



JANUARY 2009

Welcome to the National Knowledge Commission's newsletter. This issue sees the launch of the National Knowledge Commission's online contests — an endeavour to create a groundswell of public opinion and get people to discuss and debate on a range of crucial issues in the knowledge sector

The National Knowledge Commission's (NKC) recommendations have been crafted to achieve the objective of tapping into India's enormous reservoir of knowledge, to mobilise national talent and create an empowered generation with access to tremendous possibilities. With 550 million below the age of 25, our demographic dividend is our greatest asset. By recommending reforms in the education and associated sectors, our aim has been to provide a platform to harness this human capital, which has the ability to change the course of development in the country. Recommendations have also been suggested in other key areas, because to adequately tap this potential, the right development paradigm has to be created by investing in intellectual capital, developing the skill set of the population, strengthening research, encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship and creating effective systems of e-governance. However, no development agenda is complete unless concerns of disparity and inclusion are addressed. NKC's recommendations which focus on expansion in educational opportunities and special provisions for the disadvantaged, seek to create an inclusive society.

~ Sam Pitroda, Chairman, National Knowledge Commission

Inside this issue:

NKC - AIMA Education Series	2
Sam Pitroda addresses students	2
Special Session on the work of NKC	2
The Eleventh Plan	3
Regulatory reform in education	4
India Biodiversity Portal launch	4
Entrepreneurship in India	4

Join the Movement: NKC Launches Online Contests

The National Knowledge Commission is in the process of launching **online contests** comprising **debates, films and essays**. We believe that each one of us has a role to play in the process of transforming India into a knowledge society. We invite you to Join the Movement!

Debate Topics

- India will realise its demographic dividend in the next 15 years.
- Vocational education and training courses should be introduced in all schools.

Essay Topics

- How can India unleash its innovation and entrepreneurship potential?
- Expansion, excellence and inclusion – the three challenges of the Indian education system

Film

- How can I make a difference in transforming India?

For more details on the contest, visit <http://knowledgeportal.in/contests/>

NKC Outreach Events in Bangalore and Kolkata

December 2008

As part of the education conferences being jointly organised by the National Knowledge Commission and All India Management Association (AIMA), two seminars were held in Bangalore and Kolkata on 15th and 16th December, 2008, respectively. NKC Members – Mr. Sam Pitroda, Dr. Sujatha Ramdorai and Prof. Amitabh Mattoo addressed large gatherings of students and teachers in these conferences.

In Bangalore, Mr. Pitroda, Chairman, National Knowledge Commission stated that given the challenges today, the transformation into a knowledge society will take another 25 years. He also stressed the need to expand educational capacity through innovative delivery models.

Prof. Mattoo commented on the need for regulatory reforms in higher education while Dr. Sujatha Ramdorai highlighted the problem of shortage of teachers. Speaking about the Translation Mission recommended by NKC, Mr. Pitroda said that translation has the potential to create more than 2.5 lakh jobs.

In the seminar in Kolkata held at Swabhumi, Mr. Pitroda called for revamping e-governance with a fresh outlook. He said India needed to first redesign and re-engineer its methodology of governance and then computerize the systems.



NKC Chairman Sam Pitroda (third from right) and NKC Member Dr. Sujatha Ramdorai (second from right) at the AIMA

Sam Pitroda Addresses Students in Kolkata



Mr. Sam Pitroda addresses a gathering of students and teachers at Ramakrishna Mission

December 2008

A conference titled “Making of a Knowledge Society” was organised by the Ramakrishna Mission in Belur Math, Kolkata. Addressing a gathering of more than 1100 students here, Mr. Sam Pitroda gave an overview of the National Knowledge Commission’s work in the last three years. He stated that the country’s education system was obsolete and that for change to happen, demand had to come from the student community. He also stressed the importance of human capital for nation building.

