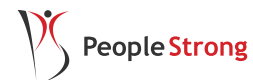


# ASPIRE SkillsWorld™ 2010

Knowledge Partners



Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> July 2010  
Life Scape, ABW Tower, IFFCO Chowk, Sector - 25, Gurgaon

## Message from Ms. Kiran Pasricha, Aspen Institute India

Dear Readers and Guests

It gives me great pleasure to have the opportunity to once again partner with Aspire and present the second edition of Aspire SkillsWorld. Aspire has been providing an exceptional service in developing India's youth and providing them with skills required to develop themselves into future leaders. It has often been pointed out that India stands to benefit from the demographic divide as the majority of the population is within the working age. However, in order to take advantage of the situation, the workforce must be appropriately skilled. Aspire has been able to recognize this fact and has already started to work towards it with extraordinary results.

This session will aim to create a dialogue between industry, academia and government on the agenda ahead for India in the crucial area of Skills Development.



**Ms. Kiran Pasricha**  
Executive Director and CEO, Aspen Institute India

### Agenda

3.00 – 3.15 pm	Registration
3.15 – 3.30 pm	Panasonic Presentation
3.30 – 3.45 pm	Aspire Presentation
3.45 – 4.45 pm	<p><b>Session I: Inaugural Session: “Education - Employability or Degree”</b></p> <p><b>Academia?</b> Dr. Siddiq Wahid, Vice Chancellor, Islamic University, Srinagar Mark Parkinson, Director, The Shriram School, Delhi &amp; Gurgaon Dr. Raj Singh, Vice Chancellor, Amity University, Jaipur Dr. Sanjay Modi, Senior Dean, Lovely Professional University, Jalandhar</p> <p><b>Industry?</b> Sanjeev Bikhchandani, CEO, Naukri.com Pankaj Bansal, Co - Founder &amp; CEO, People Strong Arjun Balakrishnan, Director, Operations Panasonic Sandeep Dhar, CEO, TESCO India Ltd.</p>
4.45 – 5.30 pm	<p><b>Session II: Plenary Session: “Eco-System &amp; Entrepreneurship for Skills Development”</b></p> <p>Prof. S.S. Mantha, Chairman, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) Dilip Chenoy, CEO &amp; MD, National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC)</p>
5.30 – 6.30 pm	<p><b>Session III: Special Session: “Mentorship for Excellence”</b></p> <p>In our final session, you will hear Mr. Shiv Khera, India's most famous motivation speaker in conversation with Ms. Saina Nehwal, India's most famous sportswoman, Padma Shri, Arjuna Awardee and Aspire's Brand Ambassador.</p>
6.30 pm onwards	Entertainment, Wine & Cheese Tasting, Cocktails & Dinner (with a live Band)

## Message from Amit Bhatia, Founder & CEO - Aspire

Dear All,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the third edition of Aspire SkillsWorld<sup>™</sup>, on our third anniversary. As Employability missionaries, still in our formative stages, your participation, support and endorsement means a lot to Aspire<sup>™</sup>. It not only encourages us to be more ambitious in our outreach but reinforces that we are not alone in this mission for India.

We are thrilled to have eminent guests in our third edition with three insightful panels. We start with Educators versus Employers segment, moving to a Policy & Ecosystem and finally, concluding with a high-voltage success story, Saina Nehwal. India's most famous woman sportsperson and Aspire Brand Ambassador, Saina Nehwal will be interviewed by India's most famous Motivational Guru, Shiv Khera.

Over the past year, Aspire<sup>™</sup> grew rapidly with your support. Last year, we trained over 12,000 students through our operations in 11 cities across 9 states. This year, we have already extended our reach to 17 cities across 11 states. Last year, we executed both our flagship products: ProHire<sup>™</sup> and EnglishPro<sup>™</sup>. This year, we will have eight editions of these two products, across schools and colleges, ready for execution. Finally, we added three new directors: Neeraj Bhargava, Warren Weiss and Samit Sinha to strengthen our Board and raised more money from Foundation Capital of USA. Aspire is clearly upto the challenge of delivering employability and professional education to a focused subsection of 320 million, school and college-going youth. Aspire's latest factsheet is included in this brochure.

