

Bridging The Higher Education Gap

National World-Class Universities and Other Models



THE PARTHENON GROUP
Boston • London • Mumbai • San Francisco

February 2010

In Association with **FedUni**



Prepared for the EDGE 2010 Conference



Introduction & Acknowledgements

- The Parthenon Group is a leading strategy consulting firm with offices in Boston, London, Mumbai, and San Francisco. Parthenon is the only international advisory to have a dedicated Education Practice (the Education Centre of Excellence – ECE) for the last 19 years and is the leading strategy advisor to the global education sector. Since the formal establishment of the ECE in 2001, Parthenon has worked on over 300 education projects across the globe. Parthenon is the strategy advisor to the largest international and Indian higher education companies. Parthenon has the largest advisory experience base in the global and Indian higher education sectors.
- FedUni is a Federation of eight Private Universities sponsored by the ICFAI Society, headquartered in Hyderabad. The Universities have been established under respective State legislatures. FedUni offers consultancy and research inputs on the Indian and Foreign Higher Education scenario. The Federation organizes and facilitates conferences, seminars and workshops , besides publishing research papers, books and newsletters.
- Parthenon and FedUni are grateful to EDGE for this opportunity to present a perspective on a critical aspect of Higher Education. We are grateful for the support of the EDGE Secretariat, Mr. Anand Sudarshan of Manipal Universal Learning and to the Heads of the Institutions who participated in our survey.
 - Karan Khemka
Partner, Mumbai Office Head,
The Parthenon Group
 - Sridhar Chari
Director, ICFAI University,
FedUni
 - Mumbai + 91 22 6744 2500
 - Hyderabad +91 40 6625 4003



Preamble

- In recent months the Government has initiated a number of policy guidelines in all three sectors of education – primary, secondary and tertiary. There is clearly a sense of urgency and commitment. In the tertiary sector, the suggestions of two high powered Committees - the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) and the Committee to Advise on Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education (Yash Pal Committee) are being discussed and suitable legislative interventions are under process. From a policy perspective there is a move “to promote the autonomy of higher educational institutions for the free pursuit of knowledge and innovation, and for facilitating access, inclusion and opportunities to all...”*. A paradigm shift in the monitoring and control of this vital space may be expected. As in the case of the Telecom and Capital market sectors, the education sector is poised for growth and improvement of quality, with the private sector playing a key role.
- One of the suggestions of the NKC is to set up a number of World-Class National Universities. The Commission recommended 50 such Universities with 10 of them within a three year time frame. The report examines this suggestion in the current context of Indian Higher Education. Opinions were sought from Heads of some of the country’s well known Institutions. Their viewpoints pointed to the need for alternate models as well. The context of this report was, thereafter, expanded to include other models as well.

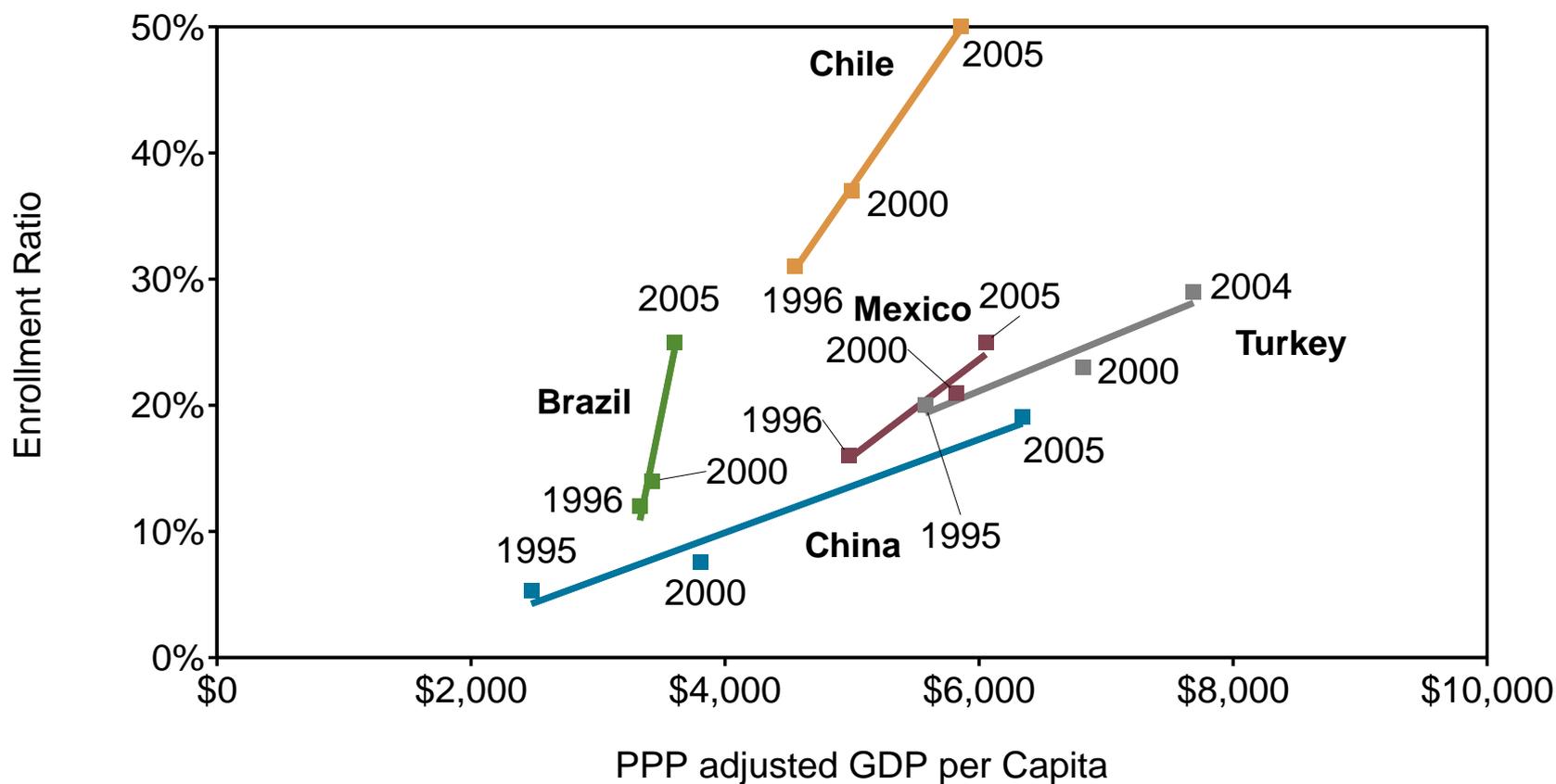


Higher Education Enrolment Rises With GDP

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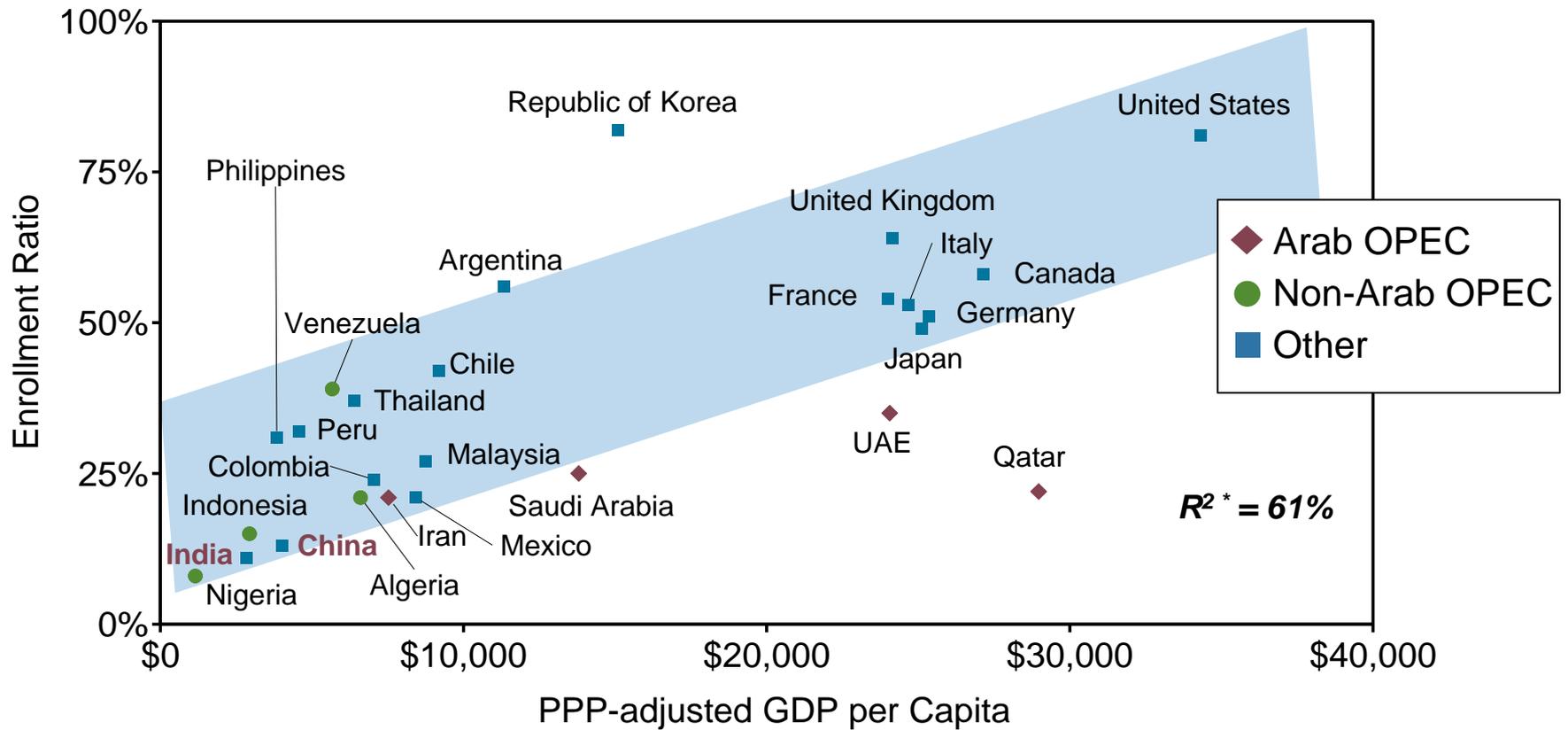
Higher Education Enrolment vs. Income



Economic Strength And GDP Per Capita Are Closely Linked To A Country's Enrolment Ratio



Higher Education Enrollment Ratio vs. PPP Adjusted GDP Per Capita



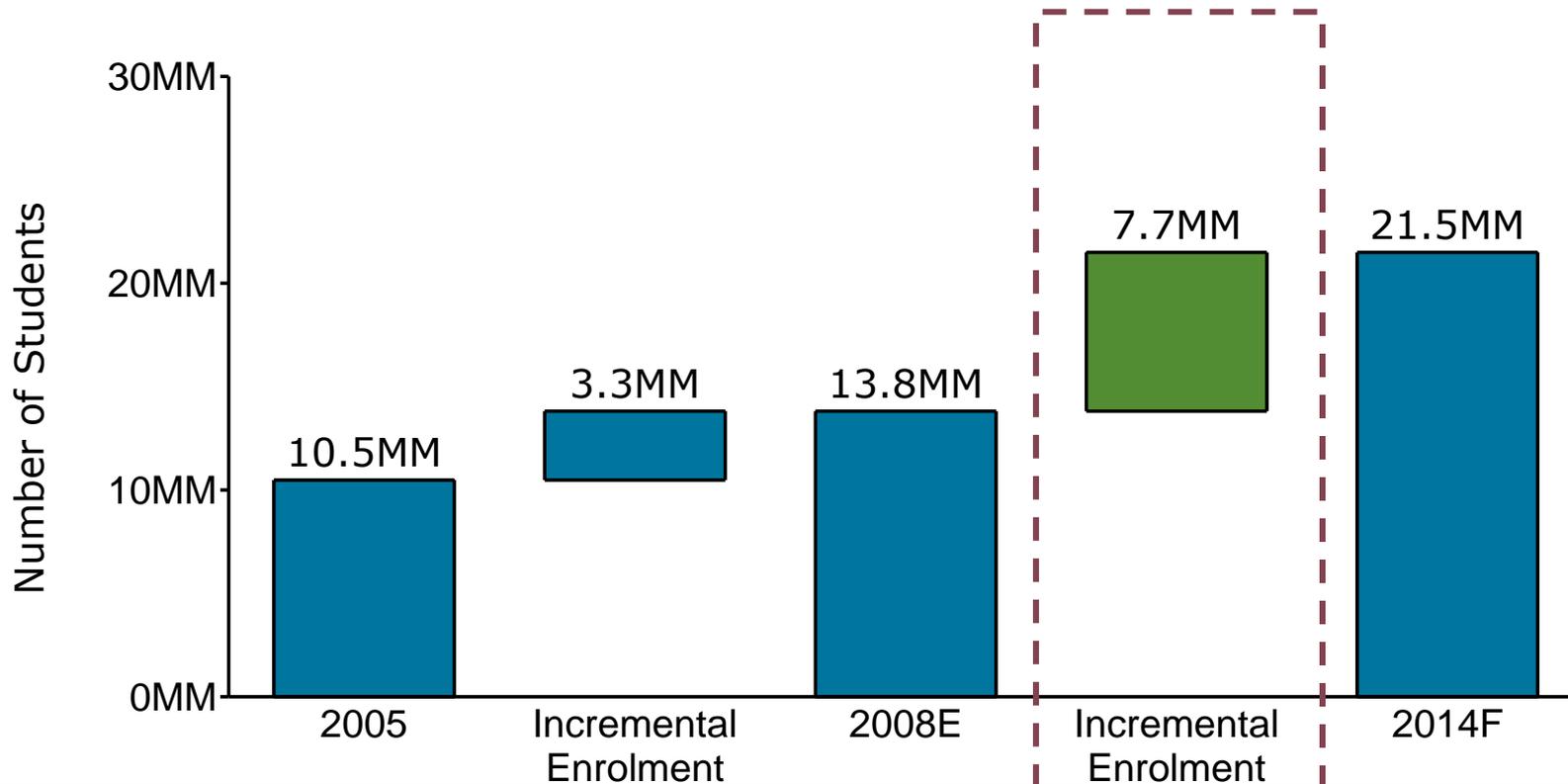
To Support Economic Growth India Needs To Grow Its Tertiary Enrolment By 7.7MM Seats In 2014



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Enrolment Forecast for Higher Education, 2005-14



GDP/ Capita (US \$ PPP Adjusted)	\$3.5K	\$4.0K	\$5.4K
Gross Enrolment Ratio	11.4%	14.3%	20.0%
Capex Required			Rs215K Cr
			Rs77K Cr

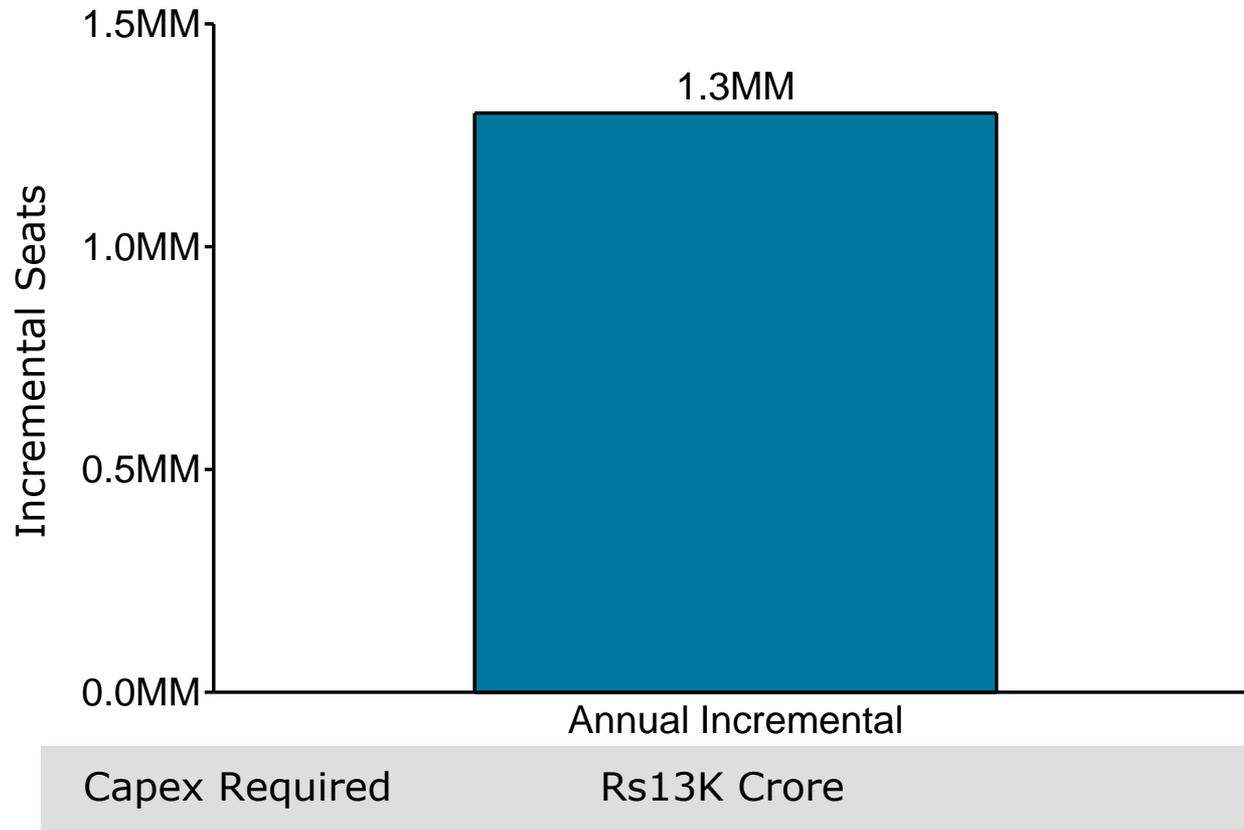
7.7MM Seats By 2014 Translates Into ~1.3MM Seats Per Year Which Implies Annual Capex Of ~Rs 13K Crores



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Annual Incremental Seats & Capex Required



The NKC Has Recommended Expansion To 1500 Universities Nationally And Establishment Of 50 National World-Class Universities



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From the National Knowledge Commission's "Report to the Nation, 2006-2009"

- “The higher education system needs a massive expansion of opportunities, to around **1500 universities** nationwide, that would enable India to attain a gross enrolment ratio of at least 15 per cent by 2015. The focus would have to be on new universities, but some clusters of affiliated colleges could also become universities.”
- “NKC recommends the creation of **50 National Universities** that can provide education of the highest standard. As exemplars for the rest of the nation, these universities would train students in a variety of disciplines, including humanities, social sciences, basic sciences, commerce and professional subjects, at both the undergraduate and post-graduate levels. The number 50 is a long-term objective. In the short run, it is important to begin with at least 10 such universities in the next three years.”