Session on the Work of the National Knowledge Commission



Mr. Pitroda at PHD Chambers of Commerce and Industry

December 2008

During the 103rd Annual Session of the Punjab Haryana and Delhi Chambers of Commerce and Industry, a special session on “The Work of the National Knowledge Commission” was held. Stressing on the importance of skill development, Mr. Sam Pitroda stated that drastic measures are needed to improve the quality of workforce in order to maintain economic growth. He also stressed the need for right kind of public-private partnerships to meet the knowledge needs of the future.

NKC Impact: The XIth Five Year Plan (2007—2011)

Vocational Training & Skill Development

Launch a National Skill Development Mission with an outlay of Rs 31,200 crore to increase capacity from 2.5 million to 10 million per annum. The National Skill Development Mission would:

- Encourage Ministries to expand existing public sector skill development infrastructure and its utilization by five fold.
- Modernize existing public sector infrastructure to get into PPP mode with functional and governance autonomy, establish a credible accreditation system and a guidance framework for all accrediting agencies, encourage agencies to rate institutions on standardized outcomes, and establish a “National Skill Inventory” and a “National Database for Skill Deficiency Mapping” on a national web portal.
- Set up a National Qualifications Framework, which establishes equivalence and provides horizontal mobility between various Vocational, Technical and Academic streams at more than one career point and a Trainee Placement and Tracking System for effective evaluation and future policy planning.
- Enlarge the coverage of skill spectrum to 1000 trades, with relevance to our emerging needs while making a distinction between structural, interventional and last mile unemployment and correspondingly set up programmes for 24 months, 12 months and 6 months duration.
- Create a “National Skill Development Fund” imposing a universal skill development obligation on industry to invest in skill development of SCs/STs/OBCs/Minorities/others candidates from BPL families.
- Facilitate repositioning of employment exchanges as outreach points of the Mission for storing and providing information on employment and skill development and to function as career counselling centres.
- Enlarge the 50,000 Skill Development Centres programme eventually into a “Virtual Skill Development Resource Network” for web based learning.

School Education

- Reorient Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan bringing in a strong rights focus to make Right to Education a reality: ensure basic learning conditions, special focus on Math, Science & English, Common Syllabi and Curriculum and Pedagogy.
- Gradually reduce Central Government’s funding over the Plan period rather than move immediately to 50:50.
- Ensure minimum standards and norms for public and private schools and address

systemic issues of accountability and decentralization of decision-making, teacher recruitment, teacher training, learning outcome measurement, teacher motivation.

- Recognize and encourage the role of private providers.
- Special focus on disadvantaged groups and educationally backward areas.
- Scheme for Universal Access and Quality at the Secondary Stage; set up 6000 Model Schools one in each Block, upgrade 15000 primary schools to secondary level, additional infrastructure and additional teachers, hundred per cent trained teachers.
- Use ICT based pedagogy and learning aids, provide broadband connectivity to all the Government and Government-aided secondary schools.
- Strengthen teacher training and professional development

Higher & Technical Education

- Expansion, inclusion and rapid movement in quality by enhancing public spending, encouraging private initiatives and initiating the long overdue major institutional and policy reforms, will form the core of the XI Plan effort.
- Improve quality: work on a detailed reforms agenda including: a) admission, curriculum and assessment; b) accreditation & ratings; c) teachers competence and motivation; and d) restructure affiliated colleges and research for policy formulation.
- An apex, independent regulatory mechanism accompanied by greater autonomy and internal accountability; establish a High-level committee to suggest specific Reforms
- Quantitative expansion through establishment of new government and private-funded institutions and increased intake in existing institutions..
- Establish 30 new Central Universities, 16 in States where they do not exist and 14 as World Class Universities (all-India admissions, course credits, regular syllabi revision, incentives for faculty, strong linkage with industry and research institutions, no affiliated colleges, outsource non-teaching functions).
- Provide flexibility to universities to raise fees accompanied by scholarships, fellowships and student loans.
- Launch a National Mission in education through ICT coverage in all the Universities and colleges; broadband connectivity through National Knowledge Network and requisite nodes within institutions; to be implemented through an Empowered Committee.



