

Outcome Report of
Roundtables and Recommendations
on New Education Policy

October 2015

Disclaimer: This report is a summary of discussions on February 17, June 18 and September 21, 2015 and should not be construed as consensus of all participants at the roundtables.

1. Backdrop

In light of the fact that Government of India is in the process of formulating the New Education Policy, CUTS International embarked upon the endeavour to collate credible inputs for the same in the month of February 2015 under the aegis of CUTS International Public Policy Centre (CIPPoIC), which amongst other areas also works on Education Reforms (<http://www.cippolc.in/>).

Three roundtables were conducted and organised by CIPPoIC to gather inputs for the policy beginning in the month of February 2015 and culminating in the month of September 2015.

The first Roundtable Discussion was organised on 17th February 2015 in Jaipur and was chaired by Professor Vijay Vyas, Professor Emeritus, Institute of Development Studies. The list of participants were drawn mainly from the state of Rajasthan and comprised of 21 experts from both school education and higher education realms. Detailed report of the proceedings at this roundtable can be accessed here http://www.cippolc.in/pdf/Report-Roundtable_on_Education_Reforms_in_India.pdf

The second Roundtable Discussion was held on 18th June 2015 in New Delhi and was chaired by Prof S.K. Thorat, Chairman, Indian Council of Social Science Research, with keynote address by Prof. C. Raj Kumar, Vice Chancellor, O.P. Jindal Global University, Prof. J. S. Rajput, Former Chairman NCTE and Former Director NCERT and Mr. Sanjay Bhargava, Chairman, Shiksha Mandal, Wardha. Nearly 40 experts participated in the discussion comprising policy makers, researchers, academia, civil society and media. To facilitate the discussion CIPPoIC also prepared a draft discussion paper which can be accessed here http://www.cippolc.in/pdf/Discussion_Paper_on_Education_Policy.pdf. Detailed report of the proceedings at this roundtable can be accessed here http://www.cippolc.in/pdf/Report-Roundtable_on_New_Education_Policy_of_India.pdf

The third Roundtable Discussion was held on 21st September 2015 in collaboration with UNESCO, New Delhi. This roundtable discussion was opened by **Dr Satya Narayan Jatiya, Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development**. 48 participants contributed their expert views to this roundtable including Members of Parliament, Government Officials, representatives of NITI Aayog, representatives of prominent universities, think tanks, World Bank and UN officials, amongst others. Detailed report of the proceedings at this roundtable can be accessed here http://www.cippolc.in/pdf/UNESCO-CUTS_Roundtable_on_New_Education_Policy.pdf

2. Key recommendations from the Roundtable Discussions

The recommendations that emerged from the three roundtable discussions pertain to the pre-primary education, school education and higher education. These recommendations related to the 33 themes identified by the Union Government and on areas which have substantial bearing on those 33 themes.

The following are the recommendations from all the three Roundtable discussions. It is urged that policy takes into account these well informed recommendations.

2.1 Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

1. ECCE is a basic right of children and especially for communities in margin. Therefore there is a need for linking ECCE with school education. Presently, cognate areas of pre-primary education and school education are handled by two ministries namely Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD).
2. ECCE needs special attention in urban areas.
3. With respect to policy formulation, there needs to be continuity in planning by focusing ECCE Policy and curriculum with National Education Policy, National Curriculum Framework and Teacher Education.
4. The Supreme Court, in its judgment in the J. P. Unnikrishnan v. the State of Andhra Pradesh case (A.I.R. 1993 SC 2178) has held that children under the age of 14 have the fundamental right to free education. One important aspect of this judgment is that the fundamental right to education must also be extended to pre-primary education.
5. ECCE should also be a part of teacher education curricula and policy to ensure that professional education is imparted to ECCE practitioners and the quality regulation norms are at par with norms at school education level.

2.2 School Education

1. Policy must balance the objectives of socialist economy and market based economy

Increasing integration with the global economy is increasingly diluting the socialist framework to a more market based economy. Notwithstanding these developments, the Constitution of India still envisages India to be a socialist country. Therefore, the policy must balance the purpose of education between these realities.

