

National Knowledge Commission

The ability of a nation to use and create knowledge capital determines its capacity to empower and enable its citizens by increasing human capabilities. India today stands poised to reap the benefits of a rapidly growing economy and a major demographic advantage that will see the country having the largest pool of young people in the world in the next few decades. In the words of Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India, *“The time has come to create a second wave of institution building, and of excellence in the fields of education, research and capability building so that we are better prepared for the 21st century.”*

To make the best of these opportunities and respond to global challenges more strongly than ever before, India today needs a knowledge-oriented paradigm of development to give the country a competitive advantage in all fields of knowledge. The potential is tremendous, but the task of realizing it is daunting too. It is with this broad task in mind that the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) was constituted on 13th June 2005 as a high-level advisory body to the Prime Minister of India, with a mandate to guide policy and direct reforms.

NKC’s overarching aim is to transform India into a vibrant knowledge-based society. This entails a radical improvement in existing systems of knowledge as well as the creation of avenues for generating new forms of knowledge. Increased participation and a more equitable access to knowledge across all sections of society are also of vital importance in achieving these goals.

In view of this, NKC seeks to develop appropriate institutional frameworks to strengthen the education system, promote domestic research and innovation and facilitate knowledge application in sectors like health, agriculture, and industry. It also aims to leverage information and communication technologies to enhance governance and connectivity.

Its prime focus is on the on five key areas of the knowledge paradigm — access to knowledge, knowledge-concepts, knowledge-creation, knowledge-application and development of better knowledge services.

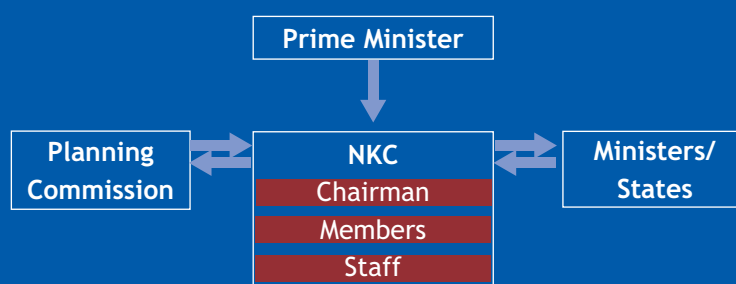
Organization

NKC consists of six members, including the Chairman. All members perform their duties on a part-time basis and do not claim any remuneration.

The Members are assisted in their duties by a small Technical Support Staff headed by an Executive Director seconded to the NKC by the government. The Commission is also free to co-opt experts to assist in the management of its tasks.

The Planning Commission is the nodal agency for the NKC for planning and budgeting purposes as well as for handling Parliament submissions or responses.

The National Steering Group for NKC is headed by the Prime Minister and includes the Ministers of Agriculture, Human Resources Development, Science & Technology, Commerce and Information Technology.



Members

Mr. Sam Pitroda: Mr. Pitroda has spent four decades in the world of telecommunications, having pioneered its use as a means to expedite the process of development and nation building, and bridge the global communications divide. His professional career has been divided between the three continents of North America, Asia and Europe, and he has received international acclaim for using telecommunications as a tool for national development.

As Adviser to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Mr. Pitroda helped to build India's telecommunications and information technology infrastructure. He was the founding Chairman of the Telecom Commission in India and headed the National Technology Missions on Drinking Water, Literacy, Immunization, Oilseeds and Dairy. In these roles, he made a notable contribution to India's developmental planning and policy approaches.

Mr. Pitroda has owned and run several companies in the United States and Europe; as an inventor he owns more than 75 patents worldwide.

Dr. P.M. Bhargava: Widely regarded as the architect of modern biology and biotechnology in India, Dr. Bhargava is Chairman of The Medically Aware and Responsible Citizens of Hyderabad, the Sambhavna Trust, Bhopal, and the Basic Research, Education and Development Society (BREAD), New Delhi.

He was the Founder-Director of the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad, President of the Society of Biological Chemists of India, President of the Indian Academy of Social Sciences, President of the Society for Scientific Values, and President of the Association

for Promotion of DNA Fingerprinting and Other DNA Technologies.

The author of over 125 major scientific publications and over 400 articles, Dr. Bhargava has headed or served on over 125 major national and international standing committees and has been connected with numerous scientific, social and cultural organizations.

He has received over 100 national and international honours and awards, including the Padma Bhushan, the *Legion d'Honneur* and the National Citizens Award (India). Dr. Bhargava has delivered over 250 invited lectures in over 60 countries and more than 1600 invited lectures in India.

Dr. Ashok Ganguly: Dr. Ganguly is the Chairman of ICICI OneSource Limited and ABP Pvt. Ltd., and a Director on the Central Board of the Reserve Bank of India, since November 2000. He heads his own consulting company, Technology Network India Pvt. Ltd.

