

*Where the mind is without fear
and the head is held high;*

Where knowledge is free;

*Where the world has not been
broken up into fragments by narrow
domestic walls;*

*Where words come out from
the depth of truth;*

*Where tireless striving stretches its
arms towards perfection;*

*Where the clear stream of reason
has not lost its way into the dreary
desert sand of dead habit;*

*Where the mind is led forward by
thee into ever-widening thought and
action...*

*Into that heaven of freedom, my
Father, let my country awake.*

Rabindranath Tagore

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Foreword

As the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) presents its first annual report to the nation, we feel a sense of excitement at the potential that India has to emerge as one of the leading knowledge societies in the world. The Commission was set up by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to prepare a blueprint to tap into the enormous reservoir of our knowledge base so that our people can confidently face challenges of the 21st century. We are conscious that this is a daunting task, which requires not only resources and time but also a vision and a long term view. At the same time, we are happy that we have taken this first important step.

At the heart of the NKC's mandate are five key areas related to Access, Concepts, Creation, Application and Services. We have addressed the question of how to build a knowledge society from these perspectives with a particular focus on access to knowledge. Of the nine sets of recommendations made by the NKC in 2006, six deal directly with access. We have done so consciously in conformity with the UPA government's philosophy of building an inclusive society. The emerging knowledge society and associated opportunities present a set of new imperatives and new challenges for our economy, polity and society. Our future prosperity depends upon the policies, programmes and people that can foster continuous generation and application of knowledge in the pursuit of learning.

We have addressed a wide range of subjects including a comprehensive reform of higher education, overhaul of public libraries, creation of a Knowledge Network, setting up of national portals, transformation of vocational education, re-engineering of government processes and making E-governance citizen-friendly. The impact of what we have proposed would be felt over the next decade and beyond. We have taken particular care to keep the entire process democratic, transparent and participative. In doing so, we have consulted a wide range of stakeholders in government, parliament, politics, academia, industry, civil society and the media. Our recommendations reflect and incorporate the concerns and aspirations of experts and persons from the concerned spheres.

The Commission members have worked painstakingly on every aspect of our recommendations. I want to thank all members for the exceptional dedication they have brought to their mandate even though they all know that the impact of their work will be felt only in the long-term. We have had our agreements and disagreements on many issues on the table but their expression has always been in the highest traditions of democracy. I would also like to thank the members of various working groups and the secretariat for their contribution and support. I would like to particularly acknowledge the support and guidance of the Prime Minister's Office and the Planning Commission.

We hope that the work we have done during our first year will be of value to the government and will find the enthusiasm and support of the administration in its implementation. We also hope that our recommendations will receive the attention they deserve and create necessary public discussion, debate and dialogue to shape and mobilize public opinion. We say this with a focus on the 550 million people below the age of 25 who will benefit the most from the new knowledge initiatives. The destiny of India is in their hands. While making the recommendations we have been guided by how knowledge will impact the lives of people, ordinary people, of India. We are conscious that knowledge is about farmers having access to accurate information about water resources, land quality and fertilizers, students having access to schools and colleges of high quality relevant education and good jobs, scientists having access to well equipped modern libraries and laboratories, industry having access to a skilled workforce and people feeling empowered with good governance in a vibrant democracy.

The recommendations of the National Knowledge Commission are really a call to action. It is time to act here and now.

Sam Pitroda
Chairman, National Knowledge Commission

National Knowledge Commission

Terms of Reference

- Build excellence in the educational system to meet the knowledge challenges of the 21st century and increase India's competitive advantage in fields of knowledge.
- Promote creation of knowledge in Science & Technology laboratories.
- Improve the management of institutions engaged in Intellectual Property Rights.
- Promote knowledge applications in Agriculture and Industry.
- Promote the use of knowledge capabilities in making government an effective, transparent and accountable service provider to the citizen and promote widespread sharing of knowledge to maximize public benefit.

The National Knowledge Commission has a designated time-frame of three years:
from 2nd October 2005 to 2nd October 2008

This Report highlights the major initiatives taken by the National Knowledge Commission and the recommendations submitted to the Prime Minister in the first year of its inception, and gives a brief introduction to the Commission.

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