2. Need to take into account relevant features and implementation failures of past polices.

There is a lack of evidence with regards to the need for a new education policy. This is because there is insufficient analyses of past polices, their objectives and failures in implementation of those objectives. For instance, even today most recommendations of the Kothari Commission stand valid and should be considered for implementation. The Common School System as recommended by the Kothari Commission (1964-66), for securing equity and social justice in education is one such example¹. This mandates a review of past polices to identify the policy prescriptions in those polices

¹ *[The Common School System was originally advocated under the chairmanship of Dr.DS Kothari. NPE, 1968 accepted the recommendation of the Kothari Commission for bringing about the Common School System. In the context of the national system of education, NPE, 1986 restated the determination of the Government to take effective measures in the direction of the Common School System. The concept of national system of education would imply, according to NPE 1986, that, upto a given level, all students, irrespective of caste, creed, location, or sex, have access to education of comparable quality. The NPERC noted that the Common School System still remained a concept even though mooted by the Kothari Commission over a quarter of a century ago and*

which are relevant even today. Further, reasons for the failure in their implementation need to be identified and the future policy must spell out a clear time bound roadmap for their implementation.

3. Need to improve human capital indicators in a mission mode

If we see the successful growth stories from other countries in the world, health care and education are two of the most critical areas which can contribute to creating a healthy and smart work force or human capital. A recent World Economic Forum global Human Capital Index has put India at the 100th position in a survey of 124 countries. The list has been compiled on the basis of 46 indicators about how well countries are developing and deploying their human capital, focusing on education, skills and employment. Among BRICS countries, Russia is at 26th, followed by China at 64th, Brazil at 78th and South Africa at 92nd. Like the Government's hectic efforts to improve our Doing Business indicators to reach 50th rank from the current rank of 142 in 189 countries, the Government of India should also set a target to reach a similar ranking in Human Capital Index in the near future.

The New Education Policy must spell out well defined and time bound goals such as improving the human capital indicators. However in doing so following recommendations must be considered.

4. Recommendations based on 2005 Global Monitoring Report

India is at the cusp where much focus is being accorded to skills necessary for economic growth. An inherent danger with disproportionate focus on this goal is likely to create an environment of monitoring and regulation which could undermine the basics needed for learning. As with all aspects of development, a balance should be struck between ensuring the relevance of education to the socio-cultural realities of learners, to their aspirations, and to the wellbeing of the nation. Specific recommendations in this regard would therefore entail:

- Avoid standardisation of cognitive skills as it will create distortion in measurements
- Group or collective learning must be encouraged instead of individual ranking of learners
- Learning indicators prepared and tried out in 2008 for MHRD for primary level may be looked into to improve overall development of learners
- Maintain a balance between focus on skills for economy, socio-cultural realities and aspirations of learners
- Teacher training must be designed to include the above stated recommendations
- If benchmarking of states and the country is taken across different parameters then it must be borne in mind that such benchmarking does not have any adverse effect on the learner and it should not undermine widely accepted learning theories.

5. The policy needs to define quality education

expressed the view that the educational disparities are being further accentuated by the failure to implement the Common School System. The NPERC advocated concrete steps to translate the concept into a reality.]

When speaking of quality unfortunately the main focus is only accorded to learning outcomes whereas quality is the combination of inputs, processes and outcomes which may include infrastructure, teacher, classrooms, school functioning, student teacher interaction, assessments, school environment, curriculum, learning outcomes, retention rates, dropout rates and age appropriate completion. While redefining quality the policy must spell out correlation between each one of these elements.

Further with regards to learning, different aspects of learning must be taken into consideration such as learning for development of identity, for development of the capacity to live in the society and development of skills or even for development of learning capacities. In this regard further recourse should be had to domains such as physical well-being; social and emotional aspect; culture and arts; literacy and communication; learning approaches and cognition; numeracy and mathematics and science and technology. Further NCF 2005 is also instructive in this regard and it may be revisited to define quality in addition to the above.

