India ND
10/02/2015 P-13

HRD's e-book on 200 days of achievements

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The HRD ministry has brought out an e-book highlighting its achievements in the last 200 days under the Modi government.

One of the key achievements, the ministry claims, is formalizing a programme that will ensure as many as 2,112 students and 528 school teachers from northeast visit some premier institutes like the IITs every year for academic exposure. They would visit the 16 IITs and six NITs. The first batch of students has already visited a few IITs.

The ministry said it has stressed on strengthening women power and for the first time women honchos have been appointed as chairpersons of board of governors of apex technical institutes and national institutes of technology.

Deccan Herald ND 10/02/2015 P-8

Modi to take up examination issues on 'Mann Ki Baat'

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will share his thoughts with students preparing for board examination and competitive examinations in his next 'Mann Ki Baat' radio programme.

This comes days after Modi held a joint radio address with US President Barack Obama in a special episode of 'Mann Ki Baat'. "Was thinking about this month's radio prog & thought (sic)...why not share 'Mann Ki Baat' with students preparing for board & competitive exams," he tweeted on Monday.

While the central board of secondary education is set to hold Class X and XII board examinations from March 2, the Council of Indian School Certificate Examinations (CICSE) began Indian School Certificate (ISC) board exams for Class XII from Monday. The CICSE will start Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE) examination for Class X from February 26.

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has also announced schedules of the Joint Entrance Examination-Main (JEE-Main), conducted to select students for admissions to the centrally funded technical institutes like national Institutes of Technology.

The test is scheduled to be conducted on April 4 in offline mode while on April 10 and April 11 in online mode.

The Joint Admission Board of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) will later conduct JEE-Advance on May 24 to select candidates for admissions to the 15 premier technical institutes as well as Indian School of Mines Dhanbad. Announcing the topic of his next radio programme likely to be aired this month, Modi has invited students, parents and teachers to write to him to share their examination experiences with him.

"I urge students, parents and teachers to share exam experiences that would inspire youngsters and even motivate them in exam preparation. Like always, I will share some of your thoughts, inputs and anecdotes during the programme. Do share them here," he tweeted.

With the Prime Minister announcing the topic of his next programme, suggestions and request from netizens, specially students, began pouring in at the mygov.in, an official web portal of the Centre to crowdsource ideas on governance and policy matters.

Mint ND 10/02/2015 P-5

HIRING DRIVE

Hopes high as placements start on a strong note at IIMs

By Prashant K. Nanda
prashant.n@livemint.com

NEW DELHI

The Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) believe that positive business sentiment and hopes of better economic prospects will mean a placement season that is better than last year's.

Sure, the premium companies attach to graduates of the IIMs means placements are good even in years when the economy isn't in great shape, but an extraordinary placement season is usually an accurate measure of the sentiment in corporate boardrooms.

Given that, things look good.

IIM Lucknow finished its placements in four days; IIM Bangalore starts its on Tuesday but a third of its graduating batch is already spoken for (so-called lateral offers), and IIM Ahmedabad and IIM Calcutta will start theirs in the next few days (and both hope to do better this year than they did in 2014).

Even IIM Indore, which has faced tough times in past years, is confident it will finish its placements process in the next week.

Meanwhile, on Monday, IIM Lucknow said it had completed the placement "on a high note" with 453 students getting 463 offers this season. These offers were made by 144 companies, including 43 new recruiters from diverse sectors.

> Even tier-II schools will see a good response this year, according to an industry expert

The offers included 93 pre-placement offers, 163 lateral offers and 207 offers from the final placements. Lateral offers are typically those at a higher level made outside the regular placement process to candidates with a few years' experience.

Shankarshan Basu, the professor in charge of placements in IIM Bangalore, said he expects more recruiters, more offers and better offers. Satish Deodhar, chairperson of the placement committee at IIM Ahmedabad, said that he is hopeful of a much better response this year, based also on the response the school received to summer placements.

Amit Khurana, chief executive of human resource company Corporate Access, said companies have started showing muscle in terms of their hiring activity as they chalk out growth plans. Even tier-II schools will see a good response this year, he added.

The *Teamlease Employment Outlook Report* (October 2014-March 2015) had projected that global macroeconomic trends and domestic demand would put business and employment sentiments on a fast-paced upward trajectory.

Bhavya Kapoor, a placement officer at IIM Indore almost echoed the sentiment and said that despite the school having more than 500 students, the highest among IIM campuses, "the response is quite encouraging and only a few students are left to be placed". "Even consulting firms are hiring in double digits," Kapoor said but declined to divulge details.

