



The Canadian Trade Commissioner Service

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India NewsWatch: Education Sector

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EDUCATION

Community colleges equipping learners

The Times of India, April 22, 2013

New Delhi: In February, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), announced the launch of around 200 community colleges from the 2013 academic session.

Community Colleges (CC) have been in India for some time now. However, these colleges have not yet emerged as an alternative system to the traditional universities. Taking cognisance of this, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), along with the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), has announced the launch of 200 CC across the country under the National Vocational Education Qualifications Framework (NVEQF) programme. The pilot CCs aim at improving employable skills of learners, providing them opportunities for flexible quality learning at low cost, multiple exit-entry and community based lifelong learning.

Elaborates BK Bhadri, assistant education advisor, MHRD, "These colleges would function from existing colleges/polytechnics, which have been identified by the state/union territories. Combining skills with general education, they will offer modular credit-based programmes relevant to the local employment market with active industry involvement in terms of design, development and delivery of the curriculum including hands-on practical training. While the general education component will conform to university norms, the vocational component will conform to the NVEQF."

Pardeep Sahni, nodal officer, Community College Unit of Iguou, adds: "The NVEQF scheme has 10 levels. Levels 1-4 are up to class XII, 5-7 complement the graduation programme, levels 8 and 9 are those of the Master's level and level 10 is equivalent to the doctoral level. A common

curriculum has been fixed and the focus of each year is on skill component as well as general education. Within each year the hours for skill development as well general education have been allocated. With each level, the component of skill/vocational education increases and that of general education decreases."

Colleges will consult industry through the Sector Skill Council (SSC), constituted by National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), for development of curriculum and evaluation of skills. However, till SSCs prescriptions are available, the pilot CCs will develop their curriculum on the lines of the model curriculum in 12 sectors developed by AICTE in consultation with the relevant industry. Speaking of the student profile that these colleges will attract, Bhadri says, "The colleges will cover all age and qualification groups, i.e., persons with no formal academic qualification, school drop-outs, high school and diploma-holders, etc.

However, at the pilot stage it may focus on students who have completed class XII, i.e., levels 5-7 of the NVEQF." In order to ensure the sustainability of the scheme, a committee comprising nine education ministers, headed by Archana Chitnis, minister of school education, Madhya Pradesh, visited the US to study the community college model.

Speaking on the findings of the committee, Bhadri says, "The team observed that the CC system has been working well in the US for the last 50 years. However, all its features cannot be imported to India due to the socio-economic and socio-cultural differences that the two countries have in spite of several similarities." The committee, accordingly, emphasised that the pilot CC should meet the contemporary needs of the community/society and the nation at large.

Some of the important recommendations of the committee include the award of certificate, diplomas, advanced diplomas and associate degrees, the dovetailing of the courses with the levels of the NVEQF to facilitate mobility between general and vocational education by bridging the credit gap, and adequate laboratory/ workshop facilities in colleges.

***TCS Insights:** Due to India's desire to create 500 million skilled workers by 2020, the country has allocated Rs. 1,000 crore (approximately CAD 190 million) in the current 2013-14 budget; the total amount is likely to increase in the coming years.*

Canada was invited in February 2013 by the Government of India to attend an international conference on this initiative as the Ministry of Human Resources Development is looking for country partners in the initial phase of the development of these colleges.

The Canadian Trade Commissioner Service is working closely with the Association of Canadian Community Colleges to explore these opportunities. There is scope for expertise from Canadian community colleges to partner with the identified pilot community colleges.

ITC, IL&FS Education, others in shortlist for opening model schools

Mint, April 23, 2013

Hyderabad: The government has short-listed 65 private organizations, including ITC Ltd and IL&FS Education and Technology Services Ltd, to open so-called model schools.

The move, coming after four years of deliberations, is a crucial first step towards partnering with private organizations to open schools, the human resource development (HRD) ministry said.

"This is a key decision and tells that we have completed due diligence in selecting private partners. It's the beginning of a long pending work which is good for the school sector," said an HRD ministry official, requesting anonymity.