This should be done in the backdrop of a national blueprint which should be spelt out in the policy and must cover a broad range of objectives. In other words, blueprint should not be narrow and parochial to include only specific aims such as skills necessary for economic growth.

6. Recommendations on Assessments

Assessments should be culturally sensitive and should focus on understanding of learner rather than learning outcome alone. This is because credible empirical studies have shown that learning in India is mostly by rote. This will be well in line with agreed upon Sustainable Development Goals which require high order of thinking rather than mere rote learning amongst learners.

National assessments and state assessments have been mandated in the last one year but these are not mapped to pedagogy or curriculum and neither are they developed in a way that can provide feedback into these aspects. Therefore there is a need to lay out a roadmap for assessments taking into account how they can generate credible feedback into curriculum and pedagogy and other such important aspects having bearing on understanding ability of the learner. This will facilitate a shift from an approach of monitoring to meaningful diagnosis.

7. Need to have clear definitions

There is a need for formulating clear definitions. For example, definition for Out of School Children is not very clear at the moment. It is important to have clear definitions in order to get accurate data for better monitoring.

8. Need to improve measurement systems

Policy is no good without implementation. Therefore for better implementation the following aspects must be considered:

- Data should be made more relevant. Currently DISE and NSSO data is not very relevant for the states and enrolment data is mostly biased.

- Multiple data sources should be referred to in order to cross validate the data and to ensure reliability.
- Data users should be able to communicate with data collectors with regards to the data gaps and data should be used not just by planners but by those carrying out monitoring process as well.
- Indicators should be kept to minimum but at same time should not compromise upon essential elements.
- Monitoring must entail monitoring across the entire spectrum of quality education
- Strong monitoring capacity should be developed at the sub national level
- Data collection should be for both qualitative and quantitative indicators
- Not all quantity indicators may be easily quantifiable. Therefore, a system to record and report qualitative indicators also needs to be put in place.

9. Role of Panchayat Raj Institutions

Village Education Committee (VEC) and School Management Committee (SMC) should be embedded in the PRI system making them more responsible to the Gram Sabha rather than being accountable to parents who are out of depth due their own limited education.

Primary school teachers should be recruited from the village as the first preference and if not available then recruitment should be from the block and district level and as a last option it should be done by state governments. Such a system would be less expensive and more accountable.

If the supervisory system is embedded in PRI measuring quality would also be affected. It would be easier for someone belonging to the village and who is voluntarily involved in the village committee to carry out formalities that statisticians require.

In the above context, the government is well advised to refer to 2013 report titled 'Towards holistic Panchayat Raj - Leveraging Panchayats for Efficient Delivery of Public Goods and Services'

10. Need to have early education in mother tongue

Multilingualism in India has played a crucial role in shaping its education dynamics. Research has shown that children first language is the optimal language for literacy and learning throughout primary school (UNESCO, 2008a). In this regards, learning in mother tongue should be accorded greater importance. Experience has also shown that children whose mother tongue is not the language of instruction in school are more likely to drop out of school or not succeed in early grades. On the other hand learning in mother tongue would lead to enhanced understanding and comprehending skills thereby creating a hospitable environment for children to learn and would also lead to overall progress in the education sector.

11. Lessons from International experiences

- The countries that have succeeded in delivering quality education are the ones spending 6% of GDP and/or 20% budgetary allocation on education sector. There is a strong argument that there is no reason why this formula will not work in India. India could do well to learn

from a country like Brazil in this regard because Brazil has clear constitutional provision of 20% of budget to be allocated for education and not only it is implemented but it has also shown impressive results.

- Maldives has done a curriculum reform and introduced a new theory of measurement. It focusses not just on cognitive aspect but takes into consideration other aspects such as monitoring by teacher as to how child is behaving, his/her health, compliance with homework and other such aspects that complement the cognitive development. The model can be studied in further detail to learn relevant lessons.
- With regards to assessments, there is a need to learn from assessment frameworks of other similarly placed countries as India in order to continuously improve the science of assessments and not just the technique. India must take a lead in the creation of a regional assessment hub in the South Asian region.
- International experiences have demonstrated that citizen participation and role of civil society is critical in demanding accountability. For this purpose recommendation # 8 under this section must be considered.
- International experiences have established that getting the policy right requires a systematic mechanism to ensure delivery. Policies need to be not just conceived but designed, structured and implemented which requires a greater degree of understanding of how the system works. For this purpose recommendation # 13 in this section must be considered.

