

Arvind Panagaria inaugurates two-day FICCI Higher Education Summit 2015
Link academia, industry and research with the higher education institutes to
upgrade quality of higher education
and become competitive in the world market

Integrated scholarship & loan portals to help students pursue higher education:
Secretary

NEW DELHI, 3 November 2015: There was an imperative need to link academia, industry and research with the higher education institutes to upgrade the quality of Indian higher education and become competitive in the world market, said **Professor Arvind Panagaria, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog** at the 11th edition of **Higher Education Summit 2015**, organized by FICCI in association with the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. The two day global conference is on the theme **‘Transforming Higher Education: The Asian Imperative’**. Professor Panagaria said that the industry could partner with the universities in two ways. If the universities have dedicated research faculty then the industry could reach out to the educational institute for providing intellectual support. Also, industry could send their employees to the university to train them upgrade their skills.

He said that quality of education has emerged as one of the biggest challenges in the sector. In 2015, only two higher education institutes have featured in the top 200 list of world institutes. There was a need to have more institutes in the world ranking and for that research needs to be given an impetus. So far, educational institutes have primarily focused in teaching and separate councils took charge of research but this model has not been very successful. The research faculty should be present in the university to allow students to attain knowledge of new innovations and technology and it would also help in upgrading the curriculum with the needs of the changing times.

Professor Panagaria said that there was a need to consider the compensation of the teachers as well which is discouraging them to take up jobs. Also, the move of the government to expand the IITs and IIMs was a step in the right direction as these institutes are known for providing high quality education in an autonomous set up.

He urged FICCI to collate the best practices of the states in the field of higher education and prepare a document, which could be used as a reference by higher education institutes across the country.

On the occasion, the dignitaries released **FICCI-EY Report 2015; FICCI-EFMD Report 2015; and FICCI-British Council Report 2015.**

Highlighting the initiatives of the government, **Mr. Vinay Sheel Oberoi, Secretary-HE, MHRD**, said that the National Institutional Ranking Framework, an indigenous ranking system for Indian institutes was being formulated and would come into effect from April 2016. Also, the government has launched an India specific-MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses)

platform, 'SWAYAM' to encourage self-learning and making higher education easily accessible via electronic medium.

Mr. Oberoi said that the National Scholarship Portal has been launched to bring transparency, accessibility and availability of scholarship to deserving students. Besides, a loan portal with a single window has come up for students seeking education loan. The government is working towards integrating the two platforms for encouraging students to continue their higher studies. He added that the National Digital Library currently was being developed by IIT Kharagpur and by the end of December two million books, journals and PhD research papers would be available free of cost to all Indians.

Dr. Jyotsna Suri, President, FICCI, said that higher education and research will play a significant role in the regional trade and policy integration provided there is a change in approach which some of the Asian countries like Korea, Singapore, Japan, Malaysia and China have done. Countries like India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, continue to grapple with over regulation of the sector leading to the mushrooming of poor quality public and private institutions. There is a huge graduate unemployment. It is therefore imperative for Asia to build a new narrative for higher education, leverage private sector participation and enhance student/faculty cross mobility.

Mr. Mohandas Pai, Chairman, FICCI Higher Education Committee, said that the workplace of tomorrow would be technology-driven, making many of the existing jobs redundant. Hence, there was a need to change and reform the higher education system to allow the younger generation to access better opportunities. He added educational institutes needed autonomy in academics, financials and administration to drive their vision and mission. There was a need to also invest in research.

Mr. Pai said that real action for development lies at the state-level. Inclusive economic and social development of states across all parameters will only take our country to the desired level of economic development. The states account for 99% of total HE institutions, 97% of enrolments and 67% of overall public spend. It is, therefore, our endeavor to translate this vision into reality and, thus, move the focus of execution from the national level to the state level. This endeavor aligns well with Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyaan (RUSA), which focuses on developing a State Higher Education Plan (SHEP) — an overarching plan/roadmap to strengthen the state higher education system.

Professor Rajan Saxena, Co-Chair FICCI Higher Education Committee, said that there was a need for implementation of policies and best practices for the higher education sector to grow at a rapid pace. Also expansion of higher education at the levels of Central and States governments and private sector was needed. He added that there was need to create a dialogue amongst the stakeholders like academia, policy makers, government and society. Also, higher education institutes need autonomy to generate ideas and implement them. Also present on the dais were **Dr. Indira J Parikh, Co-Chair FICCI Higher Education Committee** and **Ms. Shobha Mishra Ghosh, Senior, Director, FICCI**.

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