

# Foreword

The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) is pleased to submit its final Report to the Nation. It is essentially a compilation of our various reports from 2006 to 2009. The Commission was set up by the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to prepare a blueprint to tap into the enormous reservoir of our knowledge base so that our people can confidently face the challenges of the 21st century. We were conscious that this was a daunting task, which required not only resources and time, but also a bold vision and a long-term focus on speedy implementation.

At the heart of NKC's mandate are five key areas related to ACCESS, CONCEPTS, CREATION, APPLICATIONS and SERVICES. We have addressed the question of how to build a knowledge society from these perspectives, with particular focus on access to knowledge. Under these five focus areas we have covered various subjects related to Right to Education, Language, Translation, Libraries, National Knowledge Network, Portals, Health Information Network, School Education, Vocational Education and Training, Higher Education, More Students in Maths and Science, Professional 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, Traditional Health systems, Agriculture, Enhancing Quality of Life and E-governance.

In most of these areas we organised Working Groups consisting of domain experts from the government, academia, industry, civil society, media and others to make the entire process democratic, transparent and participative. The Working Groups were requested to have various consultations and prepare a white paper for discussion and debate at the Commission. Based on this methodology, a final set of recommendations was agreed upon by the majority of the members of the Commission. As a result, we believe that these recommendations reflect and incorporate the concerns

and aspirations of domain experts and other concerned stakeholders.

In the last three years NKC has submitted around 300 recommendations on 27 subjects in the form of letters to the Prime Minister. These have been widely disseminated in our Reports to the Nation, seminars, conferences, discussions and covered by national and regional media. These recommendations are also accessible through the NKC website in 10 languages. As part of our outreach program we have organised various conferences and workshops in collaboration with universities, colleges, schools, CII, FICCI, AIMA, and others. We have also been reaching out to various State Governments to discuss recommendations and associated implementation at the state level. The response from most of the states has been very good.

The UPA's commitment to NKC's Vision is reflected in the 11th Five Year Plan adopted by the National Development Council. The Plan places high priority on education as a central instrument for achieving rapid and inclusive growth with specific emphasis on expansion, excellence, and equity. This is reflected in the proposed allocation of Rs. 3 trillion, a four-fold increase over the Tenth Plan. The share of Education in the total Plan will accordingly increase from 7.7 to 20 per cent, representing a credible progress towards the target of 6 per cent of GDP. The vision of the Prime Minister and support of our leadership from across the political spectrum is indeed laudable. This is a landmark initiative in the history of government planning. We believe that the education agenda outlined in the 11th Plan is a critical step towards realising the objective of an equitable society. It is also fundamental to our continuing growth, employment generation, infrastructure development and other developmental priorities.

While releasing the first NKC Report to the Nation in January 12 2007, the PM emphasised that the Commission "must be involved in ensuring the implementation of their innovative ideas". The focus of

our work has been on ensuring that while the Central Government designs appropriate strategies supported by financial allocations to implement our recommendations, we engage simultaneously with diverse stakeholders to build a groundswell of favourable opinion and assist preparation of implementation strategies at the grassroots. Continuing dialogue with a wide and diverse set of stakeholders has been a critical part of our process, both in the formulation of the recommendations and in the subsequent dissemination.

Regarding implementation, we find that there is indeed a great deal of enthusiasm and emphasis on education as a means of achieving personal growth and development. The growing aspirations of children and parents across the cross-section of society are reflected in an increasing demand for education, which has far exceeded the supply. There is still resistance at various levels in the government to new ideas, experimentation, process re-engineering, external interventions, transparency and accountability, due to rigid organisational structures with territorial mindsets. As a result, the real challenge lies in organisational innovation with new regulatory frameworks, new delivery systems and new processes. In their absence, increasing resources could well result in more of the same things being replicated. Our country is too large, too complex and too diverse for 'one size fits all' solutions. Decentralisation and community participation at the local level would be the key to devising effective programs for implementation.

We hope that our recommendations find enthusiasm and support at various levels at State and Central Government for speedy implementation. We believe that implementation is the key in going forward to address the three fundamental challenges related to demography, disparity and development. Knowledge, education, and innovations are critical to provide opportunities for the poor and underprivileged to reduce disparities in our

society. These are equally important to expedite the process of development and to improve productivity, efficiency, and reduce cost. To get the real demographic dividends we need to empower and educate the 550 million young below the age of 25 through proper education to build future growth and prosperity. The destiny of India is in their hands.

While making the recommendations we have been guided by how knowledge will impact the lives of ordinary people of India. We are conscious that knowledge is about farmers having access to accurate information about water, land, weather and fertilisers; students having access to quality education and jobs; scientists having access to laboratories; industry having access to skilled work force; and people feeling empowered with good governance in a vibrant democracy.

Finally, I want to thank all the members and our young associates for their exceptional hard work, dedication and ongoing support. I would also like to thank the members of various Working Groups and workshops, the Planning Commission, the Prime Minister's Office, and various other individuals and organisations in the government and industry for their contribution and support.

As we have said in the past, the recommendations of the National Knowledge Commission are really a call to action. It is time to act and implement these recommendations now.

**Sam Pitroda**  
Chairman  
National Knowledge Commission