12. Need to link public funding to outcomes

At the international level, one would observe that countries which have typically spent 6% of the GDP or 20 % of the budget on the education sector have achieved better results on quality. As discussed above, the case of Brazil is one such example. In the Indian context, even though the past policies envisaged a public spending of 6% of GDP, it has never been achieved. The public spending in India on education has only peaked at approximately 4%. On the other hand, nearly 70 % of the spending in the sector has been undertaken by states. Moreover, this spending has seen a steady rise over the years yet the improvement in crucial areas like access and learning outcomes has been insignificant.

In light of the above, it appears that public funding on education sector is not entirely linked to the outcomes. Therefore there is a need to create a more accountable framework for public funding.

It is also recommended that progressive taxation would be an appropriate way to provide adequate public funds for education. This is particularly relevant because the recent steps taken by the GoI indicate that there will be reduced funding from the Union Government to the states on Centrally Sponsored scheme on education and related sectors but since states are differently placed in varied contexts, this discussion assumes special significance. For instance, from recent statements of Union Minister of Women and Child Development it appears that budget cuts have hurt fight against

malnutrition. In turn this may have adverse impact on early childhood development and in the ultimate analysis on the quality aspect of education.

13. Role of NITI Aayog

- NITI Aayog can help in formulation of credible plans at the village level. In this context it may be wise to capitalise the momentum generated through the consultation process for policy formulation.
- NITI Aayog can also support learning goals and independent monitoring outcomes. The newly established Development and Monitoring Office (DMEO) can be instrumental in this regard.
- Further the DMEO must also ensure that adequate capacities are built to enhance data usage and not just collection. A special cell for monitoring education at the state level must be constituted to increase the usage of data for better planning. In this regard a leaf can be taken from national and international experience that India can learn from. This document can be instructive in this regard http://www.cippolc.in/pdf/Is_There_an_Opportunity_to_Develop_a_Whole_of_Government_M&E_Framework_in_India.pdf
- Further NITI Aayog can also be instrumental in developing Learning Data Management systems for better data use by stakeholders
- The Aayog can also assist in providing supportive environment for evaluation of innovative practices, and sharing of best practices across states
- NITI Aayog can also facilitate in partnerships between key stakeholders national and international think tanks, educational and policy research institutions and can offer problem sharing and solving platform.
- Further the Aayog can also be instrumental in coordinating and facilitating the mapping of physical and human resources and convergence among programmes at the state level
- The Aayog can also be instrumental in laying out a framework for engagement of private sector and common schooling : sharing of resources between private and public schools at the state level

14. Education in the realm Cooperative and Competitive Federalism

GoI has taken significant steps to usher in Cooperative and Competitive Federalism. In the education sector this can be done by having states compete in order to provide best possible outcome. So that states adhere to national objectives, a system of measurement of their performance in the sector will be useful at the national level. However if such a system is to be in place, the following points must be borne in mind:

- Care should be taken that benchmarking of states does not lead to manipulation of data by the states as states are likely understate their performance in order to get more central resources while on the other hand they may inflate their achievement for electoral gains.
- State specific conditions and systems must be taken into consideration. For this purpose lessons can be learnt from UNESCO's International Standards of Classification of Education (ISCED). In the Indian context it can be done by mapping state specific education programmes, different criteria such as entry levels, education structure, the envisaged pathways etc. This will allow measurement of the comparable indicators.

In other words, state specific data on a particular indicator (such as entry level for primary education) even though it may be different across states will help in better comparison. Again NITI Aayog can be instrumental in this regard.