The challenge we are addressing has only grown in proportions over the past year. Aspire's study of the overall India Employability Skills, outlined later in the brochure, indicates that Aspire's NEST Index was down 300 BP in 2009-10 vis-à-vis 2008-09 (from 52 to 49 on a scale of 1-100), although on an expanded criteria, the Index was up from 52 last year to 53 this year (Scale: 1-100). Further, when the scores are compared to the Employability Index (employer-driven dynamic index for entry-level skills), the survey confirms a significant skill-gap in skills required and valued by employers. Aspire used an 8-axis NEST<sup>™</sup> in 2008-09 and a 12-axis NEST<sup>™</sup> in 2009-10 for this Employability Survey administered to 12,000 college students and entry level professionals across 11 states and 25 cities in India.

In summary, thank you for your support and participation. I will truly value your feedback regarding the event on [amit.bhatia@aspireindia.org](mailto:amit.bhatia@aspireindia.org)

I very much hope you enjoy the event and stay back for some drinks and dinner.



**Amit Bhatia,**  
Founder & CEO, Aspire Human Capital Management



## The Aspen Institute India

*Presents*

### Aspire SkillsWorld 2010

Aspen Institute India is delighted to present Aspire SkillsWorld 2010, hosted by Panasonic. This third edition of Aspire's SkillsWorld will be dedicated to the spirit of mentoring while bridging the academia-industry divide. The first two editions were hosted by CII in 2007 and by Aspen Institute India and The Shriram Schools in 2008.

The Aspen Institute India, which promotes values-based leadership; Panasonic Lifescape, India's first nature-friendly concept store and Aspire, India's leading Employability Education Services firm are delighted to invite you to an evening celebrating our centuries-old tradition of cultural amalgamation, an idea as diverse as our identity. The idea of India is best described as, "the idea of an ever-ever land- emerging from an ancient civilization, united by shared history, sustained by pluralist democracy". We believe that our society's success in future must be inspired by our past and hence, this evening will be dedicated to "**old-world mentorship for new-world jobs**", a fusion of tradition and modernity.

The Aspen Institute India, Panasonic and Aspire will make this magical evening happen through four-hours of action-packed content, celebration and entertainment. The evening themes include an in-media panel discussion to bridge the gap between "What Employers Want" and "What Educators Want"; tete-a-tete with Saina Nehwal; Plenary session in SkillsWorld Awards 2010 and an Entertainment Evening recreating the fusion magic to scintillate your senses, a true kaleidoscopic experience of India's unique cultural & artistic diversity. This "By-invitation" event will be limited to 100 guests and is being hosted in partnership with EPSI, Naukri.com and PeopleStrong at Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> July 2010, 3 pm onwards at Panasonic Lifescape, ABW Tower, IFFCO Chowk, Gurgaon.

In summary, we will be honored if you can mark the date, 1<sup>st</sup> of July for the event to relive the fusion of our culture, the diversity of our past and the formidable future forged in this diversity. We will ensure that you will have a rewarding and a memorable evening.

#### **About Aspen Institute India**

Aspen Institute India (Aii) promotes values-based leadership, open dialogue and cross-sector outreach by engaging the civil society, government, private sector and other key stakeholders on issues related to India's development. It invites industrial, economic, financial, political, social and cultural leaders to discuss these issues in settings that encourage frank and open dialogue. The Institute focuses on the most important problems and challenges facing society, the business community and the individual in India. It invites industrial, economic, financial, political, social and cultural leaders to discuss these issues in settings that encourage frank and open dialogue.

#### **About Aspire Skillsworld**

Aspire SkillsWorld is an annual congregation of leaders from Education and Human Resources (HR) arena to talk, discuss and debate topical issues. The first edition of SkillsWorld was hosted by Aspire and CII in New Delhi in May 2008, was attended by over 400 HR, Education & Government leaders, addressed by 25 leaders from the field of HR / Education and the keynote speakers included Dr. Peter Cappelli, Wharton. The 2009 edition, presided by Shri Kapil Sibal, Hon'ble Minister for HRD was hosted by The Aspen Institute India and The ShriRam Schools in Gurgaon. The event launched our first Aspire SkillsWorld Awards to 10 eminent sports personalities (Arjuna & Droncharya Awardees).