IIM Lucknow said its major recruiters this year were Accenture Management Consulting, Boston Consulting Group, Deloitte, KPMG and McKinsey. **Reliance Industries Ltd**, **HDFC Bank Ltd**, Samsung, Snapdeal and Amazon also hired from its campus, the school said. The top segments based on roles offered were sales and marketing (25%), finance (22%), consulting (21%), and e-commerce (15%).

Tribune ND 10/02/2015 P-2

AICTE approval: DU teachers seek VC intervention

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 9

Delhi University teachers today demanded the Vice Chancellor's intervention in the issue of around 24 varsity colleges not having AICTE approval for B.Tech courses even as scores of students held a protest in that regard outside its Arts Faculty.

"The careers of 6,000 students will continue to hang in balance if Delhi University does not seek AICTE approval for the B.Tech degree programmes in which they are enrolled," DUTA president Nandita Narain said in a statement here.

"While AICTE has set February 20, 2015, as the last date for seeking approval, DU is yet to put its act together. None of the five B.Tech courses introduced in 2013, in Computer Science, Electronics, Food Technology, Instrumentation Electronics and Polymer Science, have the AICTE's approval," she said.

"DUTA appeals to the DU VC to respond positively to the students' urgent need and ensure that the approvals are taken before the last date," she added.

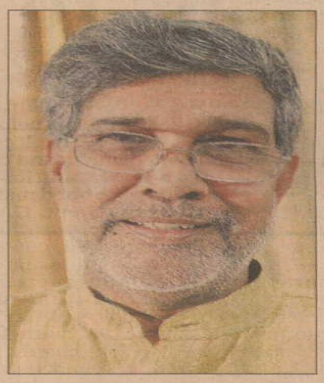
The four-year B.Tech programmes were launched as part of the four-year undergraduate programme (FYUP), which was scrapped last year after the intervention of UGC.—PTI

Economic Times ND 10/02/2015 P-10

'Students Need to Challenge Exploitation'

ET Q&A

An enhanced focus on education, employability, entrepreneurship and ethics was Nobel Laureate **Kailash Satyarthi**'s advice to the government for creating a better country in an address to students at BITS Pilani. He encouraged students to work on tackling issues of child labour. In an interview with **Anumeha Chaturvedi** on the sidelines of his visit, Satyarthi spoke about his hopes from the new government on issues like right to education, his meeting with President Obama and how companies could work on child labour and exploitation under the ambit of corporate social responsibility.



How can young students work towards addressing child labour and exploitation?

As people who are connected with the digital world and social media, students are aware of what's happening around them. They can easily express protest in just two or three words on social media if they see children being mistreated around them. If millions of young people start challenging exploitation, things will change. It will help in sensitising others, the government.

International brands have to sensitise suppliers and producers, engage and empower them and make them transparent

It will hold society accountable. As consumers, they can refuse to accept the hospitality of places where young children are working. If educated students talk to people it will help in empowering those who feel disconnected and excluded. We can end social exclusion by simply connecting with them.

What can the new government do with regard to the right to education and child labour?

No government can enforce the right to education law without abolition of child labour. The right to education law has been passed several years ago. But millions of children remain outside schools and many of them drop out. That's a big problem. The government needs to work more proactively to devise ways to withdraw those children from abusive situations – from mining, factories and restaurants. So my demand from the new government and Parliament is that a pending amendment in child labour law has to be passed as soon as possible. Our demand is that all child labour has to be banned up to the age of 14 and all hazardous or the worst forms of child labour have to be prohibited up to the age of 18. The previous government had other political agendas. The present government is engaged in matters like foreign investment, which are important issues. But how can you make your economy vibrant and your democracy successful without ensuring every single child is free from exploitation?

How was the meeting with Obama?

I met him as a fellow Nobel laureate. Besides, as president of the US, Obama is in a better position to put his weight behind issues like abolition of child slavery and ensure a non-violent and protective environment for children. Right after meeting me, he mentioned that the US and India should partner abolition of slavery and trafficking. This is one thing that can't be put aside and I hope the two governments can work together.

With the Companies Act ensuring mandatory spends on CSR, how can companies tackle issues of child labour and exploitation?

Sustainability doesn't lie in charity. Showing that you're good and being good is one thing and finding solutions to deep-rooted problems is another. I have been calling for more sustainable solutions from the corporate world to the problem of child labour with a sense of responsibility and not just charity and philanthropy. Companies must ensure that no child labour is involved in their supply chain. All the international brands have to ascertain this by sensitising their suppliers, producers and engaging and empowering them and making them transparent. Opening schools and colleges is good, but if at the same time, if you employ children in production, who is responsible? They should invest more in sensitising suppliers and production chains.