Additionally the following approach is also recommended:

Each state across the country can develop its own theory of change. Similarly processes can also be mapped out to achieve the desired objective. Theories of change across these states may not be identical nevertheless from different theories a common theory can be culled out and some of the major indicators that are common across these theories of change can be identified and those can be used to compare the effectiveness of educational programmes of each state. In this regard however concerns highlighted under GMR 2005 report must be taken into account and a middle path has to be found.

15. Need to strengthen no detention policy and CCE improving elements such as assessments and pedagogy

No detention policy envisaged under Right to Education Act needs to be revisited. This is because, theoretically, the policy is an ideal pedagogical instrument but can only work under certain conditions such as with availability of good teachers and better infrastructure to enable improved learning. No detention policy needs to entail a stronger assessment system strengthening the competitive edge of children.

In this context, it may also be noted that Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) was introduced in the Central Government schools. It is mandatory for teachers to learn and practice "assessment for learning" and "assessment of learning". Teacher education colleges should ensure that teacher education is well integrated with the requirements of CCE. However since promotion largely depends on seniority, there is a lack of interest in trying new practices or introducing innovative ideas in teaching-learning process. Such factors deter meritorious students from choosing teaching as a profession. Teacher students should be given substantial number of incentives to actively participate in their training process to become effective teacher educators.

An innovative pedagogical approach would also act as an incentive for students to get actively involved in learning process. Infrastructural incentives such as adequate toilets for girls or housing facilities for non-residential students should be promoted as well.

16. Need to plug malpractices emanating from non-profit character of educational institutions

Global experience suggests that best educational institutions / universities across the world are 'not-for-profit'. In India too this has been the case however many unethical practices have rendered the charitable objectives ineffective. This mandates a detailed review of existing positions and need to learn from international experiences in order to make the non-profit structure more robust.

17. The policy should adhere to a time frame

There is a need to have a time frame for the policy. It needs to be reviewed periodically. There should also be a real time citizen feedback mechanism on the policy so that regular feedback is reported from the ground on policy objectives. This will be a step to instil responsive governance.

18. Need to link school education with higher education

Interlink between school education system and higher education system cannot be ignored and needs to be promoted. The past policy approach has substantially undermined the fact that primary education provides inputs into secondary and higher education and higher education, in turn, provides teachers, administrators and others for school education besides contributing towards a progressive economic growth of the country.

Secondly, it was also ignored that growth in primary education would contribute to rapid rise in demand for secondary and higher education and the corresponding need for expansion of secondary and higher education². Curriculum reforms should be undertaken in continuum considering both school education and higher education and giving primacy to not just academics but extra-curricular activities as well. Career counselling sessions from an early stage would help children make more informed choices and motivate them to pursue higher education with all seriousness.

The policy may envisage a framework on the above lines.

2.3 Higher Education

1. Need for an education statistics institute

There is a need in India to have institutes like Higher Education Statistics Agency in UK to regularly gather and monitor data on higher education. There is also a need to have an institute to map and analyse data for other levels too namely pre-primary, primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary. Currently, neither there are such institutes nor credible data. Hence, policy formulation exercise is only based on estimates. The situation is worse with regards to diploma and certificate awarding institutions. The data pertaining to such institutions is even scarcer.

2. Rashtriya Ucchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) must be strengthened

The status of universities in India has gone down substantially. This situation is even more alarming at the state level since most of universities are state universities. Therefore, there is a need to

² Absence of Policy and Perspective in Higher Education: JANDHYALA B G TILAK (Economic and Political Weekly May 22, 2004)

identify universities which need assistance both financial and technical. Centrally Sponsored Scheme RUSA can be an appropriate tool in this context. The State Higher Education Councils as mandated under RUSA must engage in identifying such universities and then make a plan for the improvement of their infrastructure, faculty and academic programmes. However, it must also be borne in mind that RUSA which would move the bulk of allocation of funds to colleges from UGC should not result in badly run institutions controlled by politicians cornering most of the funds.