#### **About Aspire**

Aspire<sup>™</sup> enables education that enhances employability through the world's first "hallmarked" Employability Education Management System (EEMS<sup>™</sup>). Aspire<sup>™</sup> is a social entrepreneurial firm, enabling education that enhances employability through the world's first "hallmarked" Employability Education Management System (EEMS<sup>™</sup>). Aspire<sup>™</sup> deploys its EEMS<sup>™</sup> through 4 products (ProHire<sup>™</sup>, EnglishPro<sup>™</sup>, NeoHire<sup>™</sup> & TracHire<sup>™</sup>), each with 4 capabilities (Content/ Assessments, Training, Technology & Placements/Recruitment) for 4 customer segments (B2E, B2B, B2C and B2G). EEMS<sup>™</sup> enables educators, governments, businesses and aspirants to grow more.

## Inaugural Session

### “Education - Employability or Degree”



Dr Siddiq Wahid  
Vice Chancellor, Islamic University,  
Srinagar

**Dr Siddiq Wahid, Vice Chancellor, Islamic University:** is the Founding Vice Chancellor of Islamic University of Science & Technology in Kashmir, a position he continues to hold. Prior to this, he was the Chair Professor in History at Maharaja Gulab Singh, University of Jammu. He has taught at Harvard University, Metropolitan University and Gustavus Adolphus College in the United States. He has lectured widely in India, the United States and Europe in his field of study-medieval Central Asian and Tibetan history. He received his PhD and Masters from Harvard University.



Mr. Mark Parkinson  
Director The ShriRam School,  
Delhi & Gurgaon

**Mark Parkinson, Director, The ShriRam Schools, Delhi & Gurgaon:** is Director of The ShriRam Schools, Delhi & Gurgaon. In 2009 the school was declared number one day school in the country by C-fore/ Education World Survey, for the second year in a row. Mark has been a visiting faculty for Business Communication Skills at IIM, Ahmedabad, Mudra Institute of Communications and Nirma Institute of Management and is a training consultant to a number of schools and commercial organisations. Before coming to South Asia he completed a law degree, did 11 years as a Senior Private Banker, collected a few UK national debating competition victories and was for a year President of the Junior Chamber of Commerce for London.



Dr. Raj Singh  
Vice Chancellor, Amity University,  
Rajasthan

**Dr. Raj Singh, Vice Chancellor, Amity University Rajasthan, Jaipur:** completed his postgraduate in Economics, Doctorate in Strategic Cost Management and Performance of Mergers and Acquisitions. He is a qualified Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) from the Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts of India (ICFAI) and was a topper in the coveted CFA programme. Prior to joining Amity, he headed the prestigious ICFAI Business School, Delhi from its inception in 1995. He was COO at Ansal API, New Delhi. Before starting his career in Academics in 1994 Dr. Singh served the Indian Air Force for 14 years.



Dr. Sanjay Modi  
Senior Dean, Lovely Professional  
University, Jalandhar

**Dr. Sanjay Modi, Senior Dean, Lovely Professional University:** Dr. Modi is an MBA and PHD, has been engaged in teaching and practice of management for 28 years. He has been a Professor in management in Punjabi University Patiala. He has been guiding Doctoral research, has worked in the industry and has been conducting management development programs for the industry. He has numerous research publications to his credit and publications of national repute. He made his presence felt as a strong administrator as Director Lovely Institute of Management 2001 -to date.



Mr. Sanjeev Bikchandani  
CEO, Naukri.com

**Sanjeev Bikchandani, CEO, Naukri.com:** Founder of Info Edge, that runs Naukri.com, India's leading job site besides other web sites like Jeevansathi.com, 99acres.com, Brijj.com, Allcheckdeals.com, Naukrigulf.com, Shiksha.com, and Firstnaukri.com. Info Edge also runs Quadrangle which is an executive search and selection business. It was the first Internet company to be listed on the Indian Stock Exchanges. Info Edge employs around 1500 people and generates revenues of approxly USD 60 Mn last year. Sanjeev, along with his partner Hitesh Oberoi, won the "Ernst and Young – Entrepreneur of the Year" award in 2008 for Business Transformation. He also won the Dataquest Pathbreaker Award & the Teacher's Achievement Award for Business in 2008.



