

Autonomy in Education Vital for Inclusive Growth



*L-R: **Y.S.Rajan**, Principal Advisor, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII); **Deepak Pental**, Vice Chancellor, Delhi University; **Rajiv Kumar**, Director and Chief Executive, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER); Moderator: **N.K.Singh**, Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha*

The country's education system needs greater autonomy along with more inclusive private sector participation was the consensus that emerged during the session on 'The Undisputed Link Between India's Universities and its Economic Growth' during the 'Ideas India 2008' seminar, being conducted here by Aspen Institute India.

Pointing out that there was need for greater empowerment of Indian universities, **Mr Deepak Pental, Vice Chancellor, Delhi University**, said that "we should enable greater interaction between universities and industries." He said that there was need for a regulatory body in higher education, with private institutions in the sector also being more open to regulation, with the government encourage good practices among them. He also said that excellence is required to be nurtured if you want to develop people. Mr Pental said that while science and technology "were the wheels of the same moped", we should now include management in this basket.

"Teachers in the classroom need to be empowered," was the line adopted by **Mr Y S Rajan, Principal Advisor, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)**. He said that there should not be a single monopoly body in the sector and opposed granting deemed status to more universities. According to him, India has one the

largest education systems in the world, but there was a urgent need to modernize it. "We need more institutions in diverse fields like agriculture, biotechnology, and human resources, among others, if we have reap the advantages of our demographic profile."

On his part, **Mr Rajiv Kumar, Director and Chief Executive, Indian Council for Research on International Economic relations (ICRIER)**, said that while some grant money should be given to the universities, they should then be encouraged to get matching grants for themselves from other sources. "Only then can the concept of autonomy become true." Mr Kumar said that the public education system was under tremendous pressure and was in need of urgent reforms. "If we want inclusive growth, the public higher education system has to be developed."

The session was moderated by **Mr N K Singh, Member of Parliament**, who said that the Central Universities Bill, which was awaiting parliamentary approval, would help widen the spread of higher education in the country, as 12 Central universities are to be opened in states which do not have a Central University so far.

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