3. UGC should be reformed to reflect the spirit of Cooperative Federalism

As a central regulator UGC should be restructured to have representation from states and adequate mechanisms must be placed so that states' voice carry weight in the decisions of the central regulator. This can be done by setting up a UGC Governing Council with state representation in it.

4. Remove monopoly by affiliating universities at state level

According to a 2014 report of the British Council titled 'The future of higher education and opportunities for international cooperation', the vast bulk of students study at public and private colleges which are affiliated to state universities. Therefore, if there is one overall structure which defines Indian higher education, it is the affiliated college system. These colleges do not have their own degree awarding powers but they deliver the courses, curricula and examinations specified and regulated by their parent state university. The affiliated college sector is huge, enrolling over 90% of undergraduates, 70% of postgraduates and 17% of doctoral students.

To make matters worse there is monopoly of state universities in their respective jurisdiction. As a result, a college which may wish to get affiliation from a better and higher ranking university cannot do so, adversely affecting the quality of education and ultimately the students.

In light of the above, government must consider this issue and should allow freedom to colleges to get affiliated to the University of their choice. This will facilitate competition and is expected to improve the quality of education.

5. Need for increased freedom in revenue raising powers of public universities

Public universities (especially state universities) depend on affiliation fees paid by the colleges for their survival, which in turn is supplemented by state government funding to pay salaries and little else. As a consequence, most universities have poor infrastructure and conduct little research, although pockets of excellence exist. This is exacerbated by the fact that many state universities spend much of their time administering the exams and admissions to their affiliated colleges.

In other countries like the US, public universities have full autonomy. Consequently, public universities are not hamstrung in their ability to compete against their rivals, whether private or public.

In this context it is recommended that there is certain flexibility for public universities to raise funds, for instance by hiking fee. This would enable the universities to upgrade the infrastructure and invest required funds for quality enhancement. It was also recommended that one of the other effective ways to facilitate the autonomy of institutions is by providing for a 'negative list' in their

regulation. Further, to increase the financial availability for the university, cross subsidisation should be allowed across components like tax and fee. The policy document can spell out the necessary framework to facilitate this.

6. Need to have choice based credit system (CBCS) across all disciplines

Study of varied subjects widens students' horizon and exposure. Keeping in mind that individual universities might not have the necessary faculty for elective subjects, the government has created a framework for credit transfer between institutes, where students can transfer credits from one university to another as credits will be recognised by every university.

To strengthen this system, credit transfers can either be lateral or vertical, that is, at the same or higher level, respectively. It is recommended that CBCS should be available for all disciplines. It was expressed in the roundtable that CBCS is currently available only for a few disciplines like engineering disciplines. Additionally, it would require shift from annual system to semester system which must be undertaken swiftly.

7. Need to monitor the accreditation system and institutions' compliance

With respect to checking quality through regulation, it may be noted that one of the failures of centralised system to move ahead in timely fashion relates to quality assurance system.

The National Education Policy 1986 recommended putting such a system in place. But it was only in 1994 that the accreditation body, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) came into existence. It took another four years to accredit the first institution. Later, UGC adopted the policy that accreditation will have no implication for funding and salaries. This took away substantive value from accreditation.

It was suggested that accreditation strict review of quality and should inspire institutions to align their missions according to the requirements of accreditations. This need to be followed in all sincerity across all institutions and a timely review is needed.

8. Need for greater collaboration between federal partners in determining useful knowledge

The concern with “useful knowledge” was first expressed in the colonial period, then in the context of a developmentalist state, and now in the context of globalization. By implication it means that curriculum at school as well as higher education level is subject to change as per changing times.

Therefore, it is recommended that government of India and the state governments must engage in a shared narrative to identify what is useful knowledge at different levels. This would need to be reviewed from time to time. This will require a sustained and collaborative effort and hence there needs to be platform or mechanism or a process to discuss this between Centre and state and at interstate level also.

9. Need to improve research and innovation

One of the ways to measure the rigorousness of research and innovation in a country is by looking at its patent filings. The Indian government has also been indicating that it is keen to see an increase in domestic patent filings across all industry sectors and technology areas.