The ministry has issued a notification naming short-listed organizations that includes private firms, education trusts, foundations of corporate houses and non-government organizations. Among these are Zee Learn Ltd, Everonn Education Ltd, Educomp Solutions Ltd, Jindal Education and Welfare Society, and Core Education and Technologies Ltd.

The ministry is set to issue fresh request for qualification documents to involve more private entities in the scheme, it said in its notice, which *Mint* has reviewed.

R.C.M. Reddy, managing director and chief executive of IL&FS Education, said government partnering with private

entities will "create higher delivery capacity" in the school sector.

"We as a group feel that PPP (public-private partnership) in education is equally important, the way it is in power or road sectors," Reddy said.

With both the HRD ministry and the Planning Commission approving the framework document on model schools, Reddy said he expects the scheme to pick up quickly.

The ministry and the planning body met several industry leaders including ITC chairman Y.C.

Deveshwar and Maruti Suzuki India Ltd chairman R.C. Bhargava in September to discuss the scheme and persuade them to participate in the schools sector.

India's school segment was valued at \$44 billion (Rs.2.4 trillion) in 2011 and is expected to reach \$144 billion by 2020, according to consulting firm Technopak Advisors Pvt. Ltd.

Under the model school scheme, the government aims to set up 6,000 model schools akin to Kendriya Vidyalayas (Central Schools). Of these, 2,500 will be set up with private partnership and the rest by the government with the support of state governments. While the government will set up these model schools in economically backward areas, the PPP schools will come up in richer blocks.

"The principal objective of this scheme is to set up... schools, for providing access to quality education to the rural children," another HRD ministry document.

For a pilot phase, the government has shortlisted 39 blocks where these schools will come up.

Private entities will procure the land, and design, develop, operate and manage the schools. The government will offer a 25% infrastructure grant and the recurring cost of education for students sponsored by it, according to the ministry.

Under the Right to Education Act that promotes compulsory schooling, at least 25% of a school's students can belong to underprivileged families and are entitled to free education.

The government will pay for their schooling.

***TCS Insights:** Various universities and schools will provide a fertile ground for partnership and collaboration with the 65 private organizations selected for starting the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model schools.*

The Canadian Trade Commissioner Service education team has connections to several of the organizations cited in the article and is happy to make introductions.

With AICTE nod, corporate houses set to start engineering colleges

The Indian Express, April 9, 2013

New Delhi: For the first time, the All India Council for Technical Education has decided to allow private corporate groups to start degree colleges in the 2013-14 academic year.

It has received applications from four corporate groups so far — Madras Cements from Tamil Nadu, Bharat Forge from Maharashtra, TechMahindra (Satyam Computers taken over by Mahindra & Mahindra) from Andhra Pradesh, and a company from Jharkhand.

"A total of four companies have applied in the first year. A decision will have to be taken soon," confirmed AICTE chairman S S Mantha. "We want industries to participate in the process of delivering quality education. We genuinely feel that the industry should participate more than they are doing now. An initiative like this is a step in that direction. It will facilitate introduction of best practices of the industry," he said.

So far, the industry was only involved in organising lectures and specific projects at AICTE-approved technical colleges. The AICTE's decision to allow a private limited or public limited company or industry, with a turnover of Rs 100 crore each year for the past three years, to start an under-graduate, post-graduate or diploma institute, is aimed at addressing the corporate sector's complaints that students graduating from technical institutes are not industry-ready or employable.

When contacted, A V Dharmakrishnan, chief executive officer, Madras Cements, said: "Madras Cements currently has schools across its factories in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. We also have a polytechnic institute from where we recruit. The only missing link is an engineering institute. We need a lot of manpower and we felt that this is the right time to start an engineering college as we already have the expertise. The construction of the college building has started and AICTE officials have inspected the site. We are expecting approval soon."

The college, which will be named Ramco Institute of Technology, will offer programmes in core engineering disciplines like mechanical, civil, electrical, electronics and communication, and computer science, he said.

The AICTE will allow a company to start any branch of a discipline that suits its requirement. The institutes could offer technical disciplines like engineering and technology, pharmacy, architecture and town planning, applied arts and crafts and hotel management and catering technology (HMCT).

