

## **FICCI Higher Education Summit 2012 5-6 November, 2012, FICCI, New Delhi**

### **Talking Point for Dr Shashi Tharoor, MoS, MHRD, Gol**

Hon'ble Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, Canada, Mr Ed Fast

Mr Sidharth Kumar Birla, Vice President, FICCI

Mr Shiv Nadar, Founder and Chairman, HCL & Shiv Nadar Foundation

Dr Philip G. Altbach, Monan Professor of Higher Education, Director, Center for International Higher Education, Boston College

Mr Pawan Agarwal, Adviser (HE), Planning Commission and Honorary Adviser-FICCI Higher Education Committee

Prof M Anandakrishnan, Chairman-FICCI Higher Education Committee

Mr Avinash Vashishtha & Prof Rajan Saxena, Co-chairs FICCI Higher Education Committee

Dr A Didar Singh, Secretary General, FICCI

Ladies & Gentleman

- 8th FICCI Higher Education Summit 2012 a two day Global Conference, is one of FICCI's Flagship events and is being held on November 5 &6, 2012 at FICCI New Delhi supported by MHRD, Gol and Planning Commission. This year's theme is Indian Higher Education: Quest for Quality. The Agenda of the Summit developed keeping in mind the issues delineated by Planning Commission in the 12th Plan on Higher Education.
- It has emerged as one of the largest international forum on Higher Education in Asia and is being organized since 2004. The intent to bring together key policy makers, educationists and corporate at both national and international level for deliberation and interactions that leads to knowledge sharing, identification of policy and practice imperatives and action plan for the way forward.
- Some of the highlights this year are;
  - More than 650 delegates. About 50 international delegates from 12 countries, viz UK, USA, Canada, Japan, Germany, Scotland, Mozambique, China, The Netherlands, South Africa, UAE, Afghanistan

- Exhibition
  - Poster presentation
  - CEO's Roundtable
- Education is the most important lever for social, economic and political transformation. A well educated population, equipped with the relevant knowledge, attitudes and skills is essential for economic and social development in the twenty-first century.
  - India is one of the largest higher education systems in the world and ranks second in terms of student enrollment exhibiting healthy growth in the number of institutions and enrollment over the decades. (659 universities, 33000 colleges and 18% Gross enrollment Ratio (GER)). However, we still lag behind with low Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) of 20% compared with 84% in the US, 59% in the UK, 55% in Japan, and 28% in China.
  - Although the Eleventh Plan saw nine fold increase in the public spend which fueled significant inclusive expansion in the public higher education sector. Yet our spending is much lower at 1.1% of GDP compared to US spends at 3.1% while South Korea spends 2.4% of its GDP. To meet the public fund deficiency and bring in private sector investment robust institutional and policy framework for Public Private Partnership (PPP) should be implemented during the XIIth Plan.
  - The demand for quality skilled workforce and an environment for impending policy and regulatory change encouraged greater private sector participation. Private unaided institutions and universities are the fastest growing segment of Indian higher education and accounts for 59% share of total enrollments in 2012. We do understand that self financing institutions are constraints for resource generation due the typical Trust and society structure.
    - For rationalization of student financing and education financing mechanism, top priority will be accorded to the setting up of National Higher Education Finance Corporation (NHEFC) in the 12th Five Year Plan.
    - Further, work with the States to create a conducive environment and remove entry barriers for private providers.
  - But the biggest challenge is that there has been no significant improvement in terms of quality of higher education delivery. The issues of skill gaps, skill shortages and unemployable graduates still persist.
    - A study of infrastructure quality of 1471 colleges and 111 universities by UGC revealed that 73% of colleges and 68% of universities fall under medium or low quality

- According to statistics from the MHRD, GoI, the student to teacher ratio in an average higher education institution is 26:1, compared to the norm of 15:1.
  - As of March 2011, only 161 universities and 4,371 colleges had been accredited by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC).
  - India's share in global research output is much low at 3.5%
  - No Indian college or university ranks among the top 300 of the prestigious Times Higher Education Supplement (THES) which is based on peer evaluations whereas China has 23 institutions in the Top 500.
  - A World Bank-FICCI Survey in 2009 highlights that only 64% of employers are somewhat satisfied with new graduates passing out of Indian Engineering institutions.
- For India to sustain its growth momentum and to strengthen its competitiveness, a world-class higher education system is an important pre-requisite. Global experiences indicate a positive correlation between GER and economic growth in a country and point to the need for a minimum of 30% GER to sustain economic growth. To meet this minimum requirement there has to be a sharp improvement in the quality and quantity of institutions of higher education to match standards in a globalized modern higher education system. This will require significant investment and focus on faculty and research. The government will expedite the work on setting up of National Mission for Faculty Development. We would also work towards putting the reform agenda back on track.
  - The corporate sector is a key stakeholder in higher education. It can play a pivotal role in improving India's current higher education system as well as in meeting future aspirations. Corporations can collaborate with the academia in several ways, with varying funding commitment, ranging from direct ownership and management of institutions to collaborating with the higher education institutions in research, faculty development, infrastructure creation, student scholarships, and governance. The recommendation by the Narayan Murthy Committee to set up the 'Council for Industry and Higher Education Collaboration (CIHEC), to facilitate industry-institute collaborations is indeed the way forward and government will certainly support this intervention.
  - I am happy to learn that deliberations in the summit will focus on developing the strategies required to improve quality across all parameters of higher education delivery to impart appropriate skills, knowledge and value systems to our youth. I will look forward to the recommendations emerging from this conference.