Mr. Pankaj Bansal  
Co-Founder and CEO,  
PeopleStrong HR Services

**Pankaj Bansal, Co-Founder and CEO, PeopleStrong HR Services:** has a Masters Degree in HR Management from University of Pune and a Bachelors' degree in Entrepreneurship from Delhi University. As CEO at PeopleStrong, Pankaj is responsible for planning and building a strong footprint in the India and international market. Pankaj is responsible to build strategic partnership and direct financial growth of PeopleStrong. Pankaj is also a Director (non-executive) at Withya Group. Pankaj is on the National Board of NHRDN. He is an active member of CII National Committee on Skills & Human Resource.



Mr. Arjun Balakrishnan  
Director, Panasonic India

**Arjun Balakrishnan, Director, Panasonic India:** joined Panasonic in 2005 starting with the India strategy group. In 2006 he re-established a new sales company in India under the name Panasonic Sales and Services India Pvt. Ltd. (Now Panasonic India Pvt. Ltd). After its establishment he assumed the role of director of operations and was made a board member of the company. Currently, Arjun assumes the dual role of overseeing sales company operations and the setting up of the country headquarter function in India. Mr. Arjun Balakrishna holds a Masters degree in Engineering and a Masters in Business Administration from Harvard Business School.



Mr. Sandeep Dhar  
CEO, Tesco Hindustan  
Service Centre

**Sandeep Dhar, CEO, Tesco:** before joining Tesco, Sandeep was the Managing Director of Sapien Corporation in India. He was responsible for Delivery globally and managed over 4000 engineers and designers in the space of Consulting and Interactive Marketing. Prior to that, he was the President of the \$ 100 million BPO business at Mphasis-EDS, a business which he grew from 3000 to 10,000 people in the space of just over three years. Sandeep spent several years with Citibank and ABNAMRO in India as well as internationally and did pioneering work in the field of Contact Centres, E-Commerce and MCommerce. Sandeep completed his Post Graduate Diploma in Business Management from IMT Ghaziabad in 1988 and has also attended an Advanced Management Program at Wharton Business School.

## Plenary Session

### “Eco-System & Entrepreneurship for Skills Development”



Dr.S.S Mantha  
Chairman, AICTE

**Dr. S. S. Mantha, Chairman, AICTE:** an eminent academician and an able administrator, is the Chairman (Accounting), of the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), since August 2009. Having joined the Organisation in March 2009 as its Vice Chairman, he has been at the forefront of bringing in radical changes for transparency and accountability in its administration. He holds a Bachelors degree in Mechanical Engineering from the M S University, Baroda, and a Masters in Mechanical Engineering from VJTI, Mumbai. Step by step he progressed to be the Professor and Head, Department of Mechanical Engineering a position he held for 6 years at VJTI, subsequent to which he was appointed the ProVice Chancellor, SNDT Women's University by the Government of Maharashtra which he served for two years with distinction.



Mr.Dilip Chenoy  
MD & CEO, NSDC

**Dilip Chenoy, MD & CEO, NSDC:** is a Public Private Partnership mandated to create, fund, enable and incentivize skill development and upgradation capacity in India. Previous to this Dilip was Director General of the advocacy group for the automobile industry in India, Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers. He represented SIAM on various Government Committees as well as on the board of the National Skills Development Corporation and the Steering Committee of the International Motorcycle Manufacturers Association. He is also on the Governing Council of a Management School. Dilip was the Deputy Director General responsible for Industry Sectors and Associations Council - (ASCN) covering, Agriculture, Life sciences and ICT in the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). Dilip was the CII spokesperson and coordinated CII's international work relating to the ASEAN.

## Special Session

### “Mentorship for Excellence”



Ms. