



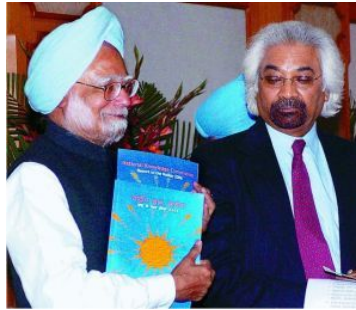
Feb & March 2009

Welcome to the last issue of the National Knowledge Commission's newsletter. This issue covers the latest recommendations made by the NKC, recent outreach programmes and the results of the NKC Online Contests.

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NKC: A Visionary Journey



In June 2005, the Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh constituted the National Knowledge Commission (NKC), the first of its kind in the world. The Commission was an expression of the Prime Minister's vision and belief that the 21st century would be the century of knowledge. Under the chairmanship of Sam Pitroda, NKC was assigned the task of recommending measures for India to meet the challenges of the knowledge century. India has a unique opportunity in the form of its demographic dividend to play a major role in the global economy and in the welfare and development of society as a whole.

NKC's blueprint for reform has covered a wide spectrum of areas related to access to knowledge, knowledge concepts, creation of knowledge, knowledge applications and delivery of services. During the course of the last three years, NKC has reached out and widely consulted pre-eminent specialists drawn from government, academia, industry and civil society. It has submitted about 300 recommendations to the Prime Minister on a variety of areas such as Right to Education, Languages, Translation, Libraries, National Knowledge Network, Portals, Health Information Network, School Education, Higher Education, More Students in Mathematics and Science, Legal Education, Medical Education, Management Education, Engineering 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, Vocational Education and Training, Traditional Health Systems, Agriculture, Enhancing Quality of Life, and E-Governance.

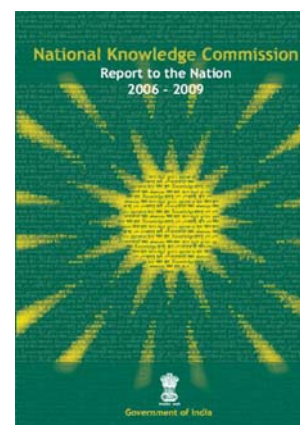
The government, at the central and state levels, has evinced keen interest to take NKC's recommendations forward. In particular, the UPA government's commitment to knowledge initiatives in the XIth Plan places a high priority on education as a central instrument for achieving rapid and inclusive growth, with specific emphasis on expansion, access, excellence and equity.

Yet, a lot more remains to be done. There is an urgent need for fundamental re-thinking on a variety of structural issues. With education becoming indispensable to the country's ambitions in the knowledge economy, the need for change grows more urgent with each passing day. The speed of implementation remains a pressing challenge, just as the groundswell of public opinion on the primacy of education keeps growing. There is still resistance at certain levels in the government to new developments, new ideas and change. Fortunately, knowledge transcends partisan issues and will remain a national priority. The movement towards a knowledge society is not a political one, but a journey of social and economic transformation. With the Commission's work, this journey to build a truly inclusive and qualitatively significant knowledge society for India has just begun. As NKC's tenure of three years draws to a close, the Commission believes that it has catalyzed the movement towards generational change, brought knowledge and education to the centre of national policy debate, engaged stakeholders and created space for continuing dialogue. The NKC now anticipates a mass movement at the grassroots and a demand for change from the people of India for future generations.

Final Report to the Nation



Mr. Sam Pitroda, Chairman, National Knowledge Commission, released NKC's Final Report to the Nation at the NKC-CII conference. In the past three years NKC has submitted around 300 recommendations with the objective of tapping into India's enormous reservoir of knowledge, mobilising national talent and creating an empowered generation with access to opportunities. The final report includes all the recommendations of NKC, follow-up action and baseline figures on key focus areas.