The World Intellectual Property Organisation's (WIPO) IP Indicators report for 2013 revealed that of the 43,663 patents applications made in India in 2012-2013, only 22% were filed by domestic entities. "Domestic filings need to be increased by encouraging research and development in India..."

One way to improve this is by creating a tenure system for the university lecturers and linking their tenure with a certain research output. The guidelines for quality research output must be framed in partnership with public and private institutions.

It is also recommended that Government must strive to create partnerships with industry and academia. Partnerships with academia must be construed both at the level of Universities and independent research and policy think tanks.

10. Need to regulate coaching institutions

Private coaching institutes are Rs 35,000 crore businesses in India today. It is a fact that learning levels substantially improve in private tuitions. Private tuitions at the moment are an unregulated business. Teachers with spare time tutor students after school, and tuition centres coach students on how to clear specific exams (SAT, GRE, GMAT, etc.).

In this background, the debate persists whether or not such tuitions should be regularised. It was recommended that instead of regularising coaching, attempts should be made to improve teaching in schools.

11. Greater debate over Common University Act is needed

The issue of Common University Act is one of the most hotly contested issue in the education sphere in India. Currently, there are several universities working within a state under different Universities Acts. This means they follow different rules leading to administrative difficulty and increased litigation. Therefore, need to have a common varsity act have been often expressed.

Such decisions should be best left to states. However, it is recommended that in case a common university act is envisaged by the state, it must take into consideration experience of states like UP and Gujarat where attempts have been made to introduce Common University Act.

It is recommended that Common University Act must be brought in other states as well. In this regard, it may be pertinent to mention that lessons should be learnt from states which already have such acts and at the same time state specific issues and apprehension must be taken on board before introducing a Common University Act. For instance, a fear that has been expressed by the lobby opposing Common University Act is that such Act would erode into the autonomy of universities.

12. Increasing accessibility to institutions of higher education

Access to colleges/universities for higher education primarily depends on the availability of such institutions which in turn is subjected to aforementioned factors such as infrastructure, availability of qualified faculty, availability of resources etc. Despite promoting development of these factors, admission is not guaranteed to many prospective students. Declining public expenditure on scholarships is a major hindrance accompanied by high rate of interest on education loans. Increasing the number of institutions imparting education in skill development via both theoretical

and practical knowledge would further encourage students to study beyond school thereby excelling in their chosen field of career. With regards to provision of scholarships it must be ensure that there scholarships are uniformly available across different regions of the country and accessed by students.

13. Need to streamline regulations

In the realm of higher education, various disciplines come under the purview of different governing bodies. For instance, Legal Education in India is recognized and accountable to the Bar Council of India as well as University Grants Commission. Multiplicity of regulatory bodies stifles the growth of the sector. In this regard it is important that education institutions come under the purview of minimum number of regulatory bodies and the capacity of such bodies must be strengthen.

3. Combined list of participants in all three roundtables

| S No | Name | Particulars |
|------|-------------------------|--|
| 1. | Dr Satyanarayan Jatiya | Chairman Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development |
| 2. | Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar | Member of Parliament (RS), INC |
| 3. | Shri R Ramakrishna | Member of Parliament (RS), BJP |
| 4. | Shailendra Sigdel | Statistical Adviser (South Asia) UNESCO |
| 5. | Mitrasen Bhikajee | Programme Specialist, Natural Sciences UNESCO |
| 6. | Pradeep Mehta | Secretary General CUTS International |
| 7. | C. Raj Kumar | Vice Chancellor O.P. Jindal Global University |
| 8. | V. S. Vyas | Professor Emeritus Institute of Development Studies (IDS) |
| 9. | S.K. Thorat | Chairman Indian Council of Social Science Research |
| 10. | J. S. Rajput | Former Director NCERT |
| 11. | Sanjay Bhargava | Chairman Shiksha Mandal Wardha |
| 12. | Anjela Taneja | Head of Policy Global Campaign for Education |