“The economic and social transformation of India in the 21st century will depend in large part on knowledge. Only knowledge can provide the foundations of an inclusive society”

~ Dr. Deepak Nayyar,
Member, NKC



“The whole idea of building a knowledge society is the idea of empowering young men and women through education and ensuring that all our delivery systems are built on the premise of the latest knowledge.”

~ Prof. Amitabh Mattoo

Special Focus

Regulatory Reforms in Education

“In order to achieve the desired modernization and expansion, a critical aspect will be to regulate entry of new institutions and accreditation of all institutions. NKC therefore recommends that an independent regulatory agency for vocational education and training be established. This body would license accreditation agencies and prescribe standards for certification. The procedures and methodologies adopted by the body would need to be simple and transparent to ensure unhindered growth in the sector.”

[NKC Recommendations on Vocational Education and Training](#)

“The present regulatory system in higher education is flawed in some important respects. The barriers to entry are too high. The system of authorizing entry is cumbersome. There is a multiplicity of regulatory agencies where mandates are both confusing and overlapping. The system, as a whole, is over-regulated but under-governed. NKC perceives a clear need to establish an Independent Regulatory Authority for Higher Education (IRAHE). The IRAHE must be at an arm’s length from the Government and independent of all stakeholders, including the concerned Ministries of the Government.”

[NKC Recommendations on Higher Education](#)

India Biodiversity Portal



The India Biodiversity portal, developed by Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) and promoted by the National Knowledge Commission was launched by NKC Chairman Mr. Sam Pitroda on 15th December, 2008 in Bangalore. The portal has a map-based wiki focused on gathering, aggregating and serving biodiversity information on the Indian subcontinent. It will provide a platform for aggregating and sharing data and information on biodiversity by allowing widespread community participation.

Visit the portal at: <http://indiabiodiversity.org/index.php>

NKC Report: Entrepreneurship in India

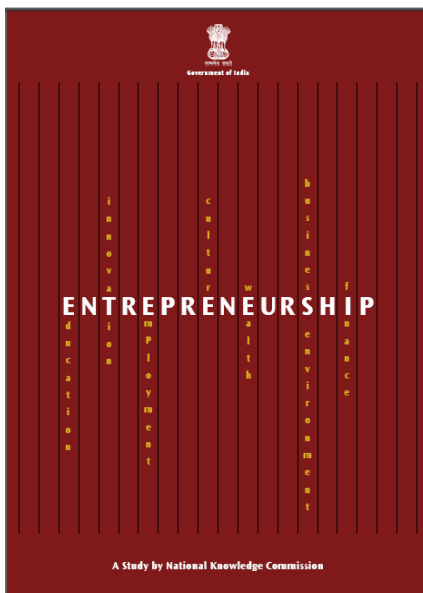
Recognizing the increasing significance and visible impact of Entrepreneurship in wealth creation and employment-generation, the National Knowledge Commission undertook a study to explore factors that have advanced entrepreneurship in India and various other factors that could further encourage and facilitate even greater growth.

The study ‘Entrepreneurship in India’ is based on one-on-one interviews with one hundred and fifty five entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds, in selected cities across India, as well as information from consultations with other relevant stakeholders in the entrepreneurial ecosystem (such as educational institutions, incubation centres, the financial community, chambers of commerce, entrepreneurial associations etc.) across the country. The study concluded that a successful entrepreneurship ecosystem is the function of a number of factors working in tandem. Key ‘entrepreneurial triggers’ identified included: individual motivations, socio-cultural factors, access to early-stage finance education and business environment.



“The key drivers of the Indian growth story since the reforms movement was introduced have been innovation and entrepreneurship”

~ Dr. Ashok Ganguly
Member, NKC



Join the Mission!

We invite you to become part of this change process!

Please send in your comments and experiences in dealing with the process of change.

“You must be the change you want to see in the world”

~ Mahatma Gandhi

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