



# India Development Coalition of America

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## Press release

### IDCA Organizes A Thought Provoking India Education Forum

Darien, IL, June 29, 2014. IDCA organized its India Education Forum at the Indian Prairie Library. There were four speakers: 2 were volunteer leaders, and 2 were from local Universities. The purpose of the forum was to learn about the activities of these organization relating to improving education in India. Dr. Mohan Jain, the Founder president welcomed all the speakers and participants. He introduced the speakers and stressed on the need to rethink education philosophy, policy, and practices to get the desirable outcome and meet the aspiration of millions. The current education system has failed to meet the need of the nation as far as it has not helped to solve the basic problems of the people. It is time that we improve the outcomes to meet the immediate needs and ultimate needs of human beings as per the life philosophy of the country. He then played a short but inspiring video on **Art of Giving**. The video talks about the life and contributions of Dr. Achuyta Samanta, Founder of KIIT (Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology--[www.kiit.ac.in](http://www.kiit.ac.in)) and KISS (Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences—[www.kiss.ac.in](http://www.kiss.ac.in)) in Odisha during the last 20 years, impacting the lives of 1 million people. KISS educates and supports 20,000 tribal children from Kinder Garten to Post Graduate levels. Dr. Jain mentioned that he had an opportunity to meet Dr. Samanta earlier this year in New Delhi. More info at: ([www.achuytasamanta.com](http://www.achuytasamanta.com)) . He also mentioned about an on line discussion on education with experts from India and the US. As a result of this dialogue we plan to send a letter of suggestions to the Human resource Development Minister.

The first Speaker was Professor Ronald Fernandes of DePaul University of Chicago, and Assistant Director, School of Public Service, discussed the School's innovative study abroad programs to India from graduate students. According to the Institute of International Education, in 2012, around 280,000 U.S students studied abroad, of which only 13% were graduate students. Around 4,600 American students studied in India in 2012 while around 15,000 students studied in China. The School has over 500 students in five degrees in public service, public management, international programs and leadership. The DePaul program in India is designed for graduate students and are of short duration and economical. Over the past 10 years, over 200 students and 7 DePaul faculty have visited India and attended courses on sustainable development and NGOs, policy analysis and design, values-centered leadership and management of International NGOs. The School has working partnerships with the DePaul Institute of Science and Technology (DIST), Angamaly, Kerala and the Watershed Organization Trust (WOTR), Pune, Maharashtra. The DePaul students engagements with India continue after they return from their visit. In 2009, they created the American Friends of WOTR, a charitable nonprofit organization based in Chicago to fund the development programs implemented by WOTR in India.

The Second Speaker was Dr. Raj Rajaram, President, Chicago Chapter, Pratham, USA.

He spoke about the four major programs Pratham ([www.pratham.org](http://www.pratham.org)) offers in India. These are: 1. Read India, the flagship program that reaches 4 million children in Rural India. Through the use of Community Events or Melas, Pratham teachers offer quality education programs focused on Reading, Writing and Math to rural children. These 10-day events, conducted about 6 to 7 times a year, have transformed the educational performance in these villages. These events serve as a catalyst for the government teachers and officials who emulate Pratham efforts and impact a lot more children in government schools. 2.

Pratham Open School Education (POSE) is a program started in 2011 that helps girls (and some boys) who drop out after elementary school. By tailoring the program to the individual needs of the students, this program has helped many thousands of girls finish secondary education or open their own business.

3. Pratham Vocational Training Programs are offered in Construction, Hospitality, Healthcare, Automotive, Banking and Beauty/Personal care. In 2014, 20,000 young people will receive these training

programs and be employed by Pratham's industry partners. The program is sustainable through the students paying back 70 percent of their tuition once they start working. 4. Annual Survey of Education Report (ASER) is a nationwide survey that Pratham has been conducting since 2005 to measure learning outcomes in rural and urban schools in 595 districts (95% of the total districts). The ASER document is released by the Central Government every January, and is used by most of the States to improve the quality of education in their state. He mentioned that over 70% of the funding comes from donors in the US and the rest from donors in India.

The third Speaker was Prof. Shewta Singh, Loyola University of Chicago. She spoke about the issues concerning the primary education in India which are retaining, repetition, enrollment in secondary schooling, and learning outcomes for children. It explores the antecedents of Indian education system and guiding philosophy as operationalized in early Independence era of India. It then examines the current issues with education that social development agencies including the Government have identified as the primary cause of concern. These include a Preoccupation with textbooks and external examinations; Vocational education in India has unfortunately still not become socially acceptable; The missing context of value education and moral science; Limited use of Technology and Distance Education; centralized and hierarchical governance of education systems; Testing dependence; Continued weak infrastructure; Predominant market awareness of curriculum and skills focus; Privatization of education and falling standards of teacher training and learning outcomes. The paper also delves into the meaning of home and the school as influencers for students in establishing career goals, values, ideologies, and relationships within education!

The fourth Speaker was Dr. Ratnam Chitturi, Founder, president of the North South Foundation, Burr Ridge, IL. North South Foundation ([www.northsouth.org](http://www.northsouth.org)) is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year. He spoke about the India Scholarship program. They are now offering 3000 scholarship to well qualified and needy students for the college education. In the US they are running classes for training the Indian American students on spelling, vocabulary, Math, Science, and Geographic Bees. For the last many years NSF students are winning all major competition. They are now trying to introduce this in India. Last year they also introduced value education.

IDCA Program Chair and moderator, Mr. Porus Dadabhoy, asked for the self introduction of all the participants. Prominent participants were: Mr. Arvind Guna Patel, president, Young Scientists Foundation, India, he spoke about his efforts to improve learning in the village schools near Ahmedabad by using students in science and math. He inspired interest in science by giving microscopes of children and teaching them how to use. Most recently under IDCA support he has developed a stand for distance tutoring by using Ipad or a tablet. He has donated several of these stands to local schools. The second person was Dr. Sundram Kumar, spoke about the LED light offering from his company. He promised to donate 10% of sales generated through IDCA website or website of its members. IDCA has a link to their website on the donation and events pages. Please help yourself, the mother earth, and IDCA or its members by ordering your LED lights through our website.

Mr. Avinash Dear, president of the One Group, Westmont, projected his site [TheIdeaMachine.In](http://TheIdeaMachine.In) and talked about building Idea Trees to fully define a problem and then identify its elements/reasons/cause before starting a idea generation or brainstorming exercise. Normally, people rush in with their pre-conceived notions/ideas so without fully understanding the problems, so the output is sub-optimal leading to unintended consequences and generally devaluing ideas. A proper problem solving following sequential steps combined with participant's creativity has great possibility of finding innovative solutions within space limited by resource and time constraints. The education related idea tree is @ <http://www.theideamachine.in/idea-tree/problem6/>

Following this everyone enjoyed some refreshments and networked with each other and ended the meeting just before 5 PM. Our upcoming events include: **India Healthcare Forum**, August 30, at the Oak Brook Library from 1:30 PM, Our **12<sup>th</sup> International Conference (Inspiring Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship for Poverty Alleviation, and Climate Change Mitigation in India)** will be held on October 18-19 at the Rice campus of the Illinois Institute of Technology, Wheaton, Illinois.

For additional ideas/resources on this subject, you are encouraged to visit IDCA website and facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/IDCA.Education/>

IDCA Promotes Social entrepreneurship, networking, collaborating, learning, giving and volunteering to alleviate poverty and mitigate climate change in India.

*It is a not-for-profit organization registered in the state of Illinois since 2004. We obtained our 501 (c)(3) tax exemption status in 2005 from the U. S. Internal service. We have been engaged since 2004 in promoting sustainable development in India to eradicate poverty and minimize damage to our environment. To this effect we have been bringing NPOs/NGOs and concerned members of our community in our Annual regional and International conferences both in India and the US and regular monthly seminars in the Chicago. So far we have organized 7 International conferences in Chicago, one in Indiana, Ten International conferences in India (New Delhi, Gurgaon, Jaipur, Kochi, and Hyderabad), and 10 regional conferences (Washington, New York, Detroit, Houston, and San Jose, California). Each conference we have 10-15 speakers representing organizations working in the areas mentioned above. For the US International conference we have invited one or more NGOs from India also. For more information about future events and sustainable development initiatives to help India's villages, please go to IDCA's web site at <http://idc-america.org/> or call Dr. Mohan Jain at 630-303-9592 or Mr. Porus Dadabhoy at :630-960-2425.*



