

PRESS RELEASE

NKC: A Visionary Journey

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New Delhi

In June 2005, the Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh constituted the National Knowledge Commission (NKC), the first of its kind in the world. The Commission was an expression of the Prime Minister's vision and belief that the 21st century would be the century of knowledge. Under the chairmanship of Sam Pitroda, NKC was assigned the task of recommending measures for India to meet the challenges of the knowledge century. India has a unique opportunity in the form of its demographic dividend to play a major role in the global economy and in the welfare and development of society as a whole.

NKC's blueprint for reform has covered a wide spectrum of areas related to access to knowledge, knowledge concepts, creation of knowledge, knowledge applications and delivery of services. During the course of the last three years, NKC has reached out and widely consulted pre-eminent specialists drawn from government, academia, industry and civil society. It has submitted about 300 recommendations to the Prime Minister on a variety of areas such as Right to Education, Languages, Translation, Libraries, National Knowledge Network, Portals, Health Information Network, School Education, Higher Education, More Students in Mathematics and Science, Legal Education, Medical Education, Management Education, Engineering Education, More Quality Ph.Ds, Open and Distance Education, Open Education Resources, Intellectual Property Rights, Legal Framework for Public Funded Research, National Science and Social Science

Foundation, Innovation, Entrepreneurship, Vocational Education and Training, Traditional Health Systems, Agriculture, Enhancing Quality of Life, and E-Governance.

The government, at the central and state levels, has evinced keen interest to take NKC's recommendations forward. In particular, the UPA government's commitment to knowledge initiatives in the XIth Plan places a high priority on education as a central instrument for achieving rapid and inclusive growth, with specific emphasis on expansion, access, excellence and equity.

Yet, a lot more remains to be done. There is an urgent need for fundamental re-thinking on a variety of structural issues. With education becoming indispensable to the country's ambitions in the knowledge economy, the need for change grows more urgent with each passing day. The speed of implementation remains a pressing challenge, just as the groundswell of public opinion on the primacy of education keeps growing. There is still resistance at certain levels in the government to new developments, new ideas and change. Fortunately, knowledge transcends partisan issues and will remain a national priority. The movement towards a knowledge society is not a political one, but a journey of social and economic transformation. With the Commission's work, this journey to build a truly inclusive and qualitatively significant knowledge society for India has just begun. As NKC's tenure of three years draws to a close, the Commission believes that it has catalyzed the movement towards generational change, brought knowledge and education to the centre of national policy debate, engaged stakeholders and created space for continuing dialogue. The NKC now anticipates a mass movement at the grassroots and a demand for change from the people of India for future generations.