Report to the Nation

Latest Recommendations made by NKC

Agriculture

NKC recognises that the challenges facing Indian agriculture can only be addressed through a comprehensive package of measure that includes an emphasis on enhanced knowledge generation and application. In this regard, NKC has recommended concrete steps to modernise and stimulate agricultural research institutions, coordinate research and make research support more flexible. It has also recognised the need for improving the organisation of agricultural research, directing more research to neglected areas, providing more effective incentives for researchers and reforming the curricula in agricultural universities. Further, to improve the scope and efficiency of extension, NKC has stressed making knowledge applications in agriculture community-driven and farmer-led and shifting the focus to provide an integrated range of services. NKC has also recommended restructuring the Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) to make it more decentralised, participatory and locally responsive, and enhancing the role of private players in agricultural extension delivery. Read the detailed letter to the Prime Minister by NKC on Agriculture [here](#).

Enhancing Quality of life: Setting up Panchayat Gyan Kendras

NKC believes that it is essential to build capacity in Panchayats to ensure participatory decision making and a healthier democracy. Towards this end, NKC has recommended the setting up of Panchayat Gyan Kendras (PGKs) throughout the country which would ensure efficient implementation of NREGA and would eventually develop into resource centres to demonstrate best practices, evolve local solutions and provide a platform for converging different social sector programs. This system of PGKs can be initiated through the broader platform of a Panchayat Knowledge Mission, for maximum scale, commitment and effect. The PGKs have the potential to immediately address the issues of peoples planning, worksite management, disclosure, social audit, and skill upgradation in the NREGA by building demonstrable systems of people-based implementation. Read the detailed letter to the Prime Minister by NKC on setting up Panchayat Gyan Kendras [here](#).

Enhancing Quality of life: Designing Ergonomic Tools

In order to use knowledge applications for the well-being of common people, especially in rural areas, NKC has focused on the urgent requirement for ergonomic tools, especially among NREGA workers. Key issues pertain to designing ergonomic tools as a means of improving dignity of labour, encouraging energy efficiency, reducing workloads for women, reducing drudgery, increasing skillful engagement and improving productivity. NKC has recommended conceptualising fresh perspectives in tool design to improve dignity of labour, ensuring skillful engagement and enhanced productivity as well as enhancing funding mechanisms for development of tool kits and provisions for loans. Read the detailed letter to the Prime Minister by NKC on Designing Ergonomic Tools [here](#).



“To me a knowledge society would be one where every citizen has got equal capabilities to access and use knowledge productively. We need to have a much more holistic perception of how knowledge affects you.”

~ Dr. Jayati Ghosh
Member, NKC

NKC Online Resources:

[All NKC Recommendations](#)

[Short film on NKC](#)

[NKC Presentations](#)

[NKC Videos](#)

[Photo gallery](#)

Sevalya and TAFVA organise outreach programmes for NKC



NKC outreach at Sevalaya

National Knowledge Commission Member Dr. Sujatha Ramdorai and actor Tisca Chopra participated in outreach programs in Chennai to involve educationists and NGOs in the debate on creating a knowledge society. The first program was organized by Sevalaya where the Education Secretary, the Chief Education Officer along with about 200 school principals from Thiruvallur district were present. The other event was organised by Tamil Nadu Federation of Voluntary Agencies (TAFVA) where more than 150 NGOs working in the education sector in Tamil Nadu had participated in the



NKC outreach organized by TAFVA

NKC - CII Outreach Event in Delhi

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the National Knowledge Commission jointly held an interactive session as part of the NKC's ongoing Outreach Programme, focused on offering a Roadmap for Reform in the Indian knowledge sector through its recommendations. The Chairman of the Commission Sam Pitroda, spoke on aspects of creating a Knowledge Society, highlighting the need for generational changes in the education system. Dr Ashok Ganguly, spoke of the crucial role that

innovation and enterprise will play in the rise of India as a developed nation. Dr Sujatha Ramdorai talked of the challenges and opportunities in the school education system, particularly in areas of autonomy and decentralisation. Prof Deepak Nayyar focused on issues of autonomy, expansion and inclusion in higher education. Prof P Balaram concluded the interactive session with a discussion on reinvigorating research systems in India.

NKC Online Contests

NKC has been engaged in consultations with the Central and State Governments for implementation of the recommendations, but to take this process further, there is a need to create a groundswell of public opinion, a demand for change from the grassroots. The idea behind the NKC online competition was to create awareness and engage a wider constituency of stakeholders, especially the youth, interested in the work of the Commission.

Category	1st Prize	2nd Prize	3rd Prize
India will realise its demographic dividend in the next 15 years	Asif Zafar Student, ISM Dhanbad	Kerishma Malik Student, Shri Ram College Of Commerce	Shekhoo S Raja Working Professional, Raja Gas Dealers
Vocational education and training courses should be introduced in all schools	Naina Karol Student, Delhi School of Economics	Sadia Zafar Student, Class 11, St. Xavier's School	Abhinav P. Nair Student, Sri Sathya Sai University
How can India unleash its innovation and entrepreneurship potential?	Raghav Mimani Student, BITS Pilani	Ravindra Choudhary Student, BIMTECH	Vaibhav Garg, Student, IIT Bombay Ravitheja Tetali Student, BITS Goa
Expansion, excellence and inclusion – the three challenges of the Indian education system	Neeraj Kumar Singh Student, IIT Madras	Shashi Bhushan Singh Student, MICA	Shailendra Hegde Working Professional, Goldman Sachs

To look at the Debate and Film entries visit:

www.youtube.com/nkc

To look at the Essay entries visit:

<http://knowledgeportal.in/contests/>



For more details on the contest visit:

<http://knowledgecommission.gov.in/contests/>

NKC Impact: The XIth Five Year Plan (2007—2011)

Innovation

- Put in place a National Innovation Policy which encourages competition among enterprises, greater diffusion of knowledge and increased support to early stage technology development initiatives and grassroots level innovators.
- Foster increased collaboration among the R&D institutes, Universities and private sector enterprises and leverage upon their cumulative strengths in designing and implementing various innovation programmes.
- Create new interface structures to forge partnerships between academia and industry

Legislative Framework for Public Funded Research

There is a need for an appropriate legislative framework for incentivizing innovators and commercialization of public funded R&D, where the Government, the recipients of funds, the inventor as well as the public benefit from the protection and commercialization of IP.

Traditional Health Systems

The Plan recognises that no single system of health care has the capacity to solve all of the society's health needs. It lays special thrust on strengthening professional education, strategic research programmes, promotion of best clinical practices, technology upgradation in industry, setting internationally acceptable pharmacopeial standards, conserving medicinal flora, fauna, metals and minerals, utilizing human resources of AYUSH in the national health programmes and strengthening IPRs with the ultimate aim of enhancing the outreach of AYUSH health care in an accessible, acceptable, affordable and qualita-



“To get the full yield of the demographic dividend, our human capital needs to be empowered: they need to be educated, they need to have good health, they need to have access to markets and jobs. We owe it to the young people of India”

Mr. Nandan Nilekani
Member, NKC

NKC Impact: State Level Initiatives

Many of the subjects on which the National Knowledge Commission has submitted recommendations fall within the purview of the State Governments. Implementation of most of the recommendations, be it reform of existing Universities, revitalising libraries in the region, introduction of English in schools, are all initiatives that need to be undertaken at the state and district level. In light of this, NKC has successfully engaged with several State Governments to formulate knowledge initiatives at the state level. It is working with 26 States and 3 Union Territories for implementation of its recommendations. Key highlights include:

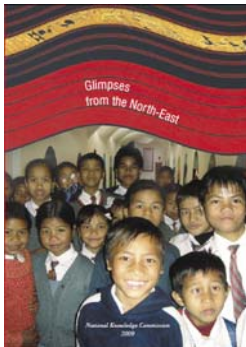
- All States have appointed nodal officers and departments for implementation of NKC recommendations.
- Many State Governments are preparing blueprints for reform based on NKC recommendations. These include Rajasthan, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh. The Delhi Government has already approved an action plan for implementation of NKC's recommendations.
- Several states are evaluating setting up a State Board of Undergraduate Education to reduce the burden of affiliating colleges on Universities. These Boards would aim to separate the academic functions from the administrative functions and provide quality benchmark.
- Karnataka has started a Knowledge Commission to lay the groundwork for reforms in the knowledge sector in the state. Rajasthan has set up a Rajasthan Knowledge Corporation Limited for promoting IT education and application of IT systems for process improvement and knowledge delivery.
- As part of the National E-governance Project (NeGP), six state governments – Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Chandigarh, Delhi and Tripura have implemented State Wide Area Network (SWAN) and in 18 states implementation is in process.



“Research activities today are largely funded by the government, with philanthropic support for such activities being almost non-existent. The time is right for industry to step in and fill this vital gap.”

~ Prof. P. Balaram
Member, NKC

NKC Publication: Glimpses from the North-East



The North-eastern region of India is a rich tapestry of culture and nature. Breathtaking flora and fauna, heritage drawn from the ages and the presence of a large number of diverse groups makes this place a treasure grove. If culture represents the entire gamut of relationships which human beings share with themselves as well as with nature, the built environment, folk life and artistic activity, the north-east is a 'cultural and biodiversity hotspot', whose immense potential is beginning to be recognised. There is need for greater awareness and sensitisation here, especially among the young. In this respect, the National Knowledge Commission believes that the task of connecting with the north-east requires a multi-pronged approach, where socio-economic development must accompany multi-cultural understanding.

This book, 'Glimpses from the North-East', seeks to highlight and celebrate some of the unique cultural and environmental aspects of the North-east. Here, a few well-known writers based in the region delve into some cultural traditions and institutions through the medium of folk narratives and stories. The language of folklore is at once universal and particular. We believe that the canvas of commonness and togetherness in the midst of variations and distances provides the backdrop for an appreciation of the North-East. Articulation through the folk idiom helps in understanding community perceptions, institutions and responses. This understanding, in turn, facilitates bridges of dialogue.

A plan on 'Knowledge from the North-East' could focus on themes such as Traditional Health Systems, Folk Music, Folk Art, Dance Forms, Oral Literature and Biodiversity. There is need for detailed analysis on the enormous potential for economic opportunity that such themes could generate for the people of the north-east. Further, creating a 'Green is Clean' conclave, focusing on the region's unique biodiversity, could involve scientific and community-based initiatives of knowledge-sharing for forest conservation, water management, land use and eco-sustaining agricultural practices. An 'Art, Culture and Literature' conclave could provide a platform for regional artists, folk performers, film makers, writers and poets in a manner that could make the north-east a cultural hub. Electronic initiatives, with cutting-edge equipment and facilities, including a North-East Portal, are also necessary to document changing socio-cultural landscapes. This will provide invaluable data to construct historiographies and ethnographies of various communities through lifestyles, occupations, cuisines, practices, costumes and other elements of heritage.

It is hoped that 'Glimpses of the North-East' will provide insights and encourage a newer generation of young writers and scholars to carry out more detailed work on the various interesting and significant aspects pertaining to this important region of India.

NKC Report on Innovation

While literature on Innovation has been growing in recent times, the NKC survey on Innovation is perhaps the first detailed and in-depth quantitative and qualitative survey on Innovation in India (as defined more broadly than R&D) using firm level aggregate statistical data on a nationwide scale, with a sample that includes the top industry leaders as well as a large number of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and across varied industrial profiles, ranging from manufacturing and services to diversified businesses. It is expected that the survey will provide feedback and information on current Innovation trends to firms as well as generate necessary catalyzing effects for business Innovation to take place in India on an even larger scale, thus ensuring sustained Innovation led economic growth in the coming years.

Innovation and competitiveness have a dynamic, mutual relationship. Innovation thrives in a competitive environment and in turn, plays a key role in the achievement of such an environment. Innovation generates economic value, new jobs in the economy and cultures of entrepreneurship. By virtue of its relationship with competitiveness, Innovation emerges as a factor in promoting economic growth.

The NKC survey confirms the rising Innovation activity and awareness in India as well as the need to continuously and publicly encourage this trend as a key enabler in India's economic growth and competitiveness. However, there is need for further effort along a range of parameters in order to fully realize India's Innovation potential. To download the complete report, click [here](#).

“Tribal traditions need not be devoted to, or perceived solely as something of the ‘past,’ but instead be the catalysts for the creative instincts of a people that identify their culture. In this way this literature of oral narratives also gives us our sense of identity”



Special Focus

National Knowledge Network

The National Knowledge Commission strongly feels that to optimally utilise the potential of institutions engaged in generation and dissemination of knowledge in various areas, such as research laboratories, universities and other institutions of higher learning, including professional institutions, it is important to connect them through a high speed broadband network. The purpose of such a knowledge network goes to the very heart of the country's quest to build quality institutions with requisite research facilities and create a pool of highly trained persons. Considering the enormity of the challenge, NKC believes an immediate objective of the network will be to share the existing content, coursework, expertise, ideas, innovations, equipment and facilities available in the limited number of centres of excellence, with a wider group of institutions, educators and students.

During 2008-09, Rs. 100 crore has been allocated for the National Knowledge Network (NKN) which proposes interconnecting all knowledge institutions in the country with gigabit capabilities, for sharing resources and research. A high level committee (HLC) constituted by the Department of Information and Technology (DIT), under the chairmanship of the Principal Scientific Adviser, was set up to operationalise the network. The design of NKN was prepared by a Technical Advisory Committee set up by the HLC, and the initial implementation is being managed by NIC (under DIT).

The network is ready for roll out and is awaiting a formal launch. The network would be operationalised in two phases. The core and distribution network covering 1000 nodes with gigabit capacity would be set up in the first phase and this process has already started. The network is scalable and coverage can grow up to 10,000 nodes/institutions.

India Water Portal



The India Water Portal is an open, inclusive, web-based platform for sharing water management knowledge amongst practitioners and the general public. It aims to draw on the rich experience of experts in the water sector, package their knowledge and add value to it through technology and then disseminate it to a larger audience through the internet. The Portal is a voluntary effort being coordinated by **Arghyam**, a non-profit trust that works in the area of water, creating regional language water portals, and working with government departments related to water. NKC has facilitated the creation of this portal.

Visit: <http://www.indiawaterportal.org/>

Feedback and Comments

“For India to become a global knowledge leader, we need to be in the forefront of creating knowledge. As such, emphasis has to be given to impart quality basic education. Apart from medical, engineering, legal education, et al, thrust has to be given for basic science education, supplemented with proper infrastructure, so as to attract young talents. I appreciate the commendable work done by NKC. I feel the National Development Council's initiative, in this regard, will create a landmark in the history of government planning. I hope the recommendations made by the Commission will be adopted by all concerned in true letter and spirit.”

Shri. Rameshwar Thakur
Governor of Karnataka

“I am happy to know that you have included recommendations on various important areas such as Portals, Health Information Network, Legal Education, Open Education Resources, Innovation, Intellectual Property Rights, Legal Framework for Public Funded Research and Traditional Health Systems and also covered 20 subjects with 160 concrete action plans in both the Reports. After going through the report I would certainly like to take up the matter with State officials and if possible with institutions and administrative bodies as well as universities.”

Shri. Nawal Kishore Sharma
Governor of Gujarat

“This immense effort that the Commission has enabled the Government and other related bodies understand not merely the magnitude and importance of the problems, but also ensure that the system makes opportunities available to all throughout India. India's rapid strides as an economic success depend greatly on adequate and timely reforms in the prevalent system. I wish you success while assuring you of my support.”

Shri Kamal Nath
Minister of Commerce & Industry

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