We Have Surveyed 9 Indian Educationalists On Their Views On WCUs And Other Models To Address The Issues Of Higher Education In India

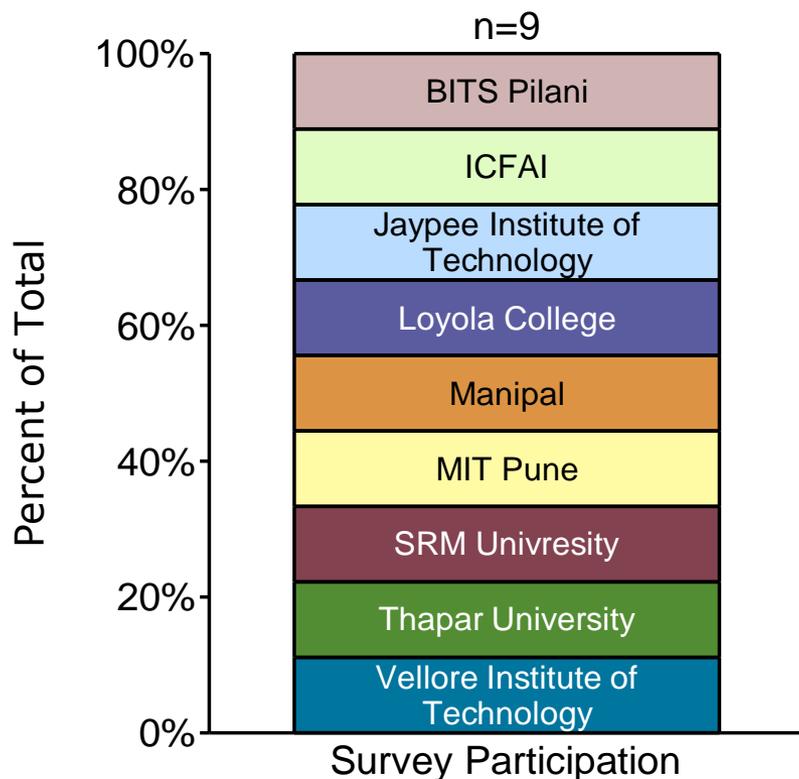


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Participating Institutions

Survey Participants



Dr L K Maheshwari, Vice Chancellor

N J Yasaswy, Founder

Dr Yaj Medury, Vice Chancellor

Father Xavier, Former Principal

Anand Sudarshan, CEO

Dr Sunil Karad, Executive Director

P Sathyanarayanan, Vice Chancellor

Dr Abhijit Mukherjee, Director

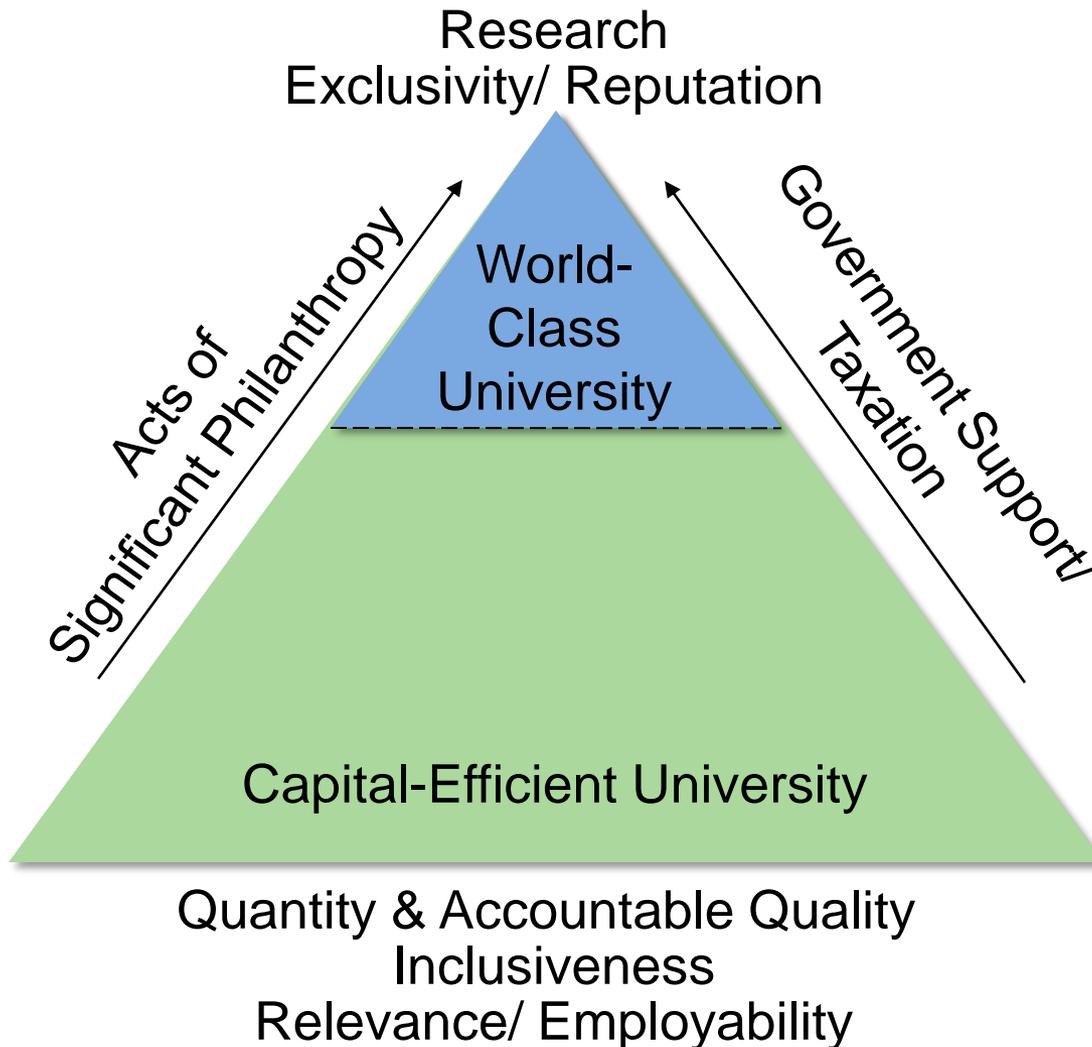
Sekar Viswanathan, Pro Chancellor

The Capital-Efficient Model Will Drive Enrolment Volume In India; The World-Class Model Will Be A Brand Builder For The Country



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“Let there be a competition to achieve world-class status.”

Dr. L K Maheshwari, Vice Chancellor, BITS Pilani

- Taxation of capital efficient universities funds world-class universities/research
- Over time a capital efficient university could become a world-class university

What Does It Mean To Be A National World-Class University?



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World-Class Infrastructure Academic Reputation

“There are two aspects to a “world-class university”. At one level is the **infrastructure**, comprising of buildings, libraries, laboratories, IT and student and faculty related conveniences. That is largely a factor of finance and may be set up easily. On another level is the “soft” side aspect which money cannot buy, and which cannot be created overnight. These require time, for they are dependent on **reputation**.”

NJ Yasaswy, Founder, ICFAI University

Collaboration With Industry/ Government/ Other Universities

“One is the physical vector: we need to have **infrastructure** which is world-class. Second is what I call an **academic extension**, which is research, industry association, relationships with other universities, participation with research centers and the government in areas that are of socio-political, socio-cultural importance. The third part is the responsibility of university to introduce **empowered and responsible learners** who will be lifelong learners after they graduate from the university.”

Anand Sudarshan, CEO, Manipal Universal Learning

Research Focus

“The number one thing which makes a university world-class is the **research**. We have to have original work coming out of our universities. It’s the ability to innovate and invent, publish and share that knowledge and to be able to patent it which makes a university stand out.”

Sekar Viswanathan, Pro-Chancellor, VIT University



What Other University Model Does India Require In Order To Meet Its Higher Education Needs?

Private Sector Participation

“If you encourage **the private sector** to start a large number of institutions and have a good and transparent monitoring system in place for quality, it will be easy to achieve a higher gross enrolment ratio. There are different segments of the public whose needs vary so not everyone needs world-class.”

Sekar Viswanathan, Pro-Chancellor, VIT University

Financial Autonomy

“One has to be really **financially independent** to deliver quality education.”

Dr Abhijit Mukherjee, Director, Thapar University

Access, Inclusion and Equity

“World-class university concept does not address the basic problems that plague the higher education space currently, i.e. that of access and equity. Just like in the secondary school space a few International Schools catering to the elite cannot, and will not, solve the access problems as how the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavans or the DAV Schools have done. India needs both the elitist and **egalitarian models** for differing reasons.”

NJ Yasaswy, Founder, ICFAI



A private, academically autonomous & capital-efficient institution will be able to address volume and accessibility issue of higher education



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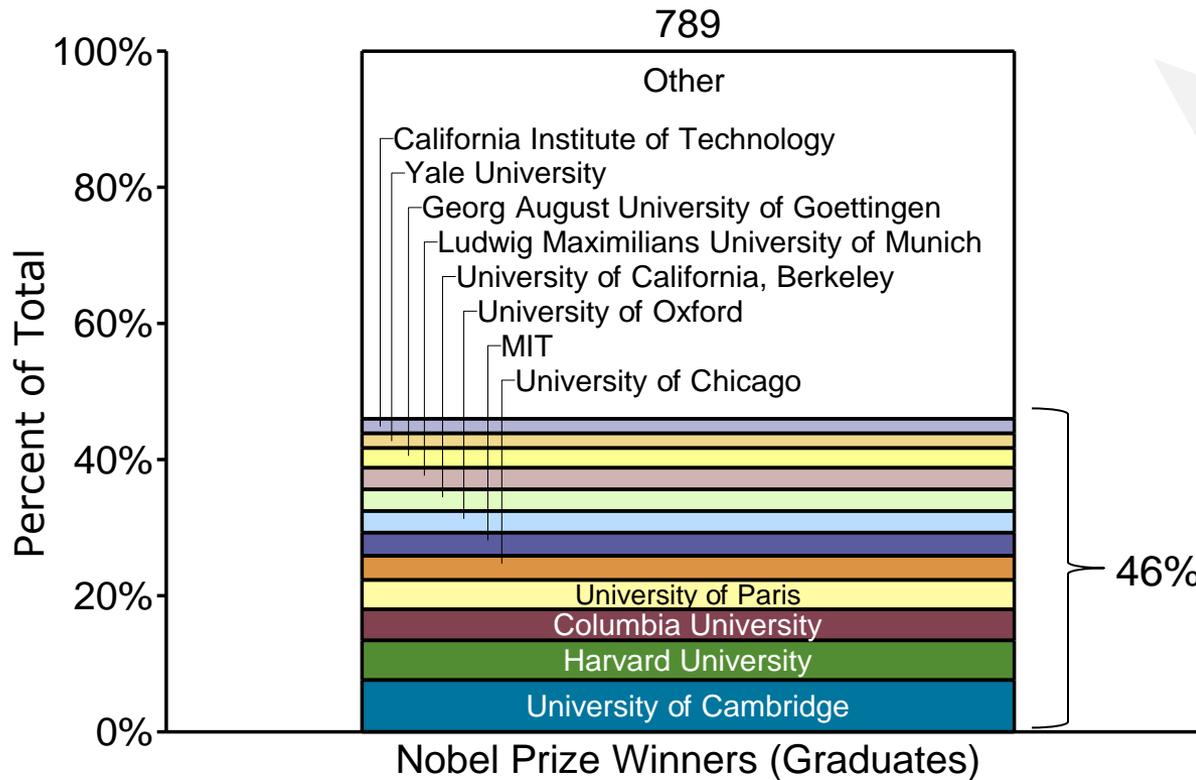
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World-Class University
Capital Efficient University

~46% Of All Nobel Prize Winners Graduated From 12 Universities



Nobel Prize Winners by University From Which They Graduated



“We celebrated our silver jubilee last year and our goal is that by golden jubilee one VITian should have a Nobel Prize.”

Sekar Viswanathan, Pro Chancellor, VIT University

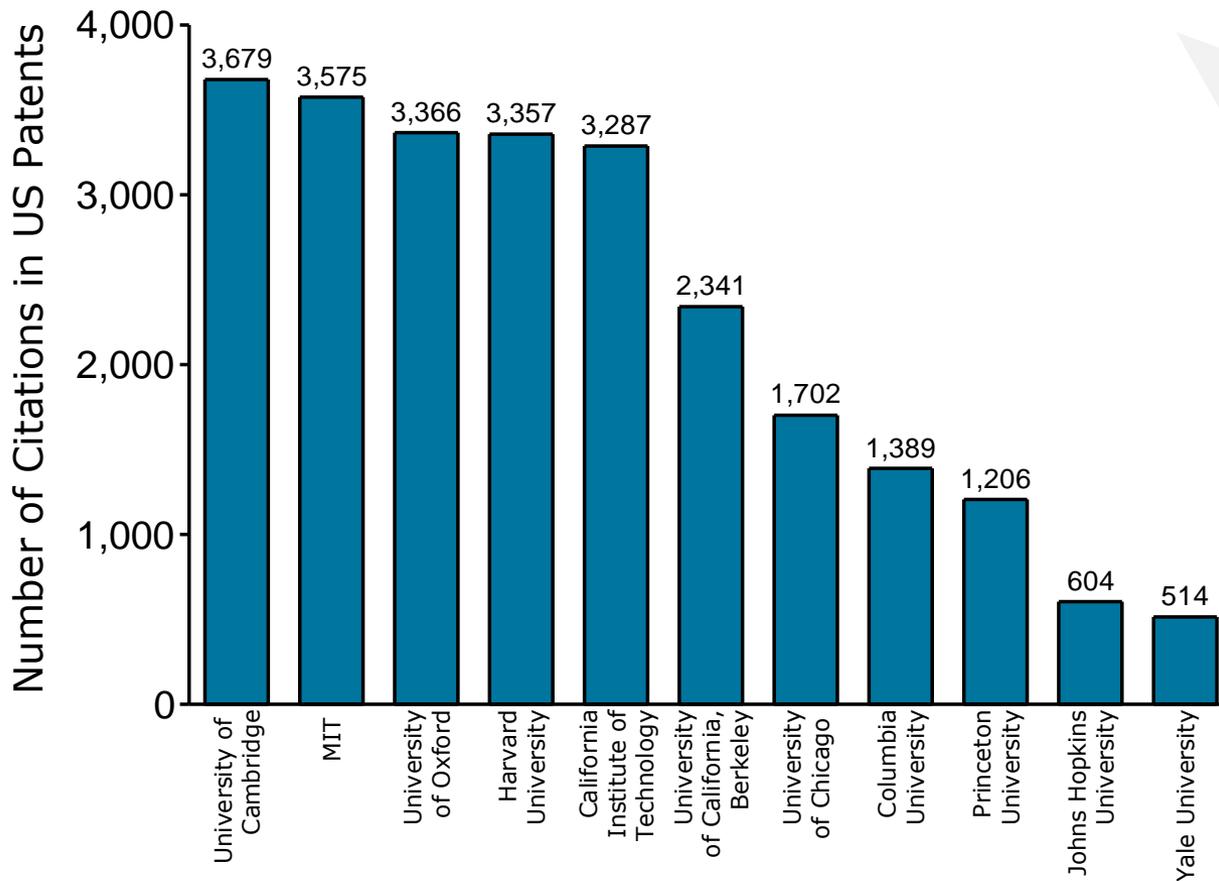
Similar Set Of Universities Have A High Number Of Citations In US Patents And Provide Cutting Edge Research



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Number of References in US Patents by Author's University



“In India research on institutional campuses is not really an accepted fact. Building a research atmosphere will be a task involving changing the mindset of the existing people and new people who join the institute.”

Dr. Sunil Karad, Executive Director, MIT Pune

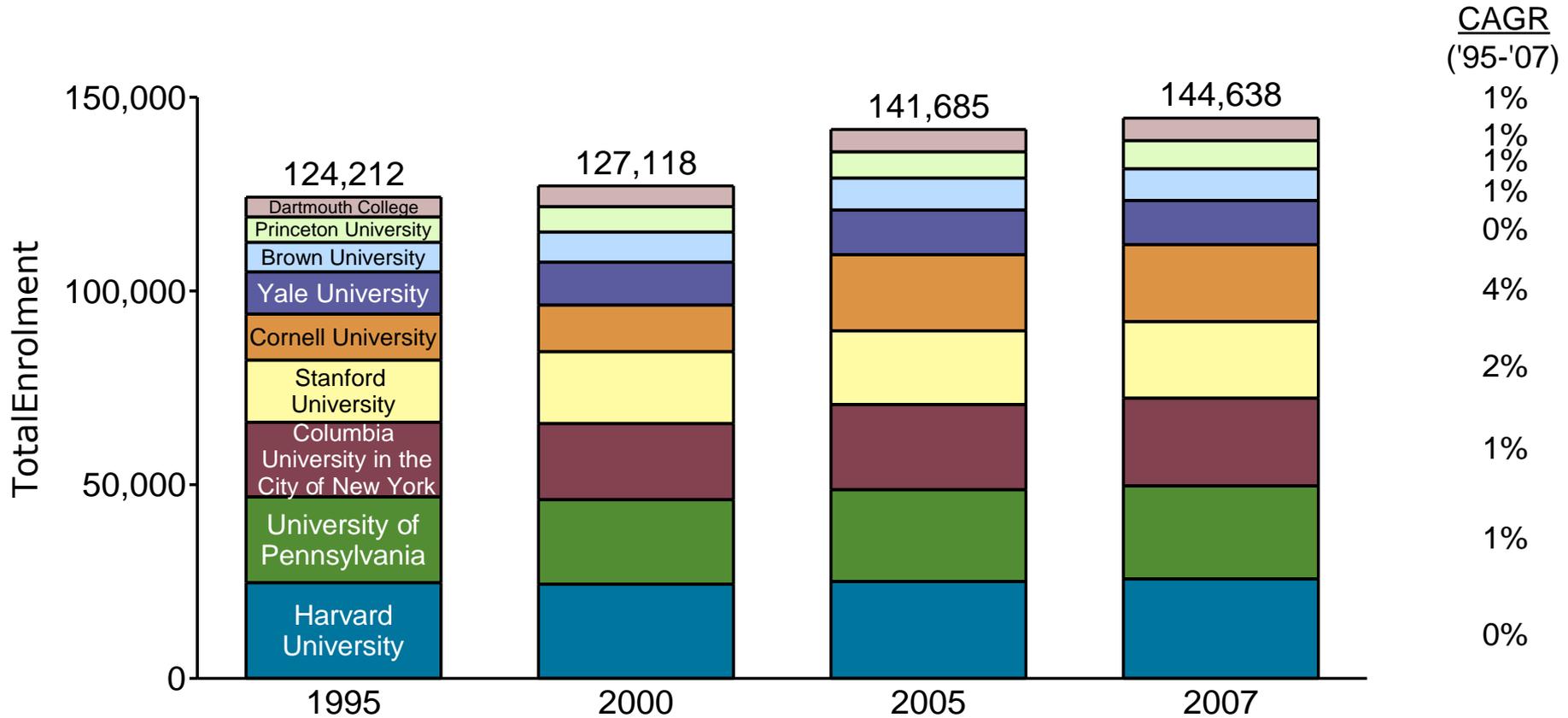
World-Class Universities Are Not Scalable; Average Enrolment At Leading Universities Is ~14K Students; Enrolment Growth Is ~1%



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Total Enrolment at Ivy League Universities, 1995-2007



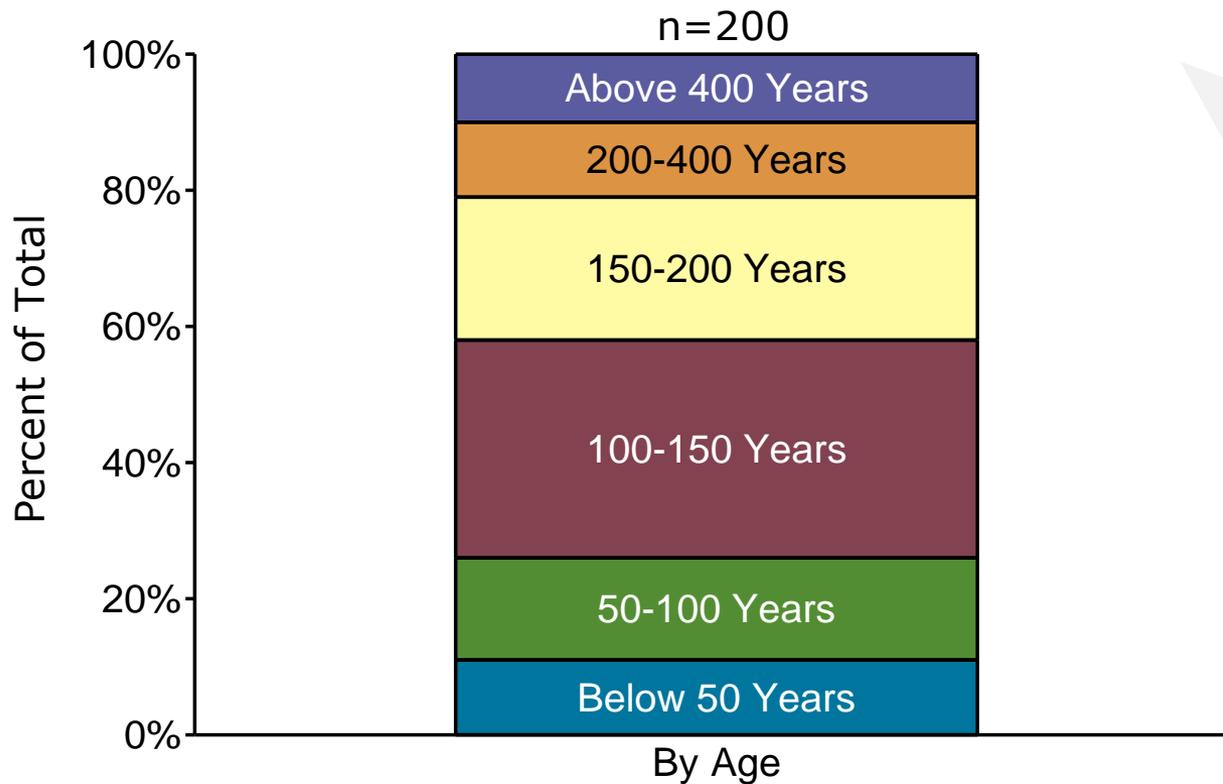
It Takes At Least ~50 Years To Develop A World-Class Institution



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Top 200 World Universities by Age*



Average Age

179 Years

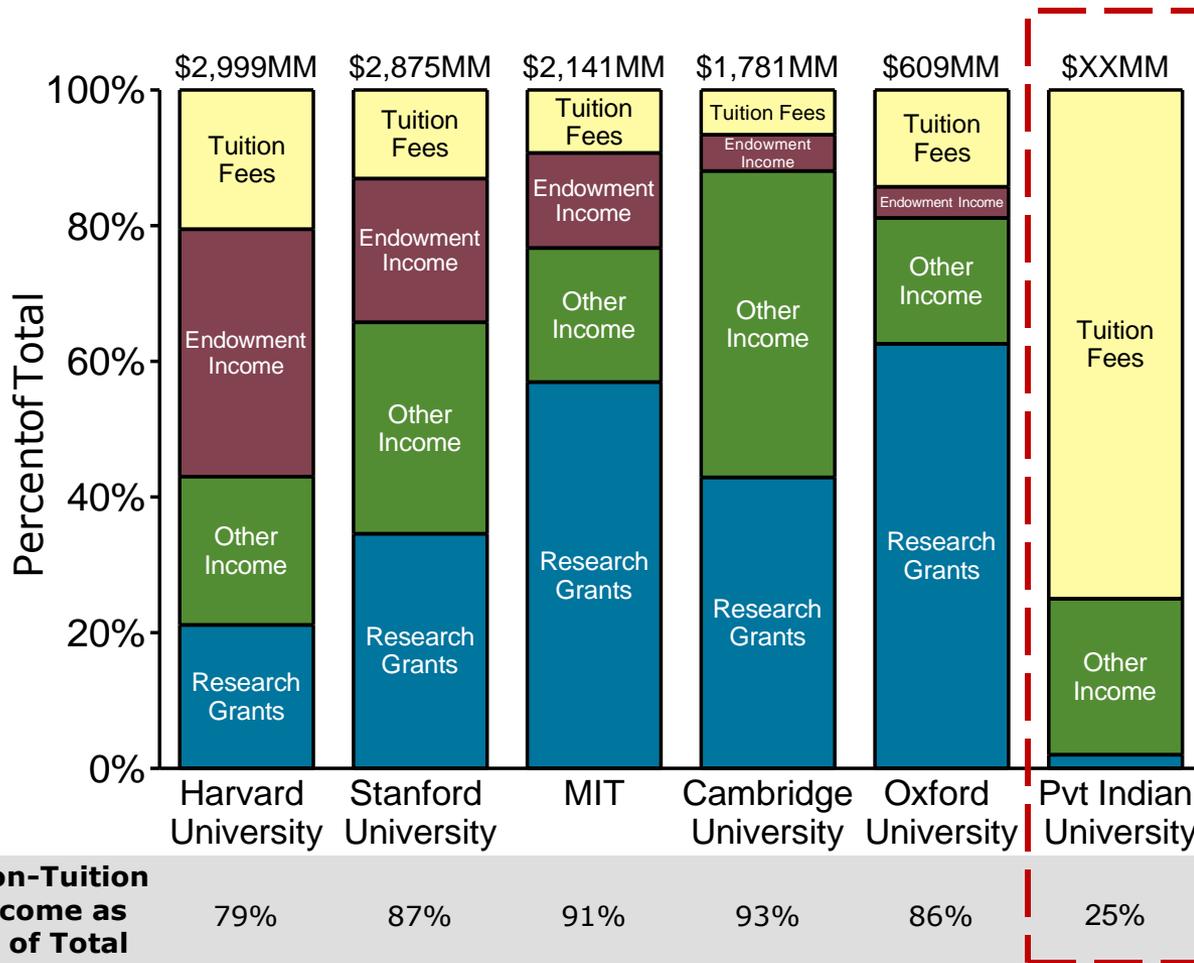
“In India there is this deep desire not to wait for a hundred years for a world-class university, to actually engineer the process. But maybe it is faster to produce an Olympic gold medal athlete in track and field from some of the existing athletes who are maybe 10, 12, 14 years of age.”