| S No | Name | Particulars |
|------|--------------------|---|
| 13. | Kiran Bhatta | Senior Fellow Centre for Policy Research |
| 14. | Gunjan Sharma | Professor, Ambedkar University |
| 15. | Vyjayanthi Sankar | Senior Consultant Brookings Institution |
| 16. | Anuradha De | Director Collaborative Research and Dissemination |
| 17. | Pramod Kumar Anand | Consultant NITI Aayog |
| 18. | Toby Linden | Lead Education Specialist The World Bank |
| 19. | Sunita Sanghi | Adviser, NITI Aayog <i>(sent her inputs through a presentation)</i> |
| 20. | Ádithya Narayanan | Fellow Teach for India |
| 21. | Ajay Mohan Goel | Executive Vice President Wadhvani Foundation |
| 22. | Anurag Goel | Former Member Competition Commission of India (CCI) |
| 23. | Apoorva Shankar | Education Analyst PRS Legislative Research |
| 24. | Ashish Mehta | Program Manager LIQVID eLearning Services |
| 25. | Furqan Qamar | Secretary General Association of Indian Universities |
| 26. | Garima Babbar | Standards and QA National Skill Development Corporation |
| 27. | Honey Gupta | CUTS Institute for Regulation & Competition (CIRC) |
| 28. | Huma Masood | National Programme Officer, Gender and Education UNESCO |
| 29. | K. S. Chalam | Political Economist and Educationist & Ex-Member Union Public Service Commission |

| S No | Name | Particulars |
|------|-------------------------|--|
| 30. | Manish Upadhyay | Co-founder and Chief Evangelist LIQVID eLearning Services |
| 31. | Meenakshi Gautam | Phd Student Zakir Husain Centre for Educational Studies School of Social Sciences Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) |
| 32. | Milindo Chakrabarti | Visiting Fellow Research and Information system for Developing Countries (RIS) |
| 33. | Monika Banerjee | Phd Student Zakir Husain Centre for Educational Studies School of Social Sciences Jawaharlal Nehru University |
| 34. | Mukul Priyadarshini | Miranda House, Delhi University |
| 35. | N. Mathur | Supertech |
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| 39. | Pawan Chopra | Director Dua Consulting |
| 40. | Pradyumna Bhattacharjee | Fellow Teach for India |
| 41. | Pratibha Jain | Partner & Head (Delhi Office) Nishith Desai Associates |
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| 51. | Vandana Singh | Associat Fellow Digantar Shiksha Evam Khelkud Samiti |
| 52. | Vimlendu Jha | Founder Swechha |
| 53. | Vivek Vellanki | Regional Resource Centre for Elementary Education University of Delhi |
| 54. | Aashika Aggarwal | Intern <i>under</i> Mr. R Ramakrishna (MP) |
| 55. | Abhishek Kumar | Associate Director CUTS International |
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| 57. | Aditi Banerjee | ASER Centre |
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| 60. | Amol R. Deshmukh | Managing Director HERD Foundation |
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| 66. | Arko Chakraborti | Student Shaheed Bhagat Singh College |
| 67. | Arunima Gupta | CUTS International |
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| 69. | Esther Suhasini | Education New Agency |
| 70. | Geetha Nambissan | Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University |
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| 72. | Mukul Kumar | Chief Executive Officer MuvIn Infotech |
| 73. | Nishma Madhav | Student Lady Shri Ram College for Women |
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| 86. | Archana Surana | Founder & Director Arch Academy of Design |
| 87. | Ashok Bapna | President NHRDN |
| 88. | Ayush Poddar | Director Kamla Poddar Group of Institutes |
| 89. | Benoy Thoompunkal | Designer Arch Academy of Design |
| 90. | Devi Singh | Vice Chancellor JK Lakshmi Pat University |
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| 99. | Sushil Kumar | Assistant Director Micro Small Medium Enterprises Development Institute (MSME) |
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| 102. | M A Khader | Chairman National Genius Search Foundation <i>(sent his inputs through e-mail)</i> |
| 103. | Shamand Basheer | Professor Nirma University, NLS Bangalore <i>(sent his inputs through e-mail)</i> |