A senior academic from the IIT system said that while the response has not been huge, it is a good start. "More industries should definitely be part of the higher education system," said the academic.

***TCS Insights:** Public-Private Partnerships are seen as an increasingly interesting option for prospective tie-ups in the Indian market. With the official nod from AICTE, Canadian universities offering engineering courses can partner with the Indian corporate groups in setting up engineering institutes in India.*

Canadian universities and institutes can look for both long term and short term partnerships in the field of purveying expertise, infrastructure, student exchange programs, and so on, for undergraduate, post-graduate or diploma courses in engineering.

IIM-A is Toughest B-School to Get Into

Bloomberg Businessweek, Hyderabad, April 23, 2013

Hyderabad: Find the acceptance rates for MBA programs at Stanford University (7 percent) and Harvard University (13 percent) terrifying? Here's a bit of perspective: Not even 1 percent of applicants were admitted to India's top business school last year.

The Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad (IIM-A) offered spots to only 0.25 percent of applicants for the 2012-14 academic years. Entry is based heavily on their performance in India's Common Admission Test, or CAT. Applicants who were admitted to the school and also took the U.S.-based GMAT bested business students the world over: The minimum GMAT score for students in IIM-A's postgraduate program in management, equivalent to a two-year MBA program, was 770, compared with an average score of 730 at Stanford's Graduate School of Business, according to data reported by 200 global B-schools to QS Quacquarelli Symonds, a London-based researcher. (Stanford is the most selective U.S. MBA program, according to *Bloomberg Businessweek* data.) "Competition in India is so intense. So many kids have outstanding grades," says QS Quacquarelli Symonds founder Nunzio Quacquarelli. "The application to acceptance rate probably makes [IIM-A] the most competitive business school in the world."

The institute received 173,866 applications for 2012-14, vs. 6,618 for Stanford's Class of 2013. "India's population is so large, particularly among young people, it's easy for [IIM-A] to have the luxury of making one huge cut" based on test scores, says Graham Richmond, co-founder of Clear Admit, an MBA admissions consulting firm in Philadelphia.

While the CAT makes the task of winnowing applicants easier, some question whether the process is the best predictor of business aptitude. Tushar Dubish, an undergrad computer science and engineering student at the Indian Institute of

Technology in Mandi, doesn't plan on applying to IIM-A and will instead shoot for Harvard Business School and the Yale School of Management, among other programs outside India. Dublisch, 20, says the pressure of doing well on the CAT isn't what bothers him. It's the notion that his score on a single exam—not his background, achievements, and other qualities—would determine his fate.

Quacquarelli says test-centric admissions may also mean less diversity. According to statistics compiled by his firm, the vast majority of students at IIM-A have engineering backgrounds, and just 17 percent of those admitted in 2012 were women. At Stanford, the figure is 35 percent, according to data gathered by *Bloomberg Businessweek*. "We value diversity in the student body and pursue that within the constraints of a selection process that has to be transparent, publicly defensible, and accommodate one of the largest applicant pools in the world," says IIM-A professor Sarin Ankar.

To distinguish himself from other Indian applicants to U.S. B-schools, Dublisch is studying in Sweden. He interned at

ShopClues, an e-commerce start-up based in Gurgaon, India, over the winter break and has lined up an internship at Microsoft in Hyderabad for the summer. "Don't you think working on oneself is much better than working for an exam that you will forget in a couple of years?" he asks.

The bottom line: *India's top business school is harder to get into than the most selective U.S. MBA program, but diversity is lacking.*

TCS Insights: *The MBA is one of the most popular courses in India. As this article highlights, there are issues concerning the competitiveness of the Common Admission Test (CAT), the eligibility test for admission to top domestic management schools and institutes. Last year, a total of 173,866 students took the CAT. While only a select few qualify for admission to these top-notch institutions, many of the remaining students may be prospective candidates for MBA courses in foreign countries such as Canada.*

For more information on Education Sector consult
Education Sector Profile - India
(see <http://www.tradecommissioner.gc.ca/India>)

Want to know more? Contact the Education Sector Team in India at
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