Anand Sudarshan, CEO,
Manipal Universal Learning

Non-Tuition Income (Grants, Income From Endowments, Etc.) Composes A Significant Portion Of Funding At WCUs; In India, Universities Rely Largely On Tuition Fees



University Funding by Source*



“In India, the one thing that we lack when we compare us to other world-class universities is the endowment. And there is nobody ready to pump in so much money into the Indian system.”

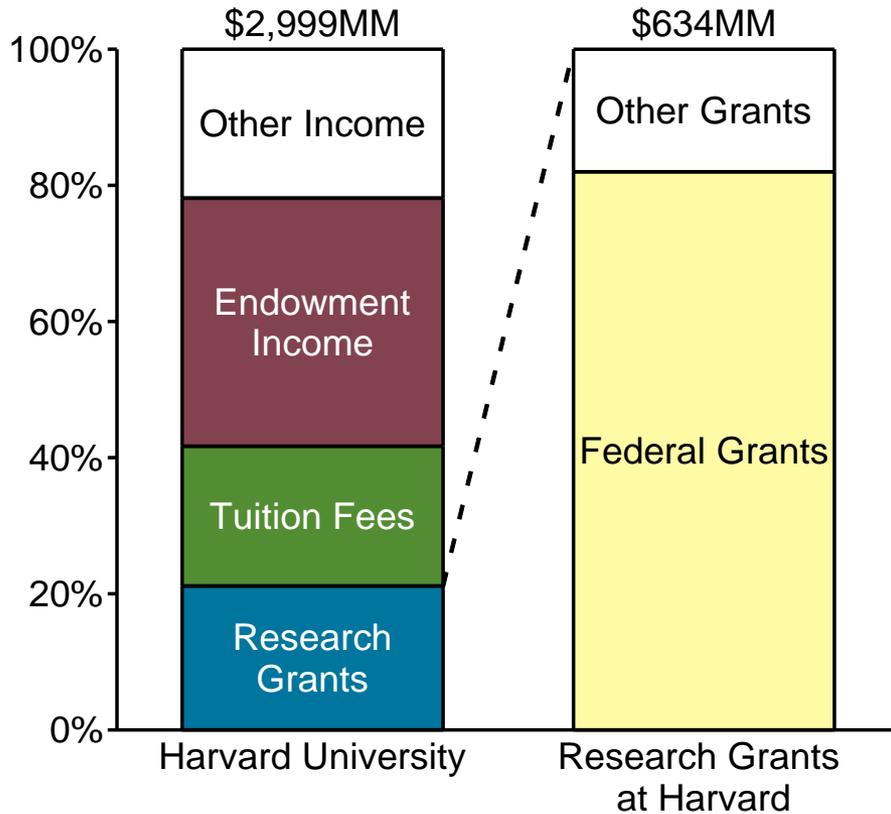
Dr Yaj Medury, Vice Chancellor, Jaypee University of Information Technology

Note: Other Income includes revenues from publishing, royalties, gifts for current use, rental, health services and other university activities; * Source: University websites; NCES

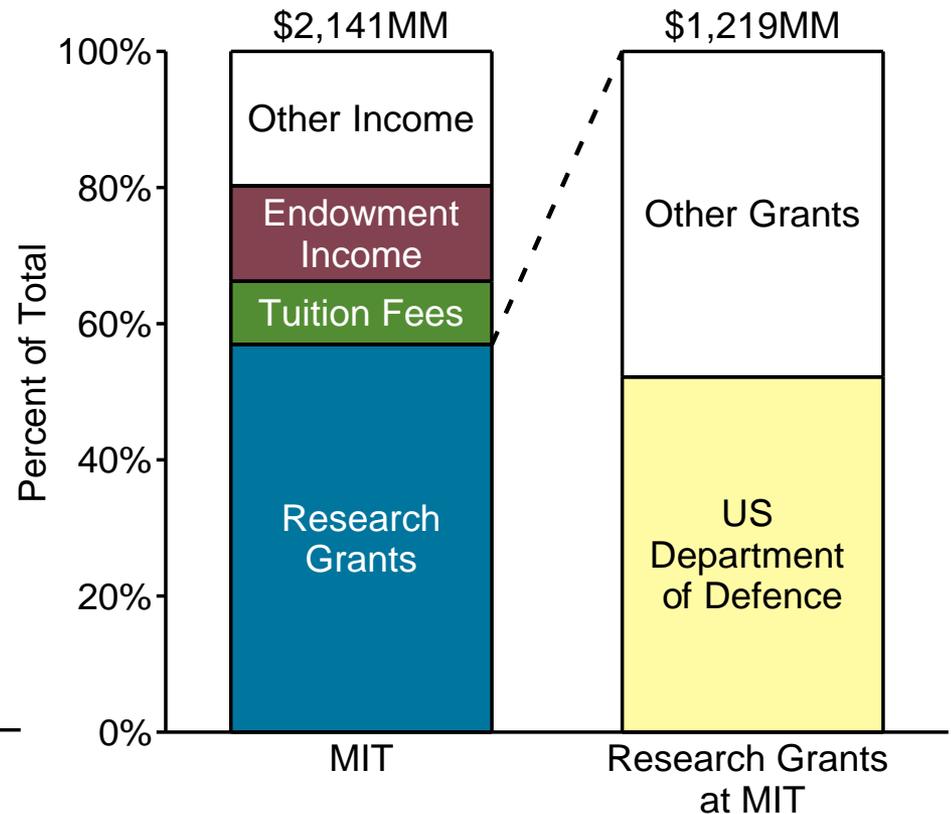
Most Of The Grants At WCUs Are Government-Sponsored



Harvard Operating Revenues by Source of Income, (FY06)



MIT Operating Revenues by Source of Income, (FY06)





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World-Class University
Capital Efficient University

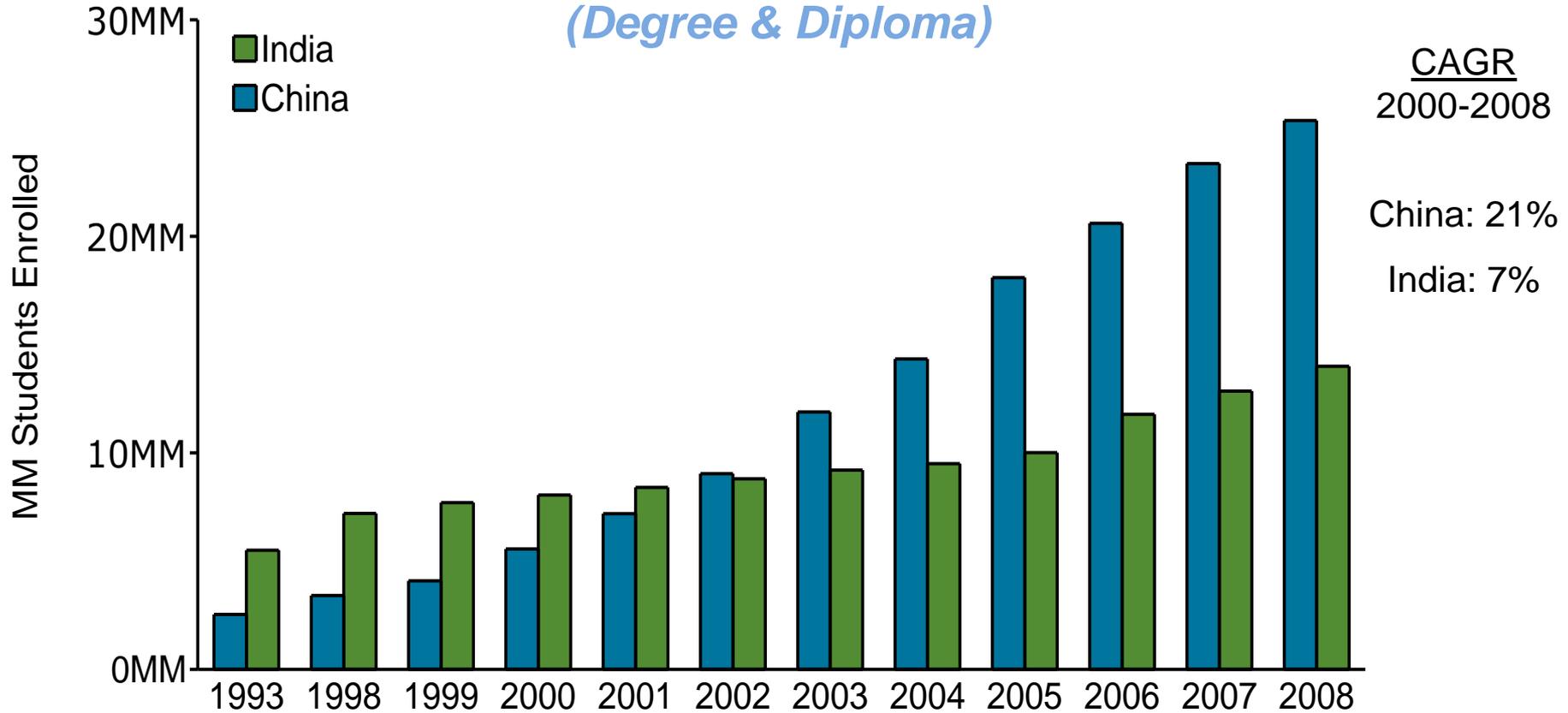
Private Self-Regulated Universities Are What Drives Enrolment Growth In China



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Number of Students Enrolled in Higher Education (Degree & Diploma)



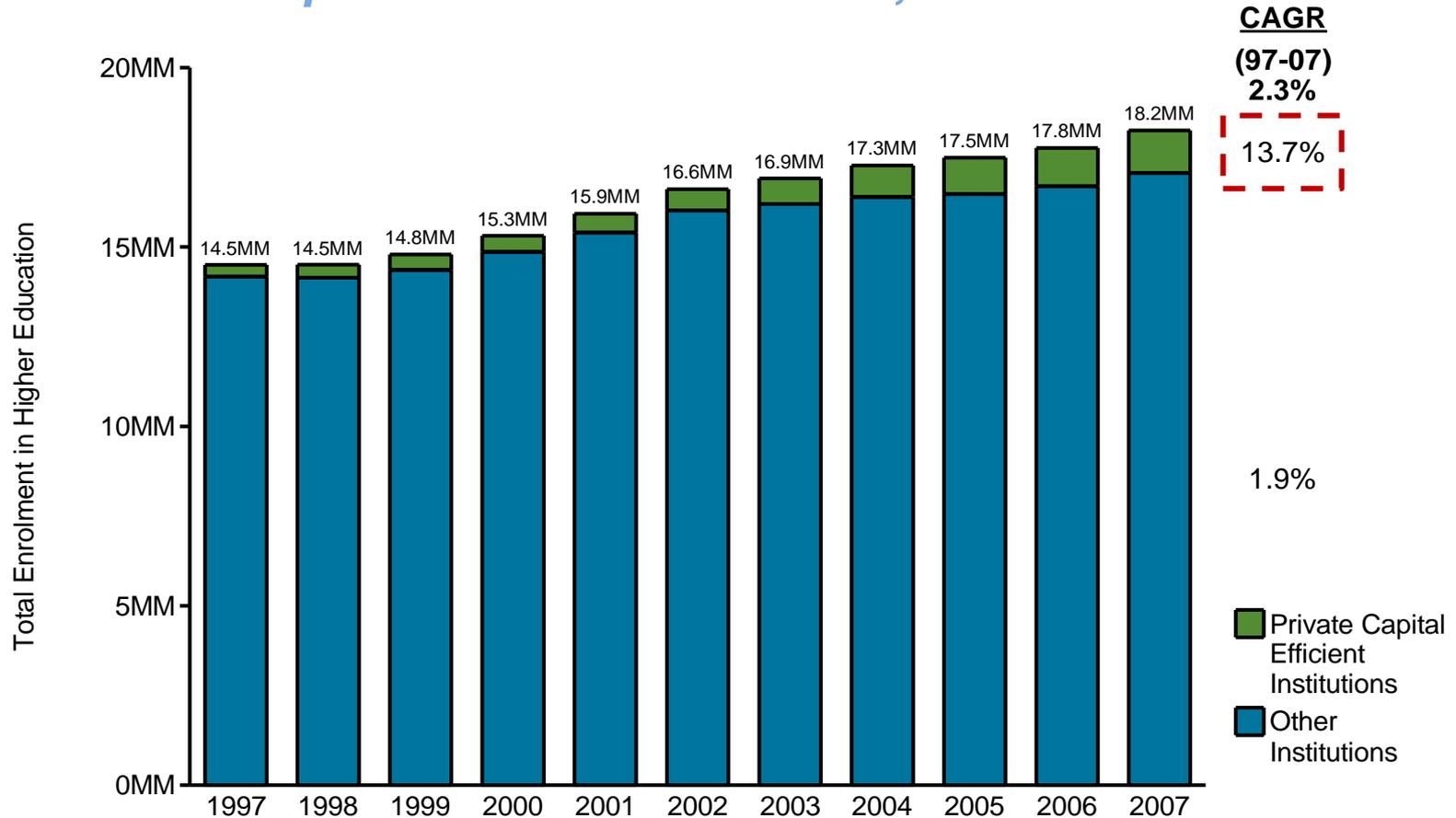
In The US, It Is The Capital-Efficient Institutions That Enroll Poor And First Generation Migrants And Are Driving Enrolment Growth



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US Higher Education Enrolment, Total and in Private Capital-Efficient Institutions, 1997-2007



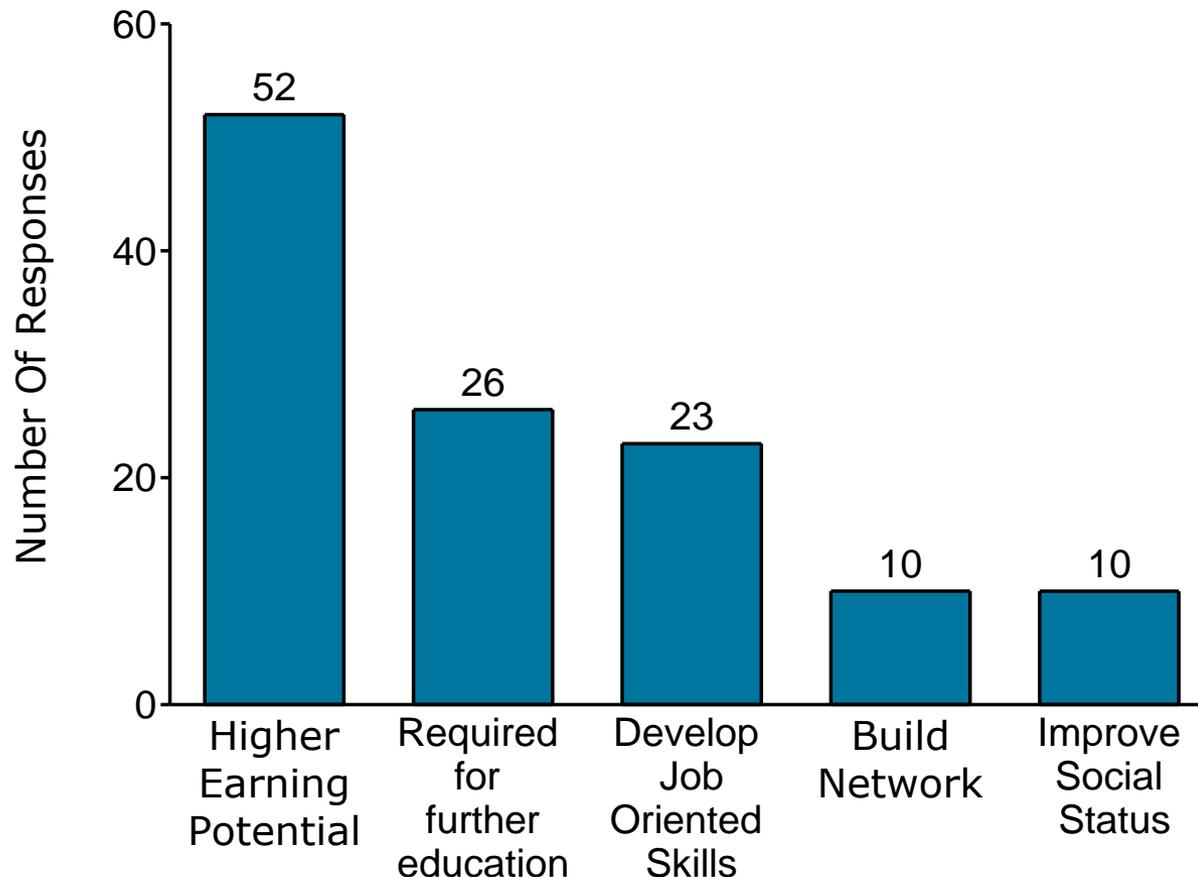
The Value Proposition Of The Capital Efficient Model Should Be Student Employability



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Question to Students: What was your primary objective behind pursuing this course?



“There are a variety of parameters to measure the success of an institution. Student placements and average salaries upon graduation are among the most important ones.”