He is a member of the Prime Minister's Council on Trade and Industry as well as the Investment Commission. Dr. Ganguly's principle professional career spanned 35 years with Unilever Plc/N.V. He was the Chairman of Hindustan Lever Ltd from 1980 to 1990 and a member of the Unilever Board from 1990 to 1997, with responsibility for world-wide research and technology.

A recipient of the Padma Bhushan and an Honorary Professor of the Chinese Academy of Science, Dr. Ganguly has authored three books – *Industry and Liberalization*, *Strategic Manufacturing for Competitive Advantage* and *Business Driven R&D - Managing Knowledge to Create Wealth*.

Dr. Jayati Ghosh: Dr. Ghosh is a Professor of Economics and Chairperson of the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and is an alumna of Delhi University, Jawaharlal Nehru University and the University of Cambridge. Her research interests include globalization, international trade and finance, employment patterns in developing countries, macroeconomic policy, and issues related to gender and development.

Her published works include *Crisis as a Conquest: Learning from East Asia*, *The Market that Failed: A Decade of Neoliberal Economic Reforms in India* and *Work and Well-being in the Age of Finance*. She was the principle author of the West Bengal Human Development Report 2004 which received the UNDP Award for excellence in analysis, and numerous academic papers. She is a regular columnist for leading journals and periodicals.

Dr. Ghosh is involved in managing several public information websites, a founder of the Economic Research Foundation, and is the Executive Secretary of International Development Economics Associates (IDEAS), an international network of heterodox development economists. She chaired the Andhra Pradesh Commission on Farmers' Welfare in 2004, and continues to be closely involved in working with progressive organizations and social movements.

Dr. Deepak Nayyar: Dr. Nayyar is a Professor of Economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University, and has taught at the universities of Oxford and Sussex, and the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta. He was Vice Chancellor of the University of Delhi from 2000 to 2005. He served as Economic Adviser in the Ministry of Commerce, Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of India and Secretary in the Ministry of Finance.

A graduate of St. Stephen's College, University of Delhi, he became a Rhodes Scholar and obtained a D.Phil in Economics from Balliol College, Oxford. He has received the VKRV Rao Award

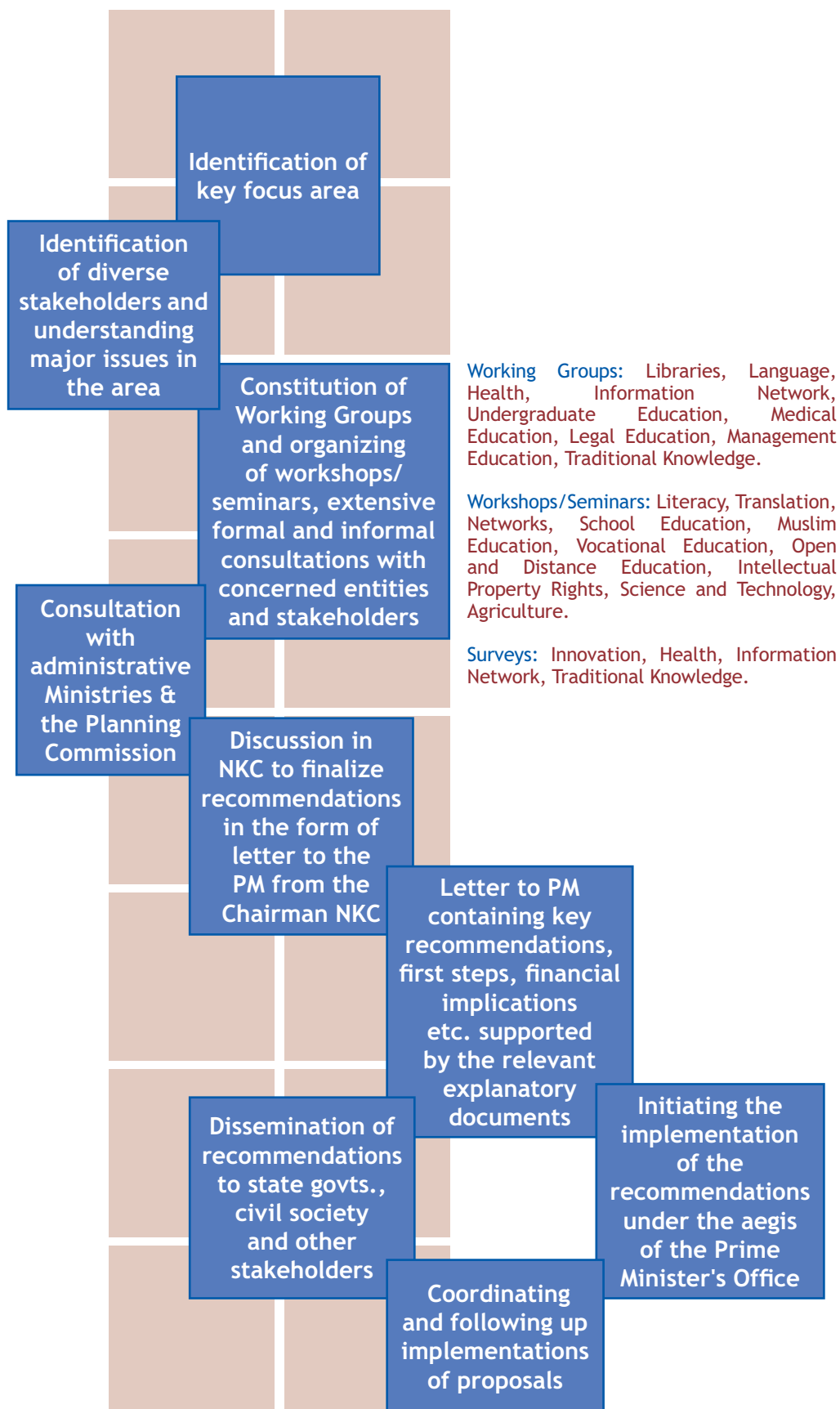
for his contribution to research in Economics. His books include *India's Exports and Export Policies*, *The Intelligent Person's Guide to Liberalization*, *Governing Globalization: Issues and Institutions* and *Migration, Remittances and Capital Flows: The Indian Experience*.