Dr Yaj Medury, Vice Chancellor, Jaypee University of Information Technology

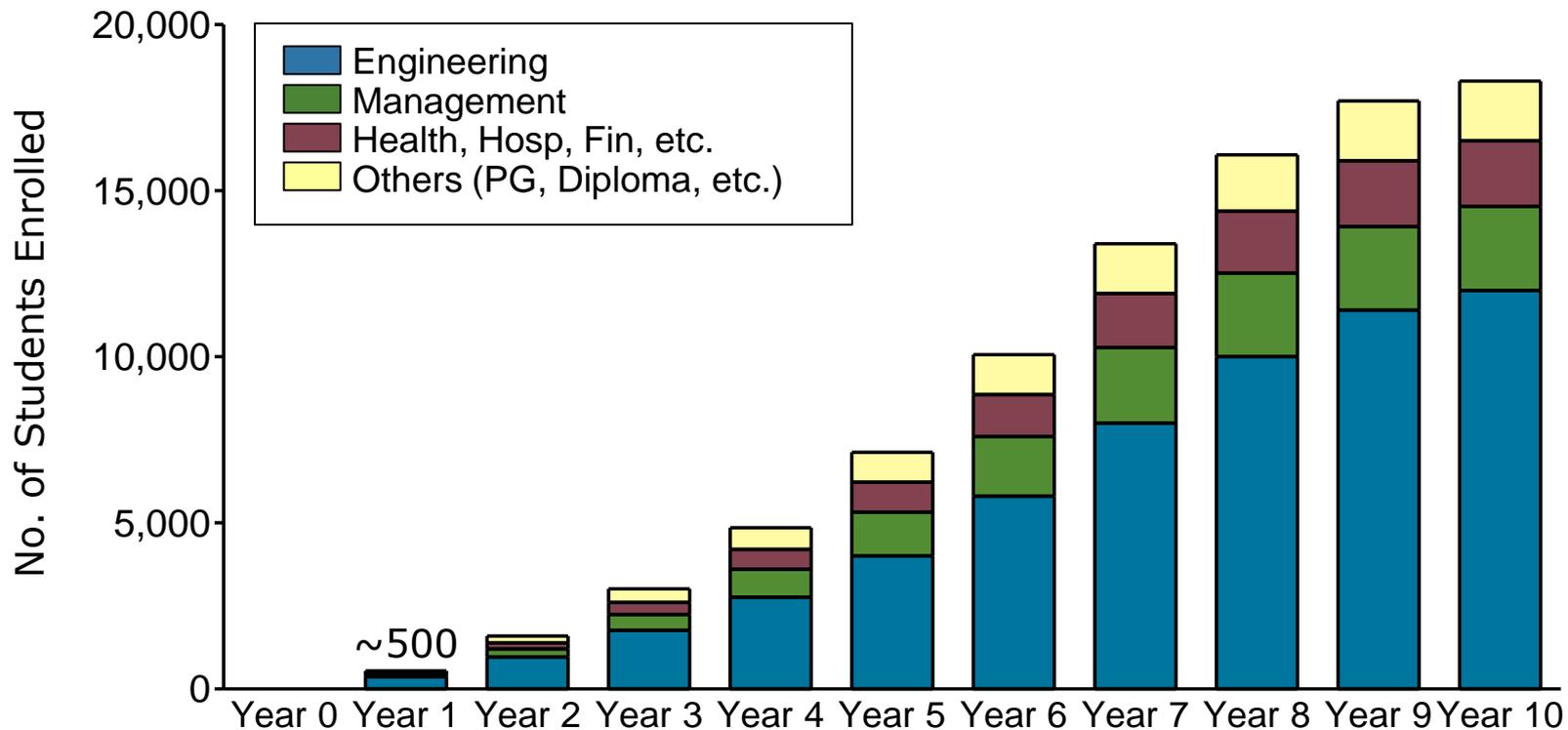
It Is Possible To Achieve ~20K Student Enrolment By Year 10 Of Operations On A Single Campus



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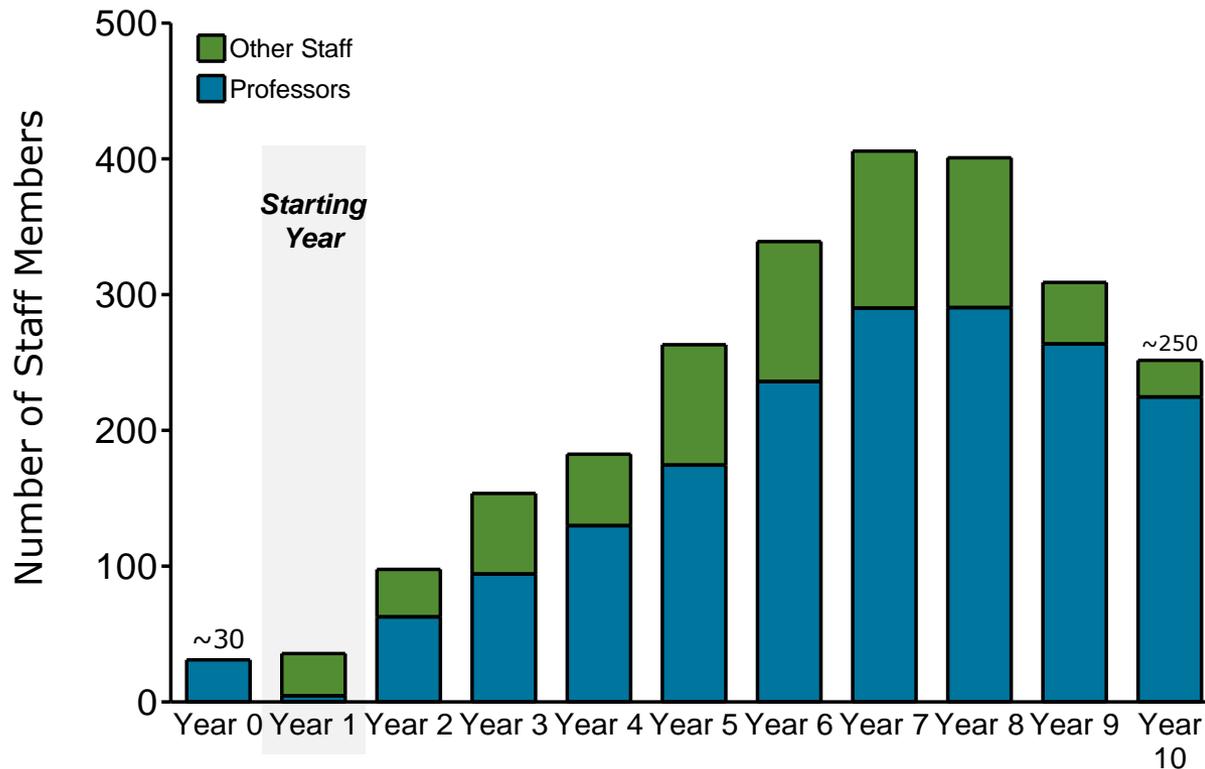
Enrolment at a Scale Campus, Year 0 to Year 10



The University Will Require Total Staff Of ~2K By Year 10 Of Operations



Incremental Staff Recruitment at a Scale Campus, Year 0 to Year 10



Total Staff	~30	~85	~200	~350	~550	~800	~1,100	~1,400	~1,700	~1,800	~1,900
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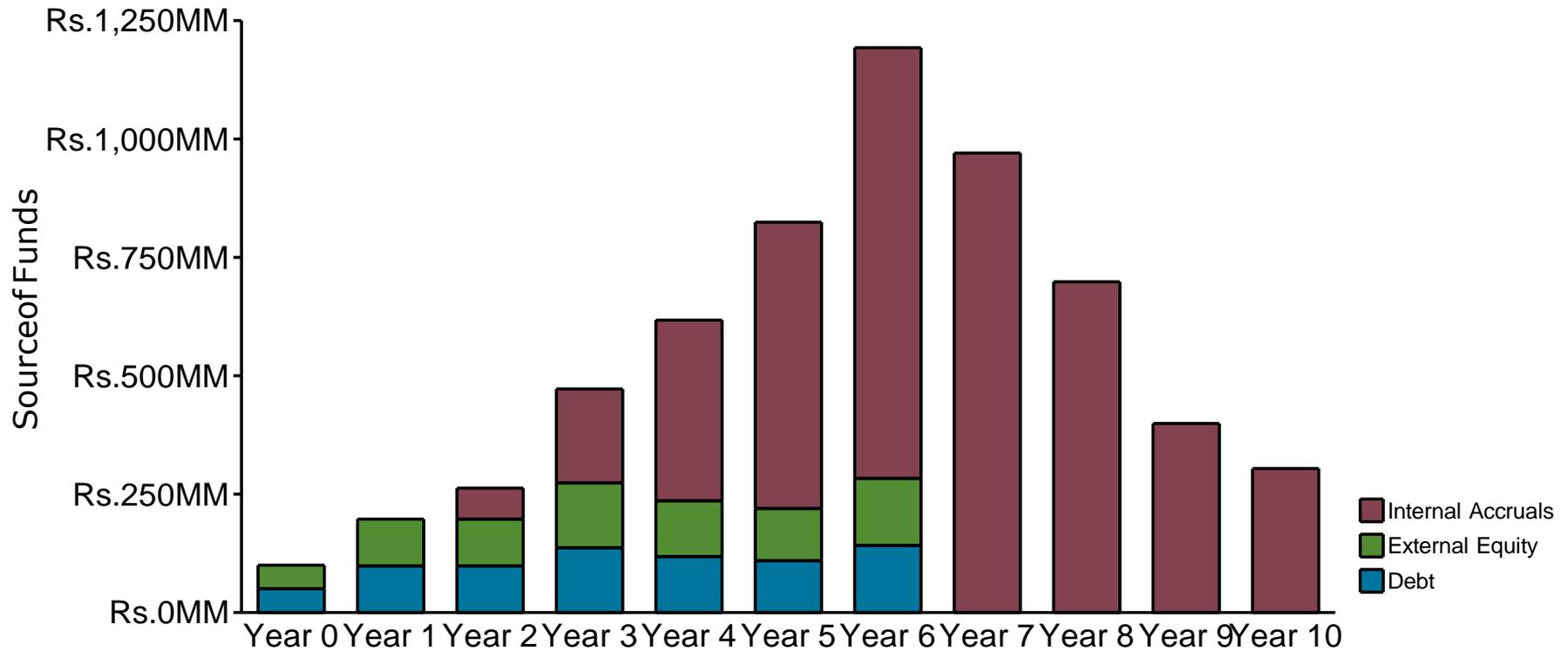
“The need for good faculty tops the list of the critical factors for a university. Most of my energy goes into hiring good people.”

Dr Abhijit Mukherjee,
Director, Thapar
University

Scale Campus Can Be Expected To Become Self-Financing From Year 7 Onwards



Source of Funds for a Scale Campus, Year 0 to Year 10



China Has Driven Growth Of Quality Higher Education Through A Balanced/Objective Accreditation System



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Accountability/Quality

- Accreditation is licensed from public university
 - Private college is subject to quality inspection
 - Parent public university ultimately responsible for quality of private college
 - Funds from licensing re-invested in public college

Scalability

- Private college allowed to set price points and decide courses to offer
- Private college allowed to grow enrollment based on maintenance of objective metrics (e.g., students/teacher ratio, infrastructure per student)
- Transparent funding, shareholder and dividend structure

Student Needs Focused

- Private colleges must compete for students based on quality and value (i.e., job placement)
- Ability to build operating surplus through pricing/scale enrollments allows colleges to re-invest in quality to compete

Growing India's GER At Rates Similar To China Would Result In PPP-Adjusted GDP Per Capita Of \$10,400 By 2020



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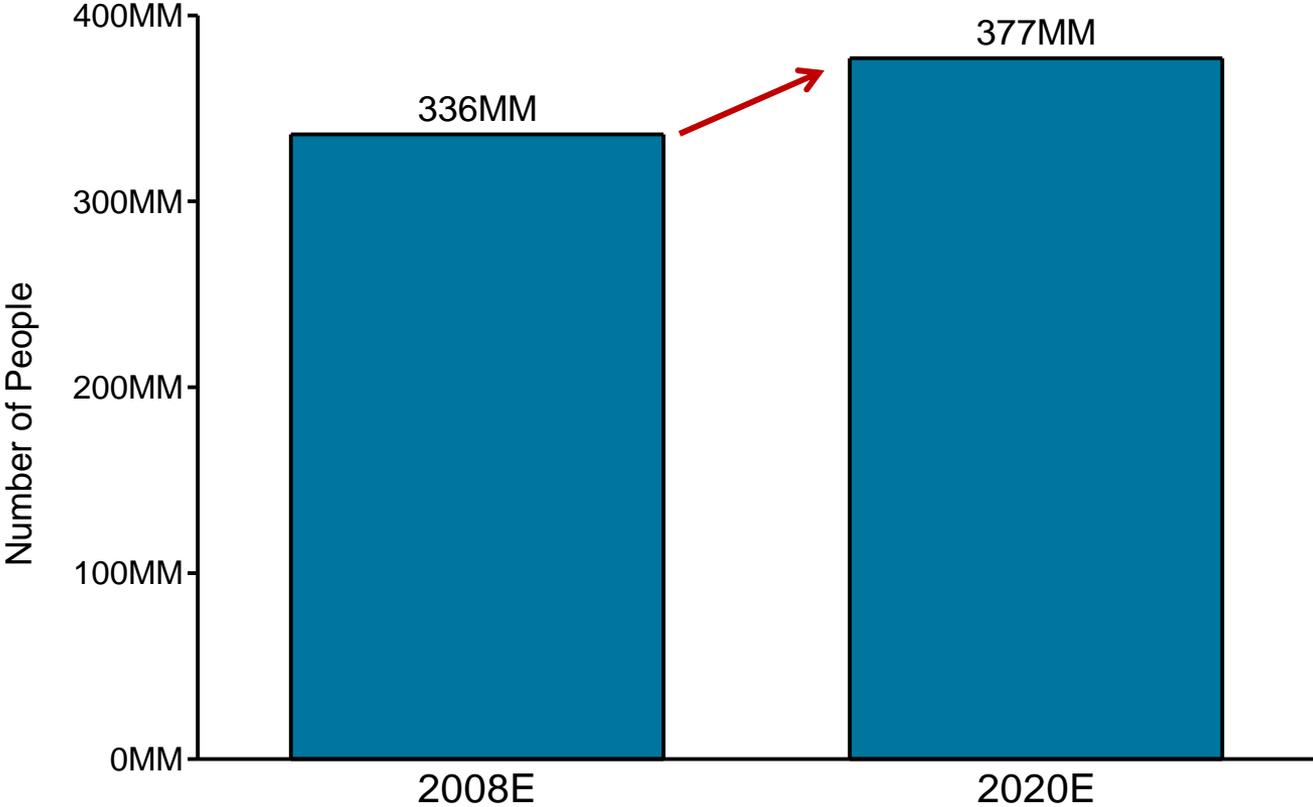
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	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
	Tertiary Enrolment Grows At Historical Rate (1.1MM Additional Seats per Year)	Tertiary Enrolment Grows At China's Rate (2MM Additional Seats per Year From 2011)
Year	2020	2020
Tertiary Gross Enrolment Ratio	19%	29%
Resulting PPP-adjusted GDP per capita	\$6,100	\$10,400

Without Accelerating The Growth Of Indian Higher Education We Will Squander Our Demographic Dividend



Number of 25-50 Year Olds Without A College Degree, 2008 and 2020 (if the Growth of Indian Higher Education Does Not Accelerate)



Incentives Required For The Capital Efficient University Model



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■ **Accountability/Quality:**

- Develop clear and objective guidelines for accreditation
- Create competitive mechanisms for accountability (e.g., competing accreditation boards, links to existing quality public universities)

■ **Scalability:**

- Permit responsible private capital to enter sector
- Allow private colleges/universities the freedom to offer courses to meet market needs and scale to meet demand
- Let the market (including the entry of competitive supply) decide pricing

■ **Student Needs Focused:**

- Use competition as the mechanism to focus colleges on meeting student needs

“There are institutions and corporates who are ready to invest and create great universities. There should be policies for them to enter into the field.”

Dr Sunil Karad, Executive Director, MIT Pune



Conclusions

- **Economic growth of a country is linked to growth in higher education enrolments**
- **To support economic growth India needs to have additional ~7.7MM seats by 2014 which requires ~Rs. 77K crores incremental capital investment**
- **The NKC recommends to establish 50 World-Class universities in addition to expanding the current number of universities to 1500**
- **The Parthenon Group and FedUni study suggests the need for two types of universities in India – World-Class universities and capital efficient universities**
- **The capital efficient university model will drive enrolment volume in India; the World-Class model will be a brand builder for the country**
- **Government concerns on quality and costs of higher education can be addressed through liberalization of the higher education sector for the benefit of the students**



Interviewer	Dr L K Maheshwari
<p>In order to increase the number of world-class universities, what strategy should be implemented in India: upgrading existing institutions, merging existing institutions or creating new institutions from scratch?</p>	<p>World Class Universities will require autonomy in designing curriculum, syllabus, pedagogy, admission methods, level of fees, etc. to be decided by universities themselves. There is no need of approval by external agencies or administrative processes subject governmental supervision. Let there be a competition to achieve world class status.</p>
<p>What share of the responsibility of establishing national universities should fall on the private sector?</p>	<p>Private sector will play a very important role. Let it be given the autonomy to face the challenge. Government can ask for total transparency and verify declarations made by the sector.</p>
<p>Does India actually need world-class universities? Or does it need a different format of additional institutions?).If different, please describe the institution along various parameters:</p>	<p>Subjects - India can offer specialised subjects on heritage, the science of medicine, yoga, Indian sculpture and also modern areas of computer technology and other disciplines. Governance - governance structure should be responsive to stakeholders' needs, namely students, faculty and surrounding society. Research areas and infrastructure must be best and equal to any best university. Freedom to researcher to choose has to be given. Faculty - the campus life should be conducive to faculty involvement and growth. Infrastructure - it has to be world class and user friendly.</p>
<p>What incentives should be offered by the government?</p>	<p>Fewer regulations; ensuring the autonomy of institutions in their day-to-day operations.</p>
<p>What should be the role of foreign institutions in helping India set up its universities, if at all?</p>	<p>Borrow best practices of world class institutions in academic programs, pedagogy, research, university administration, infrastructure, people-related issues and campus life.</p>



Interviewer	N J Yasaswy
<p>What do you consider to be the greatest achievement of your institution?</p>	<p>The success in offering innovative, career oriented courses in management has been a key achievement. Whether it is the CFA program back in 1985, when ICFAI was established, or the current programs in the management discipline both in the Campus and distance mode, the emphasis on developing skills, attitudes and knowledge relevant to the demand in the marketplace has enabled ICFAI to build a fair brand equity</p>
<p>What were the 3 most critical success factors for your institution?</p>	<p>Amongst the three would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the software: the content and its delivery. • Focus on Employability: ensuring the relevance of the teaching to the demand of the marketplace by way of a close interaction with potential recruiters, and • Focus on Quality: across all aspects from Faculty selection, student enrolment, infrastructure and conduct.
<p>How have you been able to attract high-quality faculty?</p>	<p>A “professional” work environment is the cornerstone of ICFAI’s approach to Faculty retention and motivation. Faculty are given ample opportunity to (1) conduct research, (2) teach and (3) be involved in Institutional building activities. In ICFAI’s experience, Faculty views a proper work environment as being more critical than monetary aspects. The remuneration at ICFAI is market based</p>
<p>What has been the greatest challenge in developing your institution?</p>	<p>The greatest challenge has been the sourcing of Faculty. The shortage of Faculty, more specifically with a doctoral qualification is an all India problem. ICFAI addresses this shortage proactively through a student friendly PhD program that offers attractive stipends and research exposure in foreign Universities.</p> <p>The regulatory environment has never been a serious issue, as ICFAI operates in the management space, where the regulations are lighter when compared to Medicine or Engineering.</p>
<p>Where do you see your institution in 10 years?</p>	<p>In this time frame, ICFAI would have Universities in a majority of States offering courses in the Liberal Arts, Science and technology, Education, Law and Management.</p>
<p>What is required in order for your institution to achieve that goal within the next 10 years?</p>	<p>Besides the finances for building the infrastructure and adequate faculty, a critical requirement is some semblance of “stability” in the regulatory environment. In recent months there have been instances of conflicting policy statements. Further, news of impending changes in the regulatory environment, by way of Parliament Acts has given rise to an air of uncertainty. Work in key regulatory institutions has slowed down if not stopped altogether. It is not regulations that hinder growth, but its frequent revisions, or worse lack of any clarity. Any regulation that is transparent and uniform is preferred unlike a situation like the current one, where there is a “wait and watch” syndrome or one where arbitrary and inconsistent policy guidelines are issued.</p>



Interviewer	N J Yasaswy
<p>How important is it to be a self-regulated university to continue offering a quality education?</p>	<p>The proposed NCHER Act proposes a laudable and much needed objective of bringing a degree of autonomy in the working of Higher Education Institutions. Whilst we are nowhere near a US type of self regulation it is high time for a start to be made in that direction. The When promulgated the Act could impact the current scenario in one of three forms:</p> <p>The Act may work along the lines of the TRAI and SEBI Acts that opened up the telecom and capital market sectors. Both TRAI and SEBI Acts introduced a transparent and level playing field to all participants, either from the private or public sector. The “license raj” type of controls and permissions were done away with and the market was the final arbiter of performance and hence, acceptance.</p> <p>The Act could replace the existing regulatory Institutions with one that is a sum of the individual institutions with the same mind set and approach to the HE space, rather like “old wine in a new bottle”</p> <p>A third scenario is one where the Act does not result in a paradigm shift to the TRAI/SEBI type of environment, nor fully in the existing garb, but something in between.</p> <p>Of the three forms the last one is the most pernicious. Today Institutions, both in the private and public space are, for better or worse, reconciled and working within the strict archaic regime. Much as they would welcome the paradigm shift, they would be seriously affected if the half way option were to materialize. This would considerably set back any hopes of improving the GER and other critical parameters of quality and transparency.</p>
<p>In your opinion, what does it mean and what does it take to be a “world-class university”?</p>	<p>There are two aspects to a “world class university”. At one level is the infrastructure, comprising of buildings, libraries, laboratories, IT and student and Faculty related conveniences. That is largely a factor of finance and may be set up easily. On another level is the “soft” side aspect which money cannot buy, and which cannot be created overnight. These require time, for they are dependent on reputation. For instance, the Indian School of Business built a world class infrastructure in Hyderabad. It is only now, a decade later, getting some recognition in the International arena. There is yet some more distance for ISB to travel, before getting into the league of “world class Institutes”. Many of the recognized world class Universities have been in existence for decades if not centuries. Their international intake both amongst students and faculty would be at least 25% of the total strength.</p>
<p>Which Indian institutions of higher learning would you consider to be world-class universities?</p>	<p>Whilst there are quite a few Institutions in the country whose infrastructure would qualify for a world class standard, there are none that have the international diversity in Faculty and students, nor the research capability to qualify from a soft side perspective. The existing visa regime in the country is not conducive for foreign students. For instance students cannot earn whilst pursuing a qualification, nor be permitted to stay back in the Country to put their knowledge to work in an Indian setting. There has to be a mind set shift to accept students from developed economies who truly add to the diversity that is required. Providing education to students from LDC whilst serving a laudable cause, does not meet the objective of a world class standard.</p>
<p>What strategy do you think would work best for India: upgrading existing institutions, merging existing institutions, or creating institutions?</p>	<p>There is a possibility of upgrading select Institutions (the IIMs, IITs, IISs and a few Medical Institutions for example) to world class, provided they are able to address the issues of faculty recruitment and internationalization of offerings.</p>



Interviewer	N J Yasaswy
<p>What share of the responsibility of establishing national universities should fall on the private sector?</p>	<p>The private sector in many spheres of activity has demonstrated capacity to set up world class scale and reach. With respect to education, however, there is a great deal of skepticism amongst industrialists owing to the rather negative news from this sector. It is not so much the regulations that are a factor (SEBI and TRAI are examples), as much as the corruption and bureaucracy that the HE space has come to be associated with. New and capable players are reluctant to enter in the current scenario. The planned new ACT must be seen by the industry as providing a level transparent playing field to both the private and public sector alike.</p>
<p>In your opinion, on average what financial investment would be required to set up a national university?</p>	<p>A back-of-the-envelope estimate for a world class University infrastructure catering to liberal Arts, Science, Engineering, Management and law with an annual undergraduate intake of 5000 students would be in the region of Rs 600 crores. This excludes the cost of land estimated at 300 acres.</p>
<p>Does India actually need world-class universities? Or does it need a different format of additional institutions?</p>	<p>A world class university is a brand builder for the country. It has a “signaling” effect of the country coming of age and being recognized amongst the world community. Perhaps for that reason there is a need for a few universities to be established in the country. However this does not address the basic problems that plague the HE space currently viz. that of access and equity. Just like in the secondary school space a few International Schools catering to the elite cannot, and will not, solve the access problems as how the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavans or the DAV Schools have done. India needs both the elitist and egalitarian models for differing reasons.</p>
<p>What incentives should be offered by the government?</p>	<p>The only incentive needed is a transparent steady, dependable and non arbitrary regulatory environment.</p>
<p>Most private universities have either large endowment income and/or get a great proportion of their expenses covered by government research grants. How do you think this would work in the Indian context?</p>	<p>In the Indian context the Alumni contributing to their Alma Mater is still some years away. Likewise research grants are limited and its dispensation tied up in officialdom and patronage. Once the new Act is in place, the serious committed Institutions would be in a position to manage with their internal accruals. The proposed tax on non profits may be a dampener and contrary to the spirit making education a “right” for every citizen.</p>
<p>What should be the role of the industry within the context of universities?</p>	<p>Industry does need to co operate more closely with the Academic world to ensure right skill sets are imparted. A Sector wise finishing School (like what is introduced by some IT Firms) would improve employability and maintain currency of skills and knowledge.</p>
<p>What should be the role of foreign institutions in helping India set up its universities, if at all?</p>	<p>It is unlikely that foreign universities would find our goal of establishing world class universities of relevance to their own growth plans. The controls on prices and selection are alien to their working. Their participation may be limited to Faculty and student exchange and joint research projects.</p>



Interviewer	N J Yasaswy
<p>There is a line of thinking amongst some institutions that we have to focus on education and we can't do both – teaching and research. Research output should not be a requirement in the unitary institutions because it essentially requires a different mindset, a different ambience to be able to succeed in research.</p>	<p>What I would suggest is that the research staff should also be involved in teaching. Their main focus will be research but they will also be involved in student education. The staff which is recruited for teaching will have at least a certain amount of research to update themselves but their main thing will be teaching, so you can have two kinds of staff operating.</p>
<p>How is the research going to help an institution which is churning out good quality undergraduates?</p>	<p>We believe that any college has to develop its roots in the locality so any research that they do should be related to that area, i.e. marine agriculture for us in Tamil Nadu, etc.</p>
<p>What should be the role of the industry?</p>	<p>In the 3rd year the students will be sent for a month to an industry for internships and the industry – institute interaction should be very strong. Now when the student goes to an industry and works there, his whole outlook changes and he becomes much more serious. Some of the industries employ the student when they see a very bright student. So if you want to have any meaningful curriculum the industrial partnership is something which is really important. The research can also be linked to the industry and a way to get additional funding.</p>
<p>My last question is about the international factor. One is about the role of the foreign students on campus and the second one is about the benefits of having any relations with international institutions. What is the importance of making your brand name in the international market from the industry angle?</p>	<p>Whenever a foreign university came to us my first question was about the partnership we would have. I don't want to dilute the brand of Loyola College. I also tell them that Loyola College is a superior institution. We want our staff to be taken abroad to teach and the foreign staff to come here and teach. The research area for example is something which is of importance to them and to us so we will do our part this side and they will do their part over there and then we come together. Now, we have students going there for exchange programs and we have students coming here, they bring enough credits and whatever credit they bring from there we accept them. In the same way we had one semester of foreign students coming in and being part of our student body. They can study whatever they want to pick up and we also teach them Indian culture.</p>

Dr Yaj Medury

Vice Chancellor, Jaypee University Of Information Technology



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THE PARTHENON GROUP

Interviewer	Dr Yaj Medury
<p>When was your institution founded? What was the founder's vision for the institution? Has that vision evolved over the years?</p>	<p>We are a fairly young institution as we began our operations in July, 2002. We were granted the university status by the state of Himachal Pradesh and we were the first private university in the state. Why did the Jaypee group founder Jaiprakash Gaur get into higher education? Because he is a man who believes in giving back to the society. The Jaypee Group which runs hydroelectric power plants has been very active in the state of Himachal Pradesh and the former Chief Minister requested the Jaypee Group to set up a high quality private university in the state of Himachal Pradesh. Our founder, Mr. Jaiprakash believed that education will help people get enlightened and become more developed and ultimately help India in becoming a developed nation. He also says that one educated person can educate at least 10 others and this way illiteracy can be eradicated in this country. We started operations in 2002 on a very small scale - we took just 172 students. In 2003 it grew to 250 and then 360 students and now we have stabilized at about 450. Along with undergraduate programs, we also have post graduate programs like M. Tech in computer science, biotechnology, electronics and the doctorate programs.</p>
<p>What do you consider to be the greatest achievement of your institution?</p>	<p>There are a variety of parameters as to how successful we are. Student placements are one of them. I'm very happy to say that since our first batch of 2006 we have achieved 100% student placements, getting them jobs in IT companies and also in the biotechnology sector. In IT they have been placed in companies such as TCS, Wipro, Accenture, TechMahindra and all of them found Jaypee graduates to of very high quality. If you look at the salaries, there are students who are able to get around 8 to 10 lakhs whereas the average salary is around 3.5 to 4 lakhs. We have been able to send at least 2 students every year to the IIMs, to Germany, the US and the UK.</p>
<p>What is your typical student profile? What benefits do you receive from the state?</p>	<p>When we started off in 2002, as per our agreement with the state we had 5% reserved for Himachal students over and above the sanctioned number. As of now we have roughly around 28% Himachal students studying with us and all selections are done on the basis of their merit in the All India Engineering Entrance Exam, which is the basis for admission to our University. It's important to know that around 60 – 70% of the students who come here take an educational loan. We have scholarships for meritorious and needy students.</p>
<p>Where do students get the loans from?</p>	<p>Mostly from the banks. Additionally we are also trying to provide interest free loans on the condition that they pay back the loan without any interest within 4 years of getting a job. This is a rather unique scheme for India. It has actually spawned out of roughly 3 to 4 crores which have been generated by the employees of the Jaypee Group. People have contributed from as low as Rs 100 to cheques worth Rs 1 lakh and it is from this pool of money that we are funding this scheme.</p>

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THE PARTHENON GROUP

Interviewer	Dr Yaj Medury
<p>If you were to name 3 most critical factors for the success of your institution, what would you say?</p>	<p>The core focus at any good institution is the good faculty, good students, a good purposeful environment, and infrastructure. As far as infrastructure in concerned, it's one of the best in the country. As far as faculty is concerned, there has been a drastic change. We have been able to attract good people, some of them with doctorate degrees coming from outside as well as the Indian system. They are about 90 faculty members and around 55% hold a doctorate degree. We have also for the past 4 years generated about 7 PhDs each year so we have around 27 or 28 PhDs from our system. We have a large number of research papers which have been indexed in journals. We have been able to generate a lot of funds through projects and other government agencies like the Department of Science and Technology, Department of Biotechnology, ICMR, etc. Overall it has been a fairly successful 7 and a half years but we still say that we're young and there's a very long way to go. I mean I would be love to be in a situation where we are able to restrict our under graduate intake to 2,000-3,000.</p>
<p>Is enrolment of 420 over a period of 7 years a policy? Is the growth slow but effective?</p>	<p>There are a lot of constraint factors, since the group is not into education as a business so the focus is more on quality which is accepted by the industry. Secondly even I want to increase the student strength then I would have to expand my residential facilities here and there's land constraint since it's a hilly area. We have asked the state for extra land so as soon as we get it we plan to double our capacity.</p>
<p>Has your selectivity of students increased over the years?</p>	<p>There is a marked difference in the quality of students who join now and who joined in 2002. We are getting better rankers and students who have done well in their exams.</p>
<p>How have you been able to attract high-quality faculty?</p>	<p>We offer substantially higher rates as far as the salaries are concerned. In fact we revised our salaries every 2 years over the past 6 years so in 2006 we carried a revision, in 2008 again we carried a revision and the most recent one after the 6th pay commission came into force. We roughly offer 25-30% higher salaries than the IITs offer. Secondly, we provide an environment where the faculty is able to go out for national & international conferences; they have a free environment. My attrition rate is very low. People who generally leave are ladies who get married and then get posted in other cities otherwise I don't lose faculty. In fact some of the members who joined us in 2002 are still with us and some who have retired from their original system have come back and joined us so the overall environment is a very family like here. It puts everyone at ease and then allows them to ease into their field of work.</p>
<p>Where do you see your institution in 10 years?</p>	<p>Right now we have a campus of about 25 acres and a built up area of about 1 million square feet. If we get another 25 acres of land we will have a built up area of around 2.5 million square feet and we could go up to 4000 total students. So we're thinking of adding a lot of inter-disciplinary courses so that different departments work together in specific areas of research. However, research will not be hi-tech since that involves machinery worth crores which we can't afford right now. To a certain extent we have been able to alleviate that by asking the departments what they actually need. Today if somebody asks me how much has been invested in this campus since 2002 and you're adding everything up then about 150 crores have been put in with the infrastructure being charged at a subsidized rate, otherwise it would have been around 250 crores on this particular campus. Where do we want to be 10 years from now? I would say that we would like to keep on delivering high-quality undergraduates, we would like for our students to remain satisfied with us. I would also like to see the students take high level jobs in big companies because as of now they go to Infosys then move on to Oracle, Google, Sun, and Microsoft. But in 3 to 4 years from now I would like them to go directly to Microsoft. I think one should look at every aspect step by step and then build on that because where IITs are now – we are far, far away. I think private universities suffer to some extent from the private tag which is imposed on them. If that were to go away, I think then we would get much better faculty, who would be equally satisfied being with us.</p>

Dr Yaj Medury

Vice Chancellor, Jaypee University Of Information Technology

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THE PARTHENON GROUP

Interviewer	Dr Yaj Medury
<p>In your opinion, what does it mean and what does it take to be a “world-class university”?</p>	<p>Modern curriculum, good faculty, autonomy - it's all there in India, the one thing that we lack when we compare us to other world-class universities is the endowment. If you take MIT or the University of California, the endowment that they have is a thousand times more than the endowment in any particular institute in India. There is not a single Indian university in top 50 or top 100 world universities right now and we will try and get into that, but to get into the top 100 you have to knock somebody out, and the universities that are already in the top 100, they are not going to give away, no way. It is very easy to say “I will become a world-class university” but the biggest drawback is that we just don't have a large enough endowment, we don't have endowments running into billions of dollars and there is nobody here ready to pump in so much money into the Indian system.</p>
<p>Why do you think that's so? There are so many wealthy corporations or individuals in India, so what's the matter?</p>	<p>It is because the Indian system, the Indian industry does not participate. You talk about industry institutes - it's like a big joke, there are hardly any industry institutes in comparison to Europe or the US or even in China nowadays, there is hardly any interaction. You have the same Indian who goes and settles in the US and he's pumping millions and billions of dollars into the US academic front. That same person if you ask him to do it in India, is most reluctant, he is absolutely not willing to do it. If we don't have large endowments there is no way we can reach that level of research capabilities and other activities.</p>
<p>So where should these endowments come from? Who should be responsible and if it's the industry, so what needs to be done to change their mind set?</p>	<p>It's something that got stuck because the government has been pumping money into the academics system. If the government had long back withdrawn from it, the institutions would have to live for themselves; they would have woken up to that fact and done it. You look at certain categories of institutions like IIT Kanpur or IIM Ahmedabad, the corporate fund that they have been able to build up over a couple of years has been very high, each one has become about 100 – 200 crores. The institutions are getting money from alumni and other areas. If the government is going to keep on pumping money and keep on controlling the system which they want to do then there is a problem. We should be like the US, UK or Europe where it is market driven.</p>
<p>On average, what kind of investment is required to offer good quality infrastructure?</p>	<p>If you are looking to restrict the land size of the campus because the bigger the land size, the more you will have to build and then you are out of funds. If you are looking at about a 20 acre campus I would say roughly about Rs 100-150 crores would be more than sufficient to build something which would be of good quality. The minimum number of students you require is ~2500 students.</p>
<p>What incentives should be offered by the government?</p>	<p>These sorts of figures like Rs 150, 200, or even 1000 crores in today's context is not really outside the reach of many industrialists. Education is not being seen like what Jaypee has done, it's not being seen as a social responsibility for industrialists. If want to start something now, banks are ready to give loans up to 50-60 crores straight away which is more than enough to set up something for the first 2-3 years, get the first results and then plough it back and clear the loan. It is something that the industrialist doesn't have to spend a single paisa on his own; he just has to stand as a guarantee to that particular loan. I don't think any foreign university is going to come to India from a socialistic or a charity point of view. If they are going to come and set up something which is going to run, they don't want to keep on pumping money. In the same way an industrialist or a medium scale entrepreneur or anyone who wants to put in money, they want to be guaranteed that it's not going to be tampered with. At the end of the day if market driven forces have said that if I can go in and charge Rs 10 lakhs because the product which is coming out is of a very high quality and nature, is getting good jobs, then more and more people are joining it. For example, the Indian School of Business started off by charging Rs 16 lakhs around 5 years ago and today it charges Rs 28 lakhs per year per. Student demand is incredible. In fact they don't give a degree as well, they just come and study for 1 year and there is a paper that says that he is a good student and that he has studied for 1 year and is therefore equipped with the knowledge in management.</p>



Interviewer	Dr Yaj Medury
What should be the role of foreign universities in India, if any? If there is any role at all?	Foreign universities should be allowed to come in to India, they will set a benchmark which will be much higher than what we have, then we get to prove ourselves, then I think it would be a big plus point for any Indian campus. If a foreign university is set up in Himachal Pradesh, then I would be comparing myself to them otherwise I am going to lose out on students. It has happened in the Indian industry that foreign entities that have come and set up and produced items that inspired our industry to produce better goods. Same way is required in the education, it will change the face of Indian higher education, and I firmly believe that.
But do you think there will be enough demand from Indian students for these institutions?	If you take the example of engineering entrance exams, in 2009 there were 9.7 lakhs students taking that exam. How many of those would have joined the Indian engineering sector? I would say roughly less than 2 lakhs: there is a huge demand, the more available it is, the larger number of people will join these foreign universities.

Father Xavier

Former Principal, Loyola College

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THE PARTHENON GROUP

Interviewer	Father Xavier
<p>When was the institution founded and what was the vision behind it?</p>	<p>I worked at Loyola College, Chennai for about 24 years. I'm a teacher by profession. Loyola College was started in the year 1925. The main aim at that time was to make higher education available to poor people, marginalized communities and those who are not getting an opportunity to get into higher education. So this was the basic idea why the founder Father Francis Bertram started the institution. So the next main focus was to get science and arts education into the country. At first there were about 75 people in 3 departments. Afterwards it went on growing more and more. The stepping stone was the autonomy. It was one of the first main institutions that became autonomous in India. The idea of autonomy was that there would be academic freedom to formulate our own curriculum, to start innovative courses and our own examination and evaluation systems. Originally there was a lot of resistance from the staff but ultimately they saw the wisdom of it and they started to believe in autonomy.</p>
<p>Did you come across any resistance from the policy makers?</p>	<p>Autonomy was granted to us by UGC (University Grants Commission). The second autonomous college was the Madras Christian College. There were about 8 autonomous institutions at the time. Academic freedom was given and it had nothing to do with the government policy of finances. It was not a university status. We were still attached to the Madras University. We needed to get the degree from them but the examination system and evaluation system was ours. Autonomous colleges were the very first colleges where internal assessments were started. We started many new courses. From 15 departments we had when the college became autonomous, we have grown to 25. From 1,500 students then, today it's about 7,000 students. If you count the number of students who are coming to the campus for various campus centres, it is about 12,000 students in total. It's a big campus with about 96 acres of land located in the heart of the city. The campus is one of the best campuses that you can think of with a lot of playgrounds and buildings which are spread out.</p>
<p>Was the autonomy given for financial matters as well?</p>	<p>No, the autonomy was only for academic excellence. It was not for financial matters. Not for admissions or appointment of staff and so on. The autonomy was an attempt to make us a little more innovative. We had freedom to admit students because we were a minority college. I had to fight a lot with the university authorities. Whenever we started an innovative course, they would say we need to first institute it in the university only then you can have it at the college. The whole point was that by the time they would implement it, three years would have passed and it wouldn't be innovative anymore. One of the initial courses we started was visual communications. Now it is all over India but it started with Loyola College. After that when I was the Principal I started with bio-instrumentation course. We thought training instrumentation to post graduates would help them in getting into national laboratories. The only course available at that time was Masters Degree in lab technology. Then we started a course in bioinformatics. In total we had about 4 courses in biology. We wanted to start with 8 postgraduate courses which would be interdisciplinary and we would be able to have a school of our own. This was our whole idea with which we started. But every time I proposed the idea of starting a new course, the university would say no. At one point I told the university that we are an autonomous college and we are starting the course. You do what you like.</p>

Father Xavier

Former Principal, Loyola College

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THE PARTHENON GROUP

Interviewer	Father Xavier
<p>What was your greatest challenge?</p>	<p>We wanted to make autonomy more meaningful not only for courses but also to give us freedom to award degrees. There was a proposal once made by UGC that degrees could be awarded in colleges. We jumped onto it. We said now that the UGC is talking about it then give it to us. That way we would have a weak connection with the university. Most of the problems we were facing especially with starting new courses would be taken care of. But the University was not very happy. They said if we lose our best colleges what do we have left? The university wanted to hold on to us as it added prestige to them. When we finished 25 years of autonomy we had a national seminar where 425 students from all over India came to participate. We said autonomy was not an experiment. It is already proved to be effective. Autonomy is not there in colleges in Kerala, nor does Delhi have autonomous colleges. Andhra Pradesh provides limited autonomy for its colleges. In that case Tamil Nadu is a more progressive state. It allows complete freedom regarding curriculum or techniques of evaluation, etc. The state never interfered with us.</p>
<p>So what's the difference between a private autonomous college and a private university?</p>	<p>As an autonomous college we are still with the university and we need to give them the information that we are starting an innovative course.</p>
<p>Is it constraining you or is it helping you?</p>	<p>It's definitely a constraint. They can block us. They have to send people to our college to see whether we have the facilities and so on. A private or deemed university is one which is autonomous in itself which means that it is not related to any university. Now a deemed university is an act of the Parliament. The UGC approves it. It is the Parliament behind the formulation of a deemed university. The deemed-to-be university is when a particular institution excels in one particular area, so they are allowed to be deemed in that area.</p>
<p>Is it desirable for a college to do that?</p>	<p>Not really, it depends. Private University is different as it is approved by the state government. And the UGC may approve it. Private University means that they can start any number of courses. A perfect example is Vellore Institute of Technology. They were formerly an engineering college. They started bio-tech. Now they have Arts and Science College and also a Nursing one. They also have multiple campuses. Like Vellore Inst of Tech has a campus in Chennai. There is also an idea of a private unitary university. They would be located on a single campus. They are not allowed to move outside of that campus. There seems to be the need to start commercialization.</p>
<p>From the point of view of capital investment for infrastructure, etc. have you ever been financially constrained because and was that ever a challenge?</p>	<p>Loyola College is an aided college. To that extent, the staff of the approved courses are picked by the government. For the self-financed courses we have to find our own staff. So the fee structure of those students will be higher than those of aided courses. For aided courses we are not allowed to charge higher. The government has not been paying us the maintenance cost for a long time. In general, the maintenance payments are very low. Our main source of income for the maintenance of the labs is our research. We get a grant of about Rs 2-3 crores. Then we have science and technology grants then we have UGC. So we have many agencies to fund us. A part of that funding can be used for infrastructural purposes.</p>
<p>So Loyola has solved funding problems because it is a good, well-known college, expected to produce great results. Had it been any other institution, you probably would have had to struggle for funds?</p>	<p>Loyola College has a few centres of excellence. Recently a non-harmful fertilizer was created which already got 3 patents and 5 more patents have been applied for. They are thus able to get some money. Apart from that the management also spends a lot on the development of the institution. It is a mission that we carry on. The college is not to make money. For the students, apart from the scholarships that the government gives, the college also provides about Rs 17 lakhs per year to the poor and marginalized groups. Any student who comes to Loyola should not feel that he is unable to study due to the lack of money. That way we are able to manage. The Fathers who work in the college put their salaries back into the college. We also get some money by renting out our buildings on the weekends. We also have 2 cricket grounds which are rented out on Saturday-Sunday. We have a big centre at Pondicherry, Loyola Training centre. There are about 3000 students studying there. These are all the various sources of funding that we have. Not necessarily from the government but also due to our own efforts.</p>

Father Xavier

Former Principal, Loyola College

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THE PARTHENON GROUP

Interviewer	Father Xavier
<p>How do you overcome the challenge of finding high-quality faculty?</p>	<p>We have a serious problem with that. With these self-financed courses we do not attract quality faculty at all. The problem is they are all paid low. With the new Sixth Pay Commission, the Principal gets about Rs 1.5 lakhs per month. The head of the department gets around Rs 90,000. Anyone who just joins, gets about Rs 30,000. Now that's not possible. When you pay low, lecturers normally don't stick. To be able to teach in Loyola, one thing that you need is to be very good in English. Another thing is that you should be good in general knowledge. Otherwise students don't allow you to teach. One day I was just going up the stairs. A student was coming down. I asked him why he was coming down. He said, "Father, I've given attendance but there's no use sitting in his class." So I went up and sat at the back of the class without the knowledge of the teacher who was teaching. I was listening to him for 10 minutes and realized that what the student was saying was true. The gentleman was looking at the book and reading from it. A student told me he can read better than the teacher. Without his knowledge I slipped out of class. Later I called him to my room and told him that I was I in his class. He said "I saw someone like you. But I was frightened to look at you." I asked him what he was teaching and told him to at least Xerox the pages and not to read straight from the book. Another student was once having an argument with a teacher about a particular author. The teacher said that author hadn't written a particular book. So the student presented the book to her the next day and said 'Here, have it'. So this is the kind of students we get at Loyola. So its difficult to teach unless you're really good at it. We did have fantastic teachers who are extremely committed. We still have now. But they are all moving out. In the unitary university model we are suggesting that the government should pay the staff fully. Only then you can talk about quality education. At IIM a student pays Rs 2.5 lakhs a year for his education. For IIT he pays Rs 2.2 lakhs while at Central Universities it is Rs 1 lakh. For a private college it is Rs 70,000 and at an aided college like us it is around Rs 22,000. So the point is even if we paid all the teachers like university staff it will be only Rs 45,000 per student.</p>
<p>So if you get Rs 45,000 from students you would b able to get higher quality of faculty?</p>	<p>Yes. The staff that comes in would stay with us. It takes about 5 years for the staff to stabilize. So this is what we are recommending the government for the unitary university model. The idea of the whole unitary university is to get quality, conscious, innovative and excellent teachers. All of that is possible if you give money. This is what our contention is.</p>
<p>Is there a particular number of students you on decide when starting a new department?</p>	<p>When we are starting a new course, the first thing we think about is space constraint. So we start by creating space. The next thing we decide is how much funding we will get from the government. We cannot take any number of students. We cannot decide that. We are asked to take 45, 60. It depends. So we know that these many students can come. And if it is say a science based course we will be using instruments. We want to have a centralized instrumentation centre. The idea is to have a whole building meant for instruments. We would have 2-3 people who are specialists in instrumentation and any researcher or student who goes can use the instruments from any department. This is the idea.</p>
<p>When you're building this new space, is there some average cost you are targeting per student?</p>	<p>We don't need to really think about that, as space and land are available. The building cost again comes back to the labs. Also our alumni base is strong. Last Sunday there were about 480 alumni who were staying in the hostel who had come with their wives and children so we had 1,000 people there and they wanted to spend their day on campus. So we created space for them and we gave them nice lunch and honoured them for their achievements. In the process we also exhibited the future plan for the hostel which would have about 2,000 students. If they paid a certain amount, we would put their name on it. For example, if they pay Rs 3 crores, we will keep a block under their name or if they pay Rs 2 lakhs we will keep a room under their name and things, etc. A lot of our alumni are industrialists and they give us money. Some people come on their own and give us money for scholarships but not for a building. Occasionally someone comes in and says "Father, here is Rs 1 lakh. Can you keep it in so and so's name as a scholarship for so and so department under this criteria." This way we have a supply of funding coming from our alumni.</p>

Father Xavier

Former Principal, Loyola College

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THE PARTHENON GROUP

Interviewer	Father Xavier
<p>Where do you see your institution in the next 10 years, i.e. what goals do you have in mind and what will it take to get there?</p>	<p>Our whole idea is that we are pushing for private unitary university status. And we are trying to start a language school. We are teaching about 10 languages. We have German, French, Russian, Chinese and Japanese apart from the other Indian languages. In Indian languages we have Tamil, Hindi, Malayalam and Telugu. Right now they are departments. So we want our school for languages. In arts we have sociology, medical sociology, social work, history and economics. For business we have our business school, a commerce department, and 3 or 4 more departments related to commerce. In biology we have about 10 departments. We also have physical science, chemistry, statistics, etc. So that will go in a separate school. We are starting just now with a school of education for B Ed. That will become the school of education. We are also starting an engineering college in collaboration with a French university so that will become the centre for technical education so in that case we will have about 6 schools and these schools will work as autonomous units within the walls of Loyola College. We would also like to bring in new courses especially in arts such as human rights. We already have a course in human rights as a part of Masters in social work and we would like to bring human studies.</p>
<p>Could you please tell us more about the idea of the unitary university?</p>	<p>The whole concept of the unitary university is just coming in. More than anything what the college is thinking about convincing the staff. The staff feels that the government will not be and after making a unitary university they will withdraw the grant and the staff will be forced to accept a lower pay. That is a serious problem that the college is facing at the moment. So convincing the staff is the first priority of the college. Without government aid it is not possible to run a university, I have to be very clear on that. We are talking about the rights of students. The government has come out with the right to education bill for the schools. Today if you think that education is the index of the development of the nation then higher education plays a big role. Now if you want ordinary students to join then you need to have a low fee structure. We have a socialist pattern of government where subsidy for services should be there, e.g. for health care, food and education. These are all basic things people should have a subsidy for. It's not enough just to talk about providing quality education and accessibility to education. In IITs and IIMs only the relatively wealthy are studying, who can afford to pay high fees. At Loyola we are allowing ordinary men to enter and get educated so that they will be able to work for the development of the country.</p>
<p>What about making loans available to students?</p>	<p>Our whole idea is that education should be available to the common man. I am against educational loans. I am for the government to take the responsibility of paying the staff because the moment you pay the staff you will get quality stuff. The cost of education will come down and we will be able to educate people. Why is it that they are refusing to give autonomy in Kerala? The main fear is that that they can withdraw the funding. The government can withdraw the subsidy and say that you are on your own now. So there should be a guarantee.</p>
<p>So is this something which should be decided at the state level or at the centre?</p>	<p>If the UGC gives the subsidy to the state government then the government will automatically give it to us. Normally education is a subject of both centre and state, but the centre government needs to give us the money. What the state government is saying is that we don't have enough and UGC can afford to give us as they have enough funds. So this is one of the things we are looking forward to as far as higher education is concerned.</p>
<p>Coming back to the idea of a unitary university what sort of governance do you see? Is that different from the existing governance?</p>	<p>Obviously, it is going to be different. The role of the management will become really powerful, the governing body will take over a lot of responsibility, the Principal will become the Vice-Chancellor and the deans of the various schools will become Principals. They will become autonomous institutes in their own rights while the Principal of the college becomes the Vice Chancellor so the role has to be redefined.</p>
<p>Do you think that the government has a problem with this type of structure?</p>	<p>My feeling is that the Tamil Nadu government will not interfere.</p>

Father Xavier

Former Principal, Loyola College

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Interviewer	Father Xavier
<p>What should be the ideal size of the University in terms of student enrollment: 5000, 10000 students?</p>	<p>My feeling is that it should depend on the number of courses and they should be free to set the number of courses. Even the admission policy should undergo change, for example for science and arts they are admitting 20 for physics and some for chemistry. Now I wouldn't want the situation where they admit them only for only science or for arts and the student should be free to go wrong. He collects his credits and in the 3rd year he can ultimately decide whether he wants to become a physicist or a chemist or a biologist. Also the whole system could be graded, for example if a student joins in the first year and he has to leave for some reason, then he could go with a certificate, if he leaves after the second year, he can leave with a diploma, after the 3rd year with an undergraduate degree, 4th year maybe a post graduate degree and in the 5th year another post graduate degree. These are some of the innovative things that we can do when we become a unitary university</p>
<p>Can a student go and come back to the University?</p>	<p>Yes, he can join and continue in the 2nd year. So the credit that he earns in the other university can be integrated in our credit system. So someone can study in the United States for a year in something which he is really interested in then he could be allowed to join back. Total enrolment numbers depend upon the facilities that we have. Maybe Loyola College can afford to have around 20,000 to 30,000 students.</p>
<p>What should be the size of the university?</p>	<p>I would think about 20,000 to become financially viable.</p>
<p>What about campus size?</p>	<p>I would say around 25 acres.</p>
<p>Should the University be responsible for student placements post-graduation?</p>	<p>We are already responsible; we have a centre for student services and about 30 to 40 companies visit every year to recruit students. The universities should see that the students are placed because it is one of the services that the university should provide just like the management schools.</p>
<p>What should be the role of research for faculty?</p>	<p>In the unitary university research should be given priority especially need based research. Right now the teaching staff does research in their free time. If you are thinking in terms of unitary university and research then like at other universities there should be research staff who are a part of the department but they are basically involved in research and they will teach as well.</p>

Father Xavier

Former Principal, Loyola College

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THE PARTHENON GROUP

Interviewer	Father Xavier
<p>There is a line of thinking amongst some institutions that we have to focus on education and we can't do both – teaching and research. Research output should not be a requirement in the unitary institutions because it essentially requires a different mindset, a different ambience to be able to succeed in research.</p>	<p>What I would suggest is that the research staff should also be involved in teaching. Their main focus will be research but they will also be involved in student education. The staff which is recruited for teaching will have at least a certain amount of research to update themselves but their main thing will be teaching, so you can have two kinds of staff operating.</p>
<p>How is the research going to help an institution which is churning out good quality undergraduates?</p>	<p>We believe that any college has to develop its roots in the locality so any research that they do should be related to that area, i.e. marine agriculture for us in Tamil Nadu, etc.</p>
<p>What should be the role of the industry?</p>	<p>In the 3rd year the students will be sent for a month to an industry for internships and the industry – institute interaction should be very strong. Now when the student goes to an industry and works there, his whole outlook changes and he becomes much more serious. Some of the industries employ the student when they see a very bright student. So if you want to have any meaningful curriculum the industrial partnership is something which is really important. The research can also be linked to the industry and a way to get additional funding.</p>
<p>My last question is about the international factor. One is about the role of the foreign students on campus and the second one is about the benefits of having any relations with international institutions. What is the importance of making your brand name in the international market from the industry angle?</p>	<p>Whenever a foreign university came to us my first question was about the partnership we would have. I don't want to dilute the brand of Loyola College. I also tell them that Loyola College is a superior institution. We want our staff to be taken abroad to teach and the foreign staff to come here and teach. The research area for example is something which is of importance to them and to us so we will do our part this side and they will do their part over there and then we come together. Now, we have students going there for exchange programs and we have students coming here, they bring enough credits and whatever credit they bring from there we accept them. In the same way we had one semester of foreign students coming in and being part of our student body. They can study whatever they want to pick up and we also teach them Indian culture.</p>

Anand Sudarshan

CEO, Manipal Universal Learning

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Interviewer	Anand Sudarshan
<p>When was your institution founded? What was the founder's vision for the institution? Has that vision evolved over the years?</p>	<p>Kasturba Medical College founded by Dr. T A Pai in 1953 was the foundation of our educational system which has the professional side as its main focus. Kasturba Medical College was the first institution founded under the non- government, non-missionary sector. In some sense it's the first truly private professional educational institute in the country. I think it has grown substantially since then to become a Manipal education system today, with the university and several education institutes under that and above 215,000 students studying under the umbrella. I think it's been quite a journey since then.</p>
<p>What do you consider to be the greatest achievement of your institution?</p>	<p>Creating value based, ethically sound, high quality focused, global standard institution that is sustainable and that can grow, is the greatest achievement. It is possible to create a private education system that can aspire to be global class, and that can be built with no government support of any kind, that is based on a very strong foundation of values, transparency and ethics, I think that would be the greatest success of all.</p>
<p>What do you think has made it possible for you to achieve this success? Would you be able to pin point a few critical success factors in particular?</p>	<p>To start with I would say Dr. T A Pai was a remarkable person and I think his ability to envision this, and not just to envision but also to convert it into implementation, that is the first of the reasons to achieve whatever we have. In most organizations the core character forms in the first few years of existence. The leadership that comes after that builds on those values and then maybe adds a few more things to it and takes it to the next level. Therefore the initial foundation building is extremely important. The other characteristic that has served us well is innovation, we were the first Indian entity to step outside India when we founded our medical college in Nepal, which we expanded with a medical college in Malaysia and so on and so forth. Third has been a sense of exuberance and a sense of being, I would even call it stubbornness on the face of really difficult odds, particularly against the government. The language of the government today is a stark contrast of what it used to be for several decades since Independence, at least since the time that we have started KMC and therefore to continue to build an organization at this point of time in the face of such severe philosophical differences is not an easy task; it requires a considerable amount of perseverance and I would say that is the next key.</p>

Anand Sudarshan

CEO, Manipal Universal Learning

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Interviewer	Anand Sudarshan
<p>From the point of view of resources, i.e. land, infrastructure, faculty, etc. – what has been of critical importance?</p>	<p>The first set of reasons that I gave are the soft reasons, which are the intrinsic ones not dependant on resources and they are foundation elements. What you are talking about are the two key resources that are required to build an institution, finance and faculty. To me this has been a challenge right through. We have been fortunate that Dr. T A Pai acquired an enormous part of land back in 1953. Subsequently we have been fortunate to have received a lot of support from banking institutions like State Bank of India and other banks on a continuous basis, which has made a big difference to us in our growth. So understanding the power of finance, understanding the importance of building world-class infrastructure has been there right through. I think the institution has also been successful in reaching out and asking its students for inputs, e.g. creating different fee structures between Indian students and International students, etc. American universities are successful because of the endowment culture. Alumni could take a lot of pride because of the fact that they have reached out and supported their alma mater. Essentially it became a culturally important criteria for them to gain respect and respectability this way. A similar system is not available in India, has never been and still isn't. The only difference here which I think most people here again fail to understand is that it was something that was done in line with the cultural context of India – which is asking parents to support growth of an institution by what you could call a fee based endowment. On the faculty side one advantage that Manipal has had is that KMC is one of the top institutions among all the Manipal institutions, therefore being able to attract good faculty has pretty much been one of the strengths of Manipal right through. I am not saying it is easy, I am only saying it is a strength compared to perhaps many of the others in the private sector. We have been continuously successful at attracting good faculty. We give an opportunity to our faculty to rotate and get posted in one of our non-Indian locations which enriches the professional career of a faculty member significantly. This is not something too many Indian institutions do.</p>
<p>Coming back to this issue of the lack of endowment in Indian institutions, how do you think this can be changed over time? What needs to be done to overcome this issue?</p>	<p>It's a cultural thing. Giving endowments and creating a foundation that will reflect the family's name or the person's name in perpetuity – is not something that automatically would catch on. I think it's a culturally different scenario from America, I don't see India reaching the same stages of endowment based higher education growth that is there in the US for many decades. But I certainly expect it to start increasing especially within the middle class segment of the society.</p>
<p>What is it that you envision for the future of your institution? What is on your wish list for the next 10 years? What do you need to achieve that wish list?</p>	<p>Over the last few years we have already become the largest private recipients of research grants and funds in India and we will continue to expand. We are becoming a reputable applied research university so we would like to expand that. Teaching, research and industry engagement are the three pillars. From the point of view of industry engagement, I think we have done some fairly innovative stuff, e.g. innovation centers in both medicine and non-medicine; we have also reached out and actively engaged with organizations like Bhabha Atomic Research Center or Philips or GE. We have been predominately a professional stream university but in the last 5 years we have started a school of math, a school of geopolitics, one of liberal arts, etc. So we are beginning to focus on becoming a richer and more diverse multidisciplinary university. Our idea is to slowly grow both from a numbers as well as a quality prospective. Many of our institutions are among the top in India, and we would look to progress them to become among the best in the world. This way the university as a whole becomes respectable and with time we would like to see ourselves as being world-class. At the same time we would like to add inclusion to our strengths, i.e. reaching out to larger sections of population who for various reasons may not be able to study in top universities. We would like to reach out to them as well. In fact we already have with our very comprehensive distance education program. As an education system we were probably the first ones who have actively reached out to vocational education segment and we would like to continue to expand that. The third and final sector is geographical expansion. We believe that there is an opportunity for us to build a system which can provide leadership driven English class education to the developing world which is going to be one of our visions going forward.</p>

Anand Sudarshan

CEO, Manipal Universal Learning

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Interviewer	Anand Sudarshan
To achieve all of this how important do you think it is that you are a self regulated university?	It is absolutely critical to have academic and operational independence. If you look at our own journey over about 5 decades you will know that. Independence and therefore what comes along with it, i.e. boldness in thinking are core values that we have set for ourselves. . .
In your opinion, what does it mean and what does it take to be a “world-class university”?	One is the physical vector: we need to have infrastructure which is world-class. Second is what I call an academic extension, which is research, industry association, relationships with other universities, participation with research centers and the government in areas that are of socio-political, socio-cultural importance. The third part is the responsibility of university to introduce empowered and responsible learners who will be lifelong learners after they graduate from the university. What I mean by empowered learners is people who not only understand the tools and techniques of their trade but also are able to constantly rejuvenate as they go along. I think it is crucial for learners to come and actually understand the consequence of every action that they take. A world-class university produces people who are thinkers, who are accountable and responsible for their actions and who through their thought and deeds are constantly able to create a positive impact on the communities that they live in a proactive kind of way.
The government is recommending establishing 50 or so world-class universities from scratch, is that something you would consider to be a realistic plan?	I think it reflects the ambitions and aspirations of successful Indians. There is this deep desire not to wait for a hundred years for a world-class university, but to actually engineer the process. Social engineering has been chosen as vehicle, so I think there is a great belief that is possible to engineer us towards great success. This is a part of the leadership psychology in India. On a practical basis – would there be 14 universities from scratch? Would those be the only world-class universities that would be there? The answer is no. I think there are enough universities in Indian public and private space that have the capability of transforming themselves into world-class universities. The chances of that happening first are infinitely greater than any of the 14 from scratch. The government is thinking that if we could set up an IIT at a point in time when such institutions did not exist in India, if would could set up an IIM at a point in time when the concept of management was new even in the US, why not today? Maybe there is merit to that but I would suspect that we would drop all the current athletes who are there in India and then start from scratch to produce an Olympic gold medal athlete in track and field, while it is possible it might be entirely true that some of the existing athletes who are may be 10, 12, 14 years of age might actually become an Olympic athlete faster.
Are there quite a few institutions in India that are close to world-class status in India?	No I don't think there are any institutions except perhaps IITs. I think they have potential to become world-class. I think there are many universities that are there: within the private sector apart from Manipal, there is BITS. Within the public sector I would look at some of the top universities like Pune or Delhi. IITs Madras and Kanpur certainly have the capability of becoming truly world-class.
Should this responsibility of developing these world-class universities fall on the private sector or on the public sector?	Both the private and the public sector have the responsibility to create these world-class universities.



Interviewer	Anand Sudarshan
<p>When someone from the private sector, an entrepreneur or an industrial house, wants to come in and plant a seed for a world-class university, what kind of financial investment are we talking about?</p>	<p>Unless a person has got access to at least Rs 250 crores I don't think it is possible to even start thinking in terms of creating a high quality university. I didn't say world-class I said high quality as world-class obviously will still need to get refined depending on the direction in which the person wants to set it up.</p>
<p>What incentives should be offered by the government to the private sector to participate in this big endeavor?</p>	<p>This is a subject on which I have done a lot of thinking. To my mind there are four areas in which industry in India should be encouraged to participate in the success. Number one is in teaching. If they are able to allow their existing working professionals to contribute a piece of their time, let's say one day in a week to teaching, they would be contributing enormously to enhancement of quality teaching faculty in India which is a big issue. Second is money, endowment, creation of chairs and every other mechanism possible, by which they will use their Dollars and Rupees in a creative fashion to accelerate engagement of universities. Number three is in terms of scholarships. The replacement for endowments in India should be a very robust student loan/ student scholarship program. I would deeply encourage enterprises to create or participate in creation of a scholarship umbrella across multiple segments of people. Finally I would encourage enterprises to start participating in the governance of institutions, not just sitting on the board of governance which many imminent people certainly do today already, but also in actually participating in the governance in different ways. For example one way could be they take responsibility of co-managing a practice school for engineers during the last year of their education, just like a medical student after completing his education goes and does what in India is called house agency.</p>
<p>What should be the role of foreign institutions in helping India set up new universities or what should be the role in general of foreign institutions in India?</p>	<p>There are about 80-100 thousand students every year who go out of India to study in these institutions. By actually setting up these foreign institutions in India, it will not only bring what they are currently offering close to home but it would also bring in their methods of teaching, thinking and so on. The foreign institutions will raise standards; they will provide opportunities for faculty, etc. The availability of benchmarkable global standards in education here in India in itself will act as a tremendous catalyst. Why should the foreign universities do it? In my mind in the 21st century India certainly is going to have a remarkable role to play in and if these institutions do not come to India they will miss the bus.</p>

Dr. Sunil Karad

Executive Director, MIT Pune

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THE PARTHENON GROUP

Interviewer	Dr. Sunil Karad
<p>What was the founder's vision for the institution? Has that vision evolved over the years?</p>	<p>At that time education was not yet privatized and there was mainly state controlled education. Our founder professor Karad was a teacher himself in a government managed college for 20 years. In Karnataka privatization happened in 60's and 70's, Maharashtra did not have private sector then so there was a huge number of students going from Maharashtra to Karnataka to pursue medical Indian education. After three years of negotiations the Maharashtra government got convinced that there was an unmet need and MIT was the first private sector institute to come up in the state of Maharashtra in 1983. So MIT really started in 1983 as an engineering college in Pune, for the first 7-8 years it was only one college which the trust was running. In 1989 they started the second institute which was a medical college which is based in Latur, run by MIT, where we have a huge rural 700 bedded hospital. In 90's MIT really started growing quite fast because I think there was such huge demand from the students side. We just finished 25 years last year. In 25 years we have 65+ institutes, in all disciplines including engineering, medicine, management, pharmacy, social science, law. Apart from that we also run schools, but that's not the main aim of MIT. Schools were really started as a social activity. Most of the schools are subsidized or free. In 2006 we also started a more high-end school which is Vishwashanti Gurukul, an IB school based in Pune. After 2001 we really took an overall view of our education sector and then decided there is no point in starting traditional higher education institutes like engineering, medical, etc. because we have enough of those. So we realized we have to do something which is required by tomorrow's industry and that is how the marine engineering college came up. It is a fully residential college which is approved by Director General of Shipping Corporation of India, where almost 1000 students get a B.Tech degree in marine engineering. We then started with a very new concept of a design institute in 2005. In the last four years we have built a great design school, as good as the National Institute of Design based in Ahmedabad. MIT was started by professors and is still run by professors, all the people who founded MIT were all working in government colleges – that is what made MIT unique. The whole culture of MIT is slightly different from other institutions, but that has helped us a lot as far as education is concerned.</p>
<p>What do you consider to be your greatest achievement?</p>	<p>I don't believe in rankings, so our greatest achievement is that we are student centric and we believe in academic atmosphere on campus. We don't want to use the institute for personal benefit, so we are still an academic institute and we try to maintain that. Our students get best awards and best placements. Our alumni are ministers, great entrepreneurs, etc. I think that is our greatest achievement, i.e. where our alumni are today.</p>
<p>What has been the most critical success factor for your institution?</p>	<p>I will say that from the first day, we are very fortunate to have the best of the teaching staff to join us mainly because the people who started the institution were teachers. So in 1980s most of the teachers who joined MIT were from the government engineering or medical colleges, these were all senior people who came and joined, so I think success of MIT lies in our teaching faculty.</p>
<p>What has been the greatest challenge in developing your institution?</p>	<p>Everyone knows that in India education is very regulated. We are not against regulation but it is not regulated by a single body as it is regulated by a number of bodies, which have no coordination in between them. Society looks at education as a loyal profession, and you can't take any decisions from the commercial point of view. Then it becomes really difficult to fund your expansion. In the USA everyone knows that you need money to build a campus but in India that is still not accepted. Funding your growth and your existing improvement is also a very difficult task, today we have reached a stage where we are at a dead end not really sure how to fund our future growth.</p>