Dr. Nayyar is an Honorary Fellow of Balliol College and Chairman of the Advisory Council for the Department of International Development, Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford. He is the Vice President of the International Association of Universities, Paris and Chairman of the Board of Governors of the World Institute for Development Economics Research, Helsinki. He served as a Member of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization.

Mr. Nandan Nilekani: One of the founders of Infosys Technologies Ltd., Mr. Nilekani is its Chief Executive Officer, and was formerly its Managing Director and President.

Mr. Nilekani co-founded India's National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM). He is Vice-Chairman of The Conference Board, Inc. – an international research and business membership organization and Member of the London Business School's Asia-Pacific Regional Advisory Board. He has served as Chairman of the Government of India's IT Task Force for the power sector. He was a member of the insider trading subcommittee of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), and of the Reserve Bank of India's Advisory Group on corporate governance.

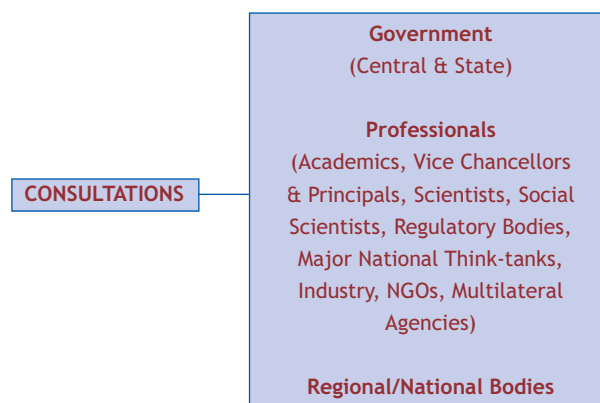
His many honours include Fortune magazine's 'Asia's Businessmen of the Year 2003' award (along with Infosys Chairman Mr. N. R. Narayana Murthy), the Corporate Citizen of the Year Award at the Asia Business Leader Awards (2004) and Padma Bhushan (2006). In 2002 and 2003, he was named among the 'World's Most Respected Business Leaders', according to a global survey by Financial Times and PricewaterhouseCoopers.



An Interactive, Consultation-based Work Methodology

The methodology followed by the National Knowledge Commission involves identification of focus areas in the first instance. This selection arises from wide consultation, within and outside the government. Thereafter, diverse stakeholders in these focus areas are identified and the major issues highlighted. Given the fact that the Government is already undertaking initiatives in some of NKC's focus areas, selection of areas also takes into account an analysis of unique value addition by the NKC. This could be either through proposing innovative solutions for conventional problems or bringing together disparate groups working on an area.

After the identification of focus areas, Working Groups of specialists and practitioners are constituted. Working Groups typically consist of between five to ten experts, and meet periodically over a period of three to four months in order to prepare a report. Working Group reports are one of the inputs used by the NKC during deliberations to frame its recommendations. In addition, workshops and seminars are held periodically along with informal consultations with concerned entities and stakeholders to get as broad-based a point of view as possible. Through this process, the NKC serves as a forum to bring together diverse opinions, in order to understand the issues in depth. For issues requiring an understanding of a very broad spectrum of experiences, a survey is undertaken. NKC has adopted different approaches for different focus areas, with the aim of setting in place a process



that is as inclusive and participatory as possible. At this stage of discussions, representatives from the relevant ministries are actively involved.

NKC Members discuss the issues raised during Consultations and in the Working Group Reports to finalize recommendations. After several rounds of deliberations, a letter is sent to the Prime Minister containing key recommendations, first steps, financial implications etc., supported by relevant explanatory documents.

Widespread dissemination of NKC recommendations to state governments, civil society and other stakeholders takes place after the recommendations have been received by the Prime Minister and the relevant ministries. The implementation of the recommendations under the aegis of the Prime Minister's Office is then initiated, along with coordination and follow up with various implementing agencies.

Five aspects of the knowledge paradigm