Dr. Sunil Karad

Executive Director, MIT Pune

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Interviewer	Dr. Sunil Karad
<p>Despite the challenge right now, where do you see your institution say in ten years?</p>	<p>We have taken a very conscious decision that we will not grow now in number, our main aim for the next ten years is to really get into post gradual and doctoral PhD education. In the next ten years we will build research infrastructure on all campuses, create that atmosphere of research and attract Western talent who can help us institute the culture of research on existing campuses. We are not growing horizontally any more, now we will be growing vertically.</p>
<p>What is necessary to achieve that goal?</p>	<p>In monetary terms a huge investment is required to build any kind of research infrastructure. The second is highly qualified faculty who are very keen to do research and know how to do the research. The third will be to inculcate the research culture into the students. In India research on institutional campuses is not really an accepted fact, even IITs struggle to do that, because everyone's aim is to score in exams and not worry about research. Building a research atmosphere will be a difficult task because it involves changing the mindset of the existing people and of new people who join the institute.</p>
<p>In your opinion what does it take to be a world-class university?</p>	<p>If you ask me to be a great educational institute, the first thing you need is freedom. If it is run by the right people, you need to have freedom, and my personal opinion is that it's not the job of the government to build a world-class university. Nowhere in the world has the government done that. British or American universities receive government funding, but they have full autonomy for their academics and financial matters. Instead of starting altogether a new university, the government should upgrade the existing universities. If you take the example of Pune University, which is ranked among top 5 universities in India, today they have half a million students and more than 600 colleges affiliated to the university. It is more of an administrative office than an academic institution. Over the last few years, there have been quite a few corporates who are ready to invest and create great institutions. The government should really talk to such organizations and have policies for them to enter into the field. The government should support them as they should not do it on their own. For a university to be world-class you need at least 10-20 years of stable guidelines. You can't create a world-class university in one year, it takes a long period. Government should really give people like Reliance, Birlas, Tatas a chance to build world-class universities because they have a better know how, they have better resources and people have more faith in them than the government. All Indian Institutes of Sciences are created by private people, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research for example. They have great intentions and capacity to build the institutions and they are ready to do that. From the monetary point of view, I don't know whether the government has the funds to do that. With the Right to Education Bill passed, there is shortage of funds to provide at least secondary education. I don't think the government should spend lavishly on higher education – let the private sector take over. IITs and IIMs are isolated; IITs don't have social science, medicine or management. It would be a good idea to think about how to turn IITs into universities. Even MIT Boston teaches everything. If you want to be a good engineer you have to learn social science and management, you can't just do technical subjects and become a great engineer – that is a very narrow vision.</p>
<p>What strategy do you think would work best for India: upgrading existing institutions, merging existing institutions, or creating institutions?</p>	<p>There are a number of institutions that have a great culture, great history and a great brand name – they can be upgraded to universities first. Instead of starting from scratch, which is a very difficult task, upgrading our top institutions could result in creating world-class universities.</p>

Dr. Sunil Karad

Executive Director, MIT Pune

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Interviewer	Dr. Sunil Karad
What does a private organization have to do to start a world-class university?	If you really want to do a good job, you can do it in this country. In the private sector it has already been done by institutions like Manipal and Vellore. They have done a great job and they are private. You can create a better university than the government universities – this has been proved. ISB Hyderabad is much better than IIMs. So if your intentions are good you can do a good job.
What's the size that is ideal for a well run university?	It should be anywhere between 10,000 – 20,000 students. In terms of infrastructure it has to be more of a residential university, most of the students should stay on campus. It should be multidisciplinary. It should have engineering, medicine, social science, law, history, geography, everything under one roof, then we can call it a university or else it will be an institute.
In terms of the residential campus, what kind of location should be considered? What sort of financial investment is needed for a private investor in order to put a foundation in place for a great university?	For a large university of about 10,000+ students, the campus needs to be really large, around 500 acres. This means that the outskirts of the city would be appropriate, but it should not be in a remote place because the faculty will not come. The students would come, but the good faculty is difficult to convince to move to a distant location. Bombay would not be good, but maybe Pune, Nasik, Aurangabad or Bangalore – all are good places for setting up a university. As far as investments go, it will be a very large investment – around a 1000 crores. This is not including all the equipment – just building and land. Then the funding also comes into the picture: the Government has talked about the creation of a fund or a corporation for provision of long term loans, similar to the power sector's Power Corporation of India, but nothing has materialized yet. Starting with a bank loan is not a commercially viable option.
What incentives must be offered by the Government to inspire private investors to start educational institutions?	There should be a set of standards and norms but it should be a cost based education system. The government should be a little flexible as far as the norms for the costs are concerned because often the rigid rules regarding costs lead to malpractices. The institutions must be given the option of pricing their education and the society should decide whether the education is worth the cost. So rather than concentrating on the cost the government should focus on ensuring the quality of teaching at Universities.
What do you think about the issue of research funding in the Indian context?	Research funding is available in India too; however there is a lack of qualified faculty. The norms say that you need to have at least 5 publications to your name in order to apply for a research grant. So if we have good faculty money will follow. For example, in our own design institute, 20% of the revenues come from industry sponsored research. The banks should also start to consider the education sector as a separate sector. There is a separate sector consideration for agriculture but not for education.
What should be the role of the industry in setting up of setting up universities?	The industry is more proactive these days. Earlier the industry was involved in placements only, but with globalization, many companies have brought the culture of involving themselves with educational bodies for purposes other than placements as well. Nowadays companies approach educational institutions when they need to start a certain idea from scratch.
What should be the level of internationalization in terms of collaborations with foreign universities, faculty exchange, and student exchange?	The student and faculty exchange concept is good, as it results in cultural exchange. A multi-cultural setup results in a better university. But the idea of franchising the university can be detrimental to the quality of education. I doubt that many foreign universities will come to India. There are also too many legal issues.



Interviewer	P. Sathyanarayanan
When was your institution founded?	The flagship constituent unit - SRM Engineering College was founded in the year 1985 as the first venture into the field of higher education, by SRM group who have been rendering yeoman's service to the cause of education over 4 decades. In 2002 as deemed to be University under section 3 of UGC Act 1956.
What was the founder's vision for the institution? Has that vision evolved over the years?	<p>Vision SRM University to emerge as a leading world – Class institution that creates and disseminates knowledge. To uphold the highest standards for instruction in Medicine & Health Sciences, Engineering & Technology, Management and Science & Humanities. Along with academic excellence, our curricula to emphasize integrity and cultural sensitivity so that our graduates may best serve the nation and the world.</p> <p>Mission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a diverse campus community that inspires freedom and innovation • Strengthen educational processes • Continue to build international alliances • Expand development opportunities available to students and faculty • Cultivate exciting and rigorous research environments
What do you consider to be the greatest achievement of your institution?	<p>Once it became a university and now it boasts students from all over India as well as abroad. This fact has been vindicated by the survey conducted by Education Times (Times of India) Gfk Mode which ranked SRM University as No. 1 Multiple Streams University (Engineering and Medical) in India. The subsequent Financial Express Survey too threw up the same result. Apart from these surveys which more or less reflect the opinion of general public and educationalists, the National Assessment and Accreditation Board (NAAC) the supreme Governmental body in India awarded B+ grade in 2006. In the last 5 years the University has gone global by implementing following unique programs & boards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple streams • Semester Abroad Program - students • Faculty Abroad Program • International Advisory Board • Corporate Advisory Board – Industry Collaboration • Research - SRM Nanosat developed by the students of SRM University in collaboration with Indian Space Research Organisation, ISRO • 98th Indian Science Congress Association to be held in 2011 • Placement – Top salary of Rs.1 crore per annum (US \$ 200,000) for SRM Nanotechnology student. <p>Entering into numerous MoUs with reputed institutes abroad Undergoing the accreditation process administered by ABET- Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), USA</p>



Interviewer	P. Sathyanarayanan
<p>How do you measure the success of your institution? (e.g. students' success at job, average salaries upon graduation, further studies, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing international standards in SRM • Exposing faculty and students to international practices in education • Collaborating with international institutes • Receiving funded research projects • Strengthening Institute industry linkages • Constitution of International and Corporate advisory boards • Students' success at job, • Average salaries upon graduation, • Students going for further studies
<p>What were the 3 most critical success factors for your institution? (e.g. faculty, infrastructure, industry interactions, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty • Infrastructure • Exposing faculty and students to international practices in education
<p>What is the composition of your faculty (i.e. what proportion are PhD's, etc.)?</p>	<p>All the faculty are either PG or PhD degree holders. The percentage of PhDs is 10% Further many of the PG degree holders in engineering have rich industrial experience and 30% of faculty are pursuing PhD</p>
<p>How have you been able to attract high-quality faculty?</p>	<p>We have been able to attract high-quality faculty primarily by providing state of the art research facilities and contemporary training opportunities. We also do not hesitate to provide attractive perks over market salaries for those who make use of the facilities to the full extent. Providing housing is not an issue since all those who want to stay in campus are provided accommodation at scales exceeding the government scales.</p>
<p>On average, what kind of per student investment is required to offer good quality infrastructure?</p>	<p>For Engineering Rs 1.5 lakhs, Medicine 3.00 lakhs and BDS 2.00 lakhs.</p>
<p>What has been the greatest challenge in developing your institution? (e.g. faculty, capital, regulations, etc.)</p>	<p>A. Faculty B. Regulation C. Capital (in that order)</p>
<p>Where do you see your institution in 10 years? (In terms of brand reputation, subjects offered, student enrolment, foreign student enrolment, international presence, etc.)</p>	<p>In 10 years time, we see our university as an international seat of learning amongst the top 100 universities of the world and to forge ahead from the rest in terms of faculty from abroad who are internationally renowned teaching and doing research at SRM amidst cream of students from India and abroad.</p>



Interviewer	P. Sathyanarayanan
<p>What is required in order for your institution to achieve that goal within the next 10 years? (e.g. capital, faculty, infrastructure, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty • Curriculum as per international standards • A stable national regulation & policy for private higher education • Collaboration with foreign Universities • Exposure of Indian students to the practices of foreign universities • International accreditation for more number of programs • Capital • Infrastructure
<p>How important is it to be a self-regulated university to continue offering a quality education?</p>	<p>Self regulated university status is a must to offer quality education for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible and updated curriculum to cater to the requirement of industry • Integration of proven international practices • outcome based student centric teaching learning process • International accreditation • Meeting the research need of industry • Flexible salary for the deserving faculty • Self funding in key areas of research • Exposure of faculty and students to international practices in education • Attraction of large endowments



Interviewer	P. Sathyanarayanan
<p>In your opinion, what does it mean and what does it take to be a “world-class university”?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Student enrolment Best quality standards adverse students from all over the globe. B. UG/ PG The ratio of UG to PG shall be 1:1 C. Subjects The syllabus content of the subjects shall be based on student centric program outcome and program objectives criteria. These shall be formulated by Alumni survey, Graduate exit survey, Employee survey, expert opinion of educationalists and industrialists, faculty input and parental wishes. D. Governance Duly constituted boards and councils with due representation to industrialists, educationalists, auditors well wishers, faculty ,students and parents. E. International presence International presence shall be achieved by following means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring reputed faculty from abroad • Making the programs open to foreign students • Faculty/student exchange through MoUs • International placement • Joint research • International seminars • Visiting faculty from abroad F. Student placements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of interested students shall be placed. • Students shall have flexibility in choosing the jobs. • Top notch companies including international ones shall visit the university • Placed students shall attract above average salary



Interviewer	P. Sathyanarayanan
<p>In your opinion, what does it mean and what does it take to be a “world-class university”? (CONT.)</p>	<p>G. Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% of the faculty shall have funded projects from government. • University will earmark 20% of income to self-funding of research works • Research shall focus on industry and social needs • State of the art labs shall be created and fully supported. • Publication by students and faculty in refereed and indexed journals • Organizing international seminars • Deputing faculty and students to international seminars conducted in India and abroad. • Giving due recognition to faculty who produce quality research output <p>H. Faculty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student –staff ratio shall not exceed 15. • Minimum 80% faculty shall be PhD degree holders • 20% faculty shall do consultancy work • Shall have adequate industry exposure • Shall be trained to apply contemporary QC techniques to educational processes • Shall be imparted training on academic administration • Shall participate in faculty development programs • Shall be given training on student psychology • Shall be deputed to industry to update their knowledge and understand the industry needs. <p>I. Infrastructure</p> <p>Existing norms prescribed by AICTE/UGC/MIC/DCI etc are adequate. However, in addition, smart class rooms, modern auditoria, gymnasium, tennis courts, play fields, swimming pools, food courts are to be provided.</p> <p>J. Other parameters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ranking by media • Ranking by peer group • National and International accreditation • Scale of endowments • International Advisory Board • Corporate advisory board
<p>Which Indian institutions of higher learning would you consider to be world-class universities?</p>	<p>None.</p>



Interviewer	P. Sathyanarayanan
How much time would it require for top-brand Indian institutions to develop into world class universities?	10-12 years
What strategy do you think would work best for India: upgrading existing institutions, merging existing institutions, or creating institutions?	Upgrading existing institutions
What should be the selection process among existing institutions if the first or second approach is chosen?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A committee shall be constituted consisting of national and international educationalists and industrialists • A detailed set of measurable parameters shall be evolved. • The committee will visit the universities and award points for the parameters with adequate explanation. • The finding shall be posted in the public domain and their queries answered. • The committee will then publish the findings.
What share of the responsibility of establishing national universities should fall on the private sector?	75%
In your opinion, on average what financial investment would be required to set up a national university?	1000 crore Indian Rupees
Does India actually need world-class universities? Or does it need a different format of additional institutions? (In view of the large gap between demand for higher education and existing supply). If different, please describe the institution along the following parameters:	Yes – India need world class universities.
What incentives should be offered by the government?	Due respect to Education Institutes, Land at low cost, Funding for projects in Research and Development areas



Interviewer	P. Sathyanarayanan
<p>Most private universities have either large endowment income and/or get a great proportion of their expenses covered by government research grants. How do you think this would work in the Indian context?</p>	<p>Right now, In Indian context the main funding can be realized by student fees and bank loans to be given at nominal interest. Future Alumni, Philanthropists, Industry contribution etc.,</p>
<p>What should be the role of the industry within the context of universities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shall be willing to invest in Universities towards creation of research facilities • Shall be willing depend on universities to meet their research/consultancy requirements • Shall train the students and faculty • Shall depute their own staff to universities for higher learning • Shall sponsor industry specific programs to be run in universities
<p>What should be the role of foreign institutions in helping India set up its universities, if at all?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shall depute their faculty to India on tenure basis • Shall encourage student/faculty exchange program • Joint research with Indian Universities • Mutual participation in conferences and seminars • Invest a sizeable portion of the research allocation in India

Dr Abhijit Mukherjee

Director, Thapar University

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THE PARTHENON GROUP

Interviewer	Dr Abhijit Mukherjee
<p>When was your institution founded? What was the founder's vision for the institution? Has that vision evolved over the years?</p>	<p>Our institute started as an engineering college back in 1956 in Patiala. It was unique in a way. It was one of the first few public private partnership ventures. It was with the Thapar family and the government of Punjab. Patiala was a princely state at the time of independence. There was distinction right from the beginning. We had distinguished principals coming in. The government used to give us a lot of grants. In 1985, we became a deemed university and were among the first 5 to do so. That time, Dr. N.C.Nigam came in as the Director of the university. It used to be called the Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology. So we were very focused on engineering all through. He came from IIT Kanpur. With his initiative the college got transformed into a deemed university. We have academic autonomy but not a financial one. We had to depend on the Punjab Government. Then the government decided that they are going to withdraw funding from our university. This happened in 2000. In 2002 we were given no grant from the government. So we became financially autonomous that time onwards. Today we are very similar to a completely private university. But culture wise we are a little ahead. I myself moved here from IIT Bombay in 2006. It is very much like IIT as far as academics and research are concerned. We also developed in terms of number of students. We now have about 4800 students. We'll go up to around 8000 students in say 4 years. At the same time we plan to open more campuses. So the number may go up to 25,000 students. It'll be spread out in other states as well. Not only in Punjab.</p>
<p>What are the most critical success factors for your institution?</p>	<p>The most important thing is maintaining academic standards. Also successfully transiting from a very government type of sector to a more private sector. Plus getting a wonderful support from the family and the group. The downside of being in the government sector is that we are not as well known as we should have been. I'll tell you one anecdote. We wanted to advertise for admission all over India. And there was a unique argument against it. We were anyway getting around 2000 applications for 200 seats. So it was very difficult to get permission from the government to advertise which would cost us a few more lakh rupees and therefore we did not become as well known as possible. We have the most important ingredient for success that is a very set academic standard. And unlike many other private universities we have focused research. We also have many more post graduates than most of them, i.e. about 45-50 which is very rare in India. I think it's very important to have that kind of spirit. We would always like to maintain that kind of spirit. We would like to have more graduates.</p>
<p>When you talk about the academic standards, is there a certain way that you measure that? How do you hold people accountable?</p>	<p>There is one thing. We all are part of one campus management system. The control of the management is with the Deans. There are committees which actually need to unanimously agree to make changes in that. We have a managing body and it has its own committee. Each and every issue is discussed here. So we have a very open system. It's all clearly articulated. We follow the rules and the memorandum. My brief from Thapar is that I don't want to hear anything negative. We have a huge pressure for admission and we have to reject 24 out of 25 applications. Sometimes it's cruel but we really cannot do much.</p>
<p>Considering the components of the institution, such as faculty, infrastructure, etc. What is the most critical factor?</p>	<p>I think all very important but according to me faculty tops the list. Most of my energy goes in hiring good people. Students are not a problem and infrastructure is very easy. But the need for the infrastructure has to come from within. That is more important. So by infrastructure what we mean is large laboratories. It's not about building a nice structure. Last year we started this mat lab which has material engineering. For this lab, we paid our own money. Because we thought that my faculty would want it most so the requirement came from within. We ask the various departments, what they would like to establish and whatever is common amongst all of them we match it. Then everyone would benefit from it. The other things we do with these labs is we help other industries. In Punjab we have a lot of small industries, there aren't many large ones. One of the problems these industries have is conforming to the norms. It is a huge problem. For example, a sewage treatment plant, a large and a small one would not have much difference. Therefore we try to help them. We consult these companies so that they can cope with it. Similarly, we have a very young Institute Of Management. It's only 2 years old. It's called the Thapar School of Management. That also has a focus on family businesses. Not the huge ones, but the small businesses that are handed over from the father to the son. Many of them don't know how to run them. So we try to help them with that.</p>



Interviewer	Dr Abhijit Mukherjee
<p>Is the research funding you are seeking privately funded?</p>	<p>We have set targets for that kind of funding. Funding is also a measure of how much our faculty is contributing. It is a significant portion of our revenue. We are nowhere close to that of research funding of Harvard, etc. But whatever we get out of this funding is very significant. Through that funding we can grow. And get subsidised costs for the studies. We have many grad students and that is a problem because instead of paying fees, they expect you to pay them. So that is one of the challenges that we have. We use teaching assistantships to pay them.</p>
<p>How have you been able to attract high quality faculty? Is it the salary, some kind of perks, research opportunities, etc.?</p>	<p>What a person needs is very difficult to predict but one thing is very sure, a true academic will need an environment that is conducive to questioning and being able to answer. Therefore we need to have a good research ambience. When we talk about infrastructure, it is actually a tactic to get faculty. When they come for their job interviews, one thing that we do is take that person around to show what we have. We have been pro-active in searching for faculty. Not that we just advertise and hope that good people will apply. We go to other campuses, if we know someone who has good students, we try to attract that person. From the financial point of view, what we do is performance incentive scheme. Through that scheme we can actually earn 15 months of salary in a year. The major points in that are research, publications, funding, guidance and teaching which is very important. So these are more or less what we do. The experience level - our professors are very experienced. We kind of cajole them to be with us. Our salaries are higher than UGC salaries. It's got higher due to the 6th pay commission. But we have more runs in the ladder. There is a senior professor level and a distinguished professor level. That's one thing I take because of my experience. We all became professors in our 30s at IIT. We all didn't care much about that. So at Thapar we expect the last promotion to be in the 50s and not in the 30s.</p>
<p>Where do you see your situation in the next 10 years? In terms of prime reputation, courses offered etc?</p>	<p>Actually it's more of a wish list. We need to diversify. We are hugely engineering based. We will have new campuses which will have a completely new mode of delivering knowledge. We feel more comfortable teaching in a classroom and so do the students. How learning takes place is very difficult to answer. I feel that one should give the students all kinds of possibilities of learning. Provide all kinds of things on their laptops, iPods or their mobile phones. We have to be very attentive whether students are learning or not. So that is going to be a huge change and it is going to happen much faster than we think. Finally the universities will be different from what they look right now. We need to make ourselves international very quickly, in fact ours is a university that gets international students quite regularly. We have a program with the University of Waterloo, their undergrad students come to us, they do a term with us and I have heard it's a highly competitive program. This year they came only this month and I was told that out of 350 applications they picked up 30 students. One reason could be that students today understand that today's industries work in a very diverse cultural environment where you will probably be producing goods in a particular cultural context, you will be transporting it through another country with a completely different kind of culture and finally it would be consumed by a society which might have a completely different cultural background. Therefore it is very important to know all this in order to be successful. I think it's very important every student must have some kind of experience of international education.</p>
<p>What is required in order to acquire this wish list of things?</p>	<p>Most important is to have a very open fact based governance system, that's probably absolutely essential. You have to understand all universities are not the same, they operate differently and would cater to different groups of people. Right now I think we have just set a straight jacket, trying to fit one size for all. Unless we have a very flexible kind of regulation, it will be difficult. About faculty – I think our research output has to go up, and the role of universities like us is very critical. So we need to actually focus on research. If these two things happen we have enough talent, both among students and also in the faculty, appetite for knowledge in both groups is just huge.</p>



Interviewer	Dr Abhijit Mukherjee
<p>How important is it to be a self regulated university for you to offer a quality education?</p>	<p>One would like to believe that one has to be really financially independent to deliver quality education. In India the best quality education has been delivered by the IITs. We had wonderful professors and faculty, but at the same time IITs have had that freedom of deciding on their own destiny and that kind of hands off approach would probably work the best. Universities would need support from the government to keep the cost of education within affordable limits; at the same time they should decide their own destiny. I think that's the model that would probably work the best. My views have not changed over the last four years; I think India is heading towards what has happened in the US. We would have a pyramidal structure – on top we would have a few very renowned private universities, and then we would have a layer of government funded universities, that would be very good but may not be as good, you know that small difference would be created because of the better governance and the organizational structure of the private universities, and at the bottom you would once again have a huge number of private universities who would like to go up the ladder. So these are the three layers that I foresee.</p>
<p>So if we talk about the most upper layer on the pinnacle, what you would call the world-class university. What does it mean and what does it take to be that?</p>	<p>I think the first thing that the universities must teach is to remain positive, to remain honest, and to remain committed to your goals and then comes other specialized knowledge that you have. The culture of honesty, the culture of belief that with something I can do, I can make a difference to the world. From the point of view of what knowledge you should impart, I think we must remain very flexible, not only on the content but also on the form of delivery, that's one area which has to be taken very seriously. I seriously don't know what would be the best that would emerge out of all the things that are happening right now in the technology space in terms of delivering education, frankly speaking the best way of delivering education is probably one teacher – one student. One has to remain extremely flexible in terms of what area of knowledge you would like to impart on students and also how you would do that. These are the two things that are very important. But most important is for all the stake holders of the university to feel free, there must be freedom, there must be honesty, there must be commitment to the society, and of course you have to remain curious all the time, you have to remain inquisitive.</p>
<p>If we are talking about the physical aspect of world-class universities, how many students should it have?</p>	<p>There can be many different situations; it need not be that the same kind of structure would suit everyone. Some of these universities would be very technology focused and they would not probably be very large, some would be more comprehensive and would be much bigger. So all those things would happen, I don't think that would determine the greatness of the university. It's more of how people feel, and by people I mean everyone, the potential employers, the faculty, the students, and the governance. What is this good is very difficult to answer. There are a few things that I feel are very important, I must feel free and able to decide my own interest, my own subject matter, own mode of delivery.</p>
<p>Are there any Indian Institutions that you might consider to be world-class?</p>	<p>If we talk in the area of research, I don't think any university in India is world-class, we need to catch up on that, if we talk of say quality of teaching I think most of the IITs are as good as world-class. So overall I would still say we have some distance to catch up with.</p>



Interviewer	Dr Abhijit Mukherjee
<p>If we take IITs and put in the resources required. How long do you think it will take to develop from where they are right now into something that is really recognized worldwide as world-class?</p>	<p>IITs have a set kind of administration, I would be really happy if some of these IITs transform themselves into world class. But I am more hopeful that some kind of organization or universities who are less known at this point in time would probably be in a better position to become world-class.</p>
<p>So in order for India to produce these world-class universities, is it better to take these existing known or unknown very good brands and take them up from there into something that's really outstanding or is it better to start something from scratch?</p>	<p>I think we should try all, as I don't know what will work best. At this point of time you like to put resources in already well known places like Indian Institutes of Science, Indian Institutes of Technology. At the same time some of the older universities, if you look at say Calcutta University or Mumbai University – they were extremely well known at one point in time, they were what you call world-class today at some point in history, so they have gone down the years. Why these universities have gone downhill because there were no owners. There was too much government involvement but no real owners.</p>
<p>What sort of financial investment does it come down to in the end to start something like this from scratch?</p>	<p>I think that's the easiest part; there is a lot of investment possible. At the same time we can help investment in education and we should be relaxing the nerves in investing in education, but at the same time if I don't think that if the university stocks are sold on the stock market it would be the right thing to do either. It has to have an exclusive enabling atmosphere, the best challenge and the best promises can actually bloom at these places, make it very exclusive and competitive in terms of money and all that we would lose out on is a lot of talent.</p>
<p>What is a higher education model that doesn't exist in India but which India really needs?</p>	<p>The focus should be undergrad education and the model would be the community college model of the US, that's going to be a very good model and I think technology would play a very important role here. I keep repeating myself all the time, you know one good lecture given is far superior to a hundred bad lectures, the amount of damage you can do with a hundred bad lectures is much more than the perceived amount of damage you can do with a deep lecture of a very good professor. I think with technology we can still give reasonably good education to a huge number of people at an affordable cost, but we must allow that. Right now distance education is something that immediately ticks your mind as something not so good quality education.</p>



Interviewer	Dr Abhijit Mukherjee
<p>In order for these community sort of colleges to come up what incentives should be offered by the government in terms of capital or regulations or anything else?</p>	<p>I think the government can help the most with regulations, the regulations must be more flexible, government is working in that direction anyway, for example on distance education. So regulation is first, second is of course huge investment, one thing that the government is doing once again quite successfully is spreading the internet network. Once this kind of infrastructure is available to people, Indian people are very creative. They will find out good usage for that. That's why the government should try help to education institutes that are not that good to come up; for that, faculty training is a very important component. We have in fact proposed something similar for Punjab because my graduate students come from these colleges, so I have a definite stake in improving the standards of those colleges. We have volunteered our professors' lectures to them, we are open to post material of their lectures, they can listen to it, they can do whatever they like, and we have no problem.</p>
<p>What should be the role of industry in all of this? What should be the role of foreign institutions, if any?</p>	<p>I think industry benefits the most from good graduates so obviously would benefit if the quality of education improves. At the same time I don't expect a very active role. Industry should not come and dictate curriculum too much. Because the kind of grad that we get will have to adapt to the different industries. Therefore we need that support. We would like to help them. Some of the industries have done a wonderful thing; they have shifted their "6+" research, i.e. the research they are not going to use immediately. But in 6 years there's a potential use. So they have research centres. So we say please tell us what can be taught but do not dictate to us. Definitely we need their support for understanding problems that today's technology is facing. We like to partner with them in terms of path breaking research. The second biggest export is students. So many thousands of them go abroad to study. We are actually losing out on a lot of foreign exchange. If they come to India, India would gain and they would gain because right now the fees are much higher. Now the growth is very high, businesses are coming up. I think the universities should come to India and set things up. At the same time this might take a little longer than one would expect because all of the old universities operate in a different form than industries. Industries can take quick decisions. I know some of my friends in universities abroad who want to start campuses in India but cannot because any approval takes one year. But in the immediate future what we can probably do is get some amount of backend research. One of the things we are looking at is, use these labs in the evenings and at nights to analyse samples from other countries. At the same time it is very useful for us. So in the near future I feel we can do a lot of that kind of work. We are trying to work on a European Indian program where there are 14 nations involved. It's just a concept. So 14 nations are involved to design the concept that would change the power generation scenario.</p>

Sekar Viswanathan

Pro Chancellor, VIT University

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THE PARTHENON GROUP

Interviewer	Sekar Viswanathan
<p>When was your institution founded? What was the founder's vision for the institution? Has that vision evolved over the years?</p>	<p>Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) was founded in 1984 as an engineering college. Our vision at that time was to be best in Tamil Nadu. We started off with 180 students. We did very well and were popular because our graduates went out to the world and became very successful. We became well known for quality engineering education. We got good students and good faculty members. Eventually it made us apply for the deemed university status in 2001. After that our growth was very steep. We got the academic freedom to start innovative programs and offer what students really want. We took full advantage of the freedom and started various innovative programmes catered to the needs of the industry and students. Now we have over 15,000 students. There are about 1,000 from abroad. We have the highest number of Chinese students in India. One of the reasons why we have success in that area is because we are in collaboration with over 80 universities across the world. We focus on the quality and processes of education and we share good relationships with the industry. Having international relations and relations with the industry helped us a lot in gaining popularity. For example the entrance exams - last year close to 140,000 students sat for the exam. Our acceptance ratio was lower than that of an IIT. So all this is possible in private sector. We understand what the industry wants and we have the flexibility to adapt it. We constantly look for good talent.</p>
<p>What is your faculty member composition?</p>	<p>Around 850 faculty members and about 1/3rd of them have PhD degrees. Many of our faculty members are graduates from esteemed institutions like IITs. There are some who got a PhD from abroad.</p>
<p>How do you manage to attract such strong faculty?</p>	<p>We are known to be a very liberal employer. In the sense that what do individuals want? They want academic freedom. They do not want to be told what to do. They want to do what they want. But at the same time there has to be accountability also. We have a lot of incentives. So that attracts a lot of people. They are attracted by the number of PhDs already here. Then they get involved and do research with others. Doing research is the key component. For example the government adopted the 6th pay commission and we were one of the first ones in the country to implement it. The word then gets out. People know that we don't mind paying well because we want quality faculty. They also know that the students are good. They want intellectually challenging students who can stimulate them. So these are the reasons for attracting good faculty. There is also on-campus housing. And we have introduced a scheme where we pay one month's salary in addition to the 12 month salary. It is like bonuses in the industry. It depends on the number of papers you publish, number of points you score as students' feedback.</p>
<p>Do you have upward feedback for professors from students?</p>	<p>We do a 360 degree feedback which includes student and staff feedback. It gives positive results. We also say you have to have 40 hour minimum training to be eligible for the performance bonus. This way we have integrated training as part of everyday work.</p>

Sekar Viswanathan

Pro Chancellor, VIT University

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THE PARTHENON GROUP

Interviewer	Sekar Viswanathan
<p>What were the 3 most critical success factors for your institution?</p>	<p>I think we have a very progressive attitude and zeal. We want to excel, excel and excel. We work as a team. All of us. We are always saying that one day we will be an MIT Boston. So when we have such a goal, we are able to move forward quickly. Having a progressive management and a straightforward goal is very important. Our reputation, our connections with universities abroad and industries all play a role. We do a lot of social work. So that creates a lot of goodwill in the society. These are some of the factors responsible for success. One scheme is the Star scheme which is used to support the advancement of rural students. We take bright students from villages - 2 from each district, one boy and one girl – and we give them free education. We also provide them with food and shelter with all of the costs covered by us. It's working out very well. Many of the students are from families whose parents have never seen school. Then there are ones who fall into the not wearing footwear category but who have this amazing eagerness to study. Such initiatives help our needs and also create a very good image in the society.</p>
<p>What is the biggest challenge that you have faced?</p>	<p>I think the biggest challenge for VIT is the location disadvantage. We are not located in a big city. So we have faculty members who have kids whose families want them to grow up in metropolitan cities where opportunities are better, etc. So we have to go the extra mile to attract them. I feel that if we were located in a big city our growth rate would have been faster. Now we also try to look at it the other way. The pollution is less; the cost of living is low, and other advantages. The 2nd challenging factor is the attitude of many people in the government. It is not always encouraging. There is a stereotype in certain minds that the private institutions are here for profit motive which is a very wrong impression. So that attitude results in decisions which keep us in shackles. Half of the time we are fighting to break open the shackles and move forward. I feel the government should be encouraging the private sector's initiative rather than discouraging it. They should be able to distinguish between the good and the bad. The government should act as a facilitator to monitor good quality of education. If you take the American higher education scenario, well there is the good, the bad and the ugly. There are about 3,000 to 4,000 higher education institutions. But not everybody is Harvard or MIT or Stanford. People go to institutions which they can afford, which they think are good. People believe in reputation too. VIT always wanted to go that extra step for additional accreditation. Apart from the Indian accreditation, i.e. the NAAC accreditation. Few years ago we went for the British accreditation. Last year we got the ABET accreditation for our civil engineering program. It's considered to be the toughest. So our engineers directly get the professional engineering license from the U.S. That is not mandatory. We just do it voluntarily to show the world that our degree is equivalent to theirs. All the extra initiatives have added to the success factor.</p>
<p>You have 15,000 students so you must have a lot of infrastructure built for them. Has that ever been a challenge? In particular, the funding it needed?</p>	<p>Not necessarily. Our institution was founded by Dr. G Viswanathan who is still the Chancellor. He went to the state government representing the local people and asked for an engineering college to be set up in this rural area. The chief minister said, "Well I don't have money. Why don't you start one?" So he formed a trust and started an engineering college. So initially funds were a problem but later on fortunately the bank gave us loan. So funding is not an issue. We are able to fund our projects very well and we can get additional funding.</p>
<p>Where do you see your institution in 10 years?</p>	<p>One thing is that we want to grow geographically also. Next year we are starting one more campus in Chennai which is about 140 km away. We will be growing geographically in other cities in India and abroad hopefully. We would also want to correspondingly increase the number of students. Our central government has been always pushing for a higher gross enrolment ratio. We have high targets. So we will be contributing to the growth in the GER. We celebrated our silver jubilee last year and our goal is that by golden jubilee one VITian should have a Nobel Prize... I know it's a tall order but we have an ambition. We want to get more patents. We want to publish more papers. We want our faculty to get engaged in a lot of research so 10 years from now I see our centre being one of the top research centres not only in the country but also well-known abroad.</p>

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<p>How important do you think it is to be a self regulated university in order to continue offering high quality education and to achieve these goals?</p>	<p>It's very important that we have the academic freedom to start new programs. We have brought in many innovations, starting from dual degree programs within VIT. You can do four years of B.Tech and the fifth year could be MBA. We have many partner universities so you can study one year in India, one year in Germany and get two degrees. There are plenty of innovations and recently we have introduced the Fully Flexible Credit System what we call the FFCS, where the students get to choose the order of subjects they want to study, the number of subjects they want to study, number of credits and they can choose their professors, their time of study, everybody has their own time table. This is common in western culture, in the US. But it's very uncommon in India, where some of the government universities are still struggling to bring in the semester system and don't even have a CGPA system. We brought in those changes years ago, including semester system, CGPA, continuous assessment, relative grading, fully flexible credit system and the ability to do a double major, major – minor, etc. All the innovations are possible only because we are a university.</p>
<p>In your opinion what does it mean to be a world-class university? What does it take to be a world class university?</p>	<p>One of the goals we set for ourselves, we want to be in the top 100 universities globally. Currently I don't think any of the Indian universities are there in the top 100. So what does it take to become a world class university? I think the number one thing which will take us there is the research; we have to have original work coming out of our universities. It's the ability to innovate, invent, publish that work, share that knowledge and being able to patent that work is what's important. The other thing is that we want to have international faculty. We currently have a lot of international students but we are not at all happy with the percentage. We want to have more of an international mix and we also want international faculty to come and teach. It's already happening in a smaller way but we want to make it happen in a big way. The other thing is the quality of education, the teaching learning processes. We are already reputed for our infrastructure; we have a 330 acre campus, 40 lakh square feet of buildings, conference halls, etc. So we need world class infrastructure first but infrastructure alone won't cut it, the kind of people you have, i.e. the faculty and scientists, is going to make the difference, which is going to attract the good students. When you get good students, the input quality is going to determine the output quality, and our alumni did do really well, they determine our success. The proof of the pudding is in the eating - the kind of job our students get, the kind of salaries they get, etc.</p>
<p>As of right now does India have anything that can be considered world-class? Which institutions are closest to being world-class?</p>	<p>Not right now, not yet. If you take technical education, the IITs would be closest and if you take management education you already have ISB in the top world standards and we have a couple of IIMs getting there as well. Among the private initiative BITS Pilani is considered one of them; VIT is considered high quality in engineering and in management; Symbiosis is one of the top institutions as well. There are a few selected institutions which are up there, e.g. Manipal is very well known for its medical education. These are good aspirants for world-class university. I always considered VIT as a new edge Nalanda. Nalanda was a university in India a thousand years ago which attracted foreign scholars and made it possible that India can excel in education.</p>
<p>How long do you think it is going to take for these top brand institutions that you just mentioned to become world-class institutions?</p>	<p>I would give it 10-15 years, provided the government facilitates a favourable environment. If we can attract more investments into education I am sure we can produce more world-class universities.</p>
<p>If you just start a university from scratch and want to make it world-class, how long does that usually take?</p>	<p>I think it would take at least 2 to 3 decades, because it takes quite a while to establish your reputation, especially research takes a while. It takes a lot of funding and patience and a lot of hard work and dedication to what you are doing. ISB is an outstanding example as it could probably get there in 15 years or even less than that, but it's a very small university, it is not scalable. If you are talking about a larger university it will take time, but if your focus is just world class university, if you take just about a small number of students, have a thousand faculty members, pump in all the money, then you can build it in 10-15 years. But if you are talking about a real university it will take 2-3 decades.</p>



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<p>So if there is a goal of establishing 50 world class universities in the next few decades, what's the best strategy – is it upgrading existing institutions or is it merging existing institutions or is it starting from scratch?</p>	<p>I think we could do a combination of everything, there a lot of government education institutions which lack funding, it would be really an irony if you don't fund them and then go and start something new. So you could do a combo of both. Merging may not be a good idea, but upgrading the existing institutions and pumping in more money while making sure the money is well spent is one way. In some areas where there aren't any institutions the government can start something new. You can have a two way approach and it is possible provided the government is willing to spend and is able to attract good talent.</p>
<p>What share of responsibility should fall on the private sector?</p>	<p>In forming the world class university, I think a private institution can play a big role apart from this government-started initiative. Government can do two things: one – it can spend its own money and make world class institutions, but the other thing is to encourage private sector, not to spend a penny and still make world-class institutions. How much money did government spend in ISB? Zero. ISB is not even recognized by AICTE. So it is possible that the government without spending a penny can create world-class universities in India.</p>
<p>In your opinion, what kind of financial investments are we talking about, if we are thinking about setting up a world-class university?</p>	<p>Well to set up an IIT, it costs about 700 to 750 crores, so 1000 crores to set up a world-class university is what I would say it would take in the initial years.</p>
<p>What incentives should the government offer to the private sector?</p>	<p>The first thing is don't come in the way of the private sector. Then the key thing is to give GSL, Guaranteed Student Loans. There are many bright students in India who are willing to study, who have the brains, but don't have the money. So the government should empower them, give them loans, make them repay it. So it's not a scholarship, it is guaranteed student loans like in the USA. The government should make the repayment period about 20-25 years, i.e. long term. It's the best investment the government can make and let them choose the university they want. You can make a condition saying the loan will be given provided that you go to a university that has a certain accreditation grade. It is fine if you don't want them to spend it foolishly in a university which doesn't have any quality. But do empower the students! You don't need to give money to the private sector to build the infrastructure. You can allow the private universities without any hindrance to collect fees based on the costs which are incurred and establish transparency. You empower the students; students will automatically choose good institutions, so the good institutions will grow. That's the incentive for not so good institutions to become good institutions, because students with money are coming in. The government can help the private sector also with research funding. It's doing it partially now already. We do get different scientific projects but the quantity is very small, it can grow tremendously. There is still some discrimination in some minds about the private institutions. That attitude should change. It doesn't matter if they are from private sector or government sector, if they are doing good work in research, their projects should be funded. So just to summarize, empower the students by providing them Guaranteed Student Loans and help the private initiatives by providing funds for research, that's all you need.</p>
<p>What other kinds of institutions does India need?</p>	<p>Basically, all you need is to encourage the private sector. Not everybody is going to have world-class universities and not everybody wants world-class universities. There are different segments of public, they are ready to pay, so be liberal and make sure you have good monitoring system for quality. Once we have these private players coming in and with transparency I am sure we can achieve this higher gross enrolment ratio easily. The government by itself cannot do it and it's a failed model. There are few government institutions which are doing outstandingly well, so the private sector is the way to go. Similarly to what happened in the industrial sector in the country should happen in the education sector.</p>

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If you are talking about a quality institution, not a world-class, but a plain vanilla quality institution, what kind of investment would you be talking about?	If it's an engineering college, it's less expensive compared to a medical college. An engineering college you can set up for about 50 crores as an investment. We are talking about 500 to 600 students. But we are talking about number of such players and they will grow, they will continue to grow. You start off slow and then pick up...
What should be the role of industry in higher education sector?	Ideally I would say the industry should sponsor more projects because the Indian industry is not spending enough on R&D. They call it the screw driver technology; you just use a screw driver to assemble and sell it. There is not much of money being spent on R&D so industry needs to increase its R&D spending in collaboration with the education institutions. The second thing is even without the money they have to participate in the academic development; they have to go back and tell the education institutions what they want. There needs to be a good dialogue between the academic world and the industry which will go a long way.
What should be the role of foreign institutions, if any?	Foreign institutions are welcome in India. Of course there should be a level playing field, the rules which are applicable to us should be applicable to them. Moreover, we want fewer rules so it should be the case for them also. The foreign universities should partner with the Indian universities. That way the Indian universities also grow and foreign universities get the local help they need. So it will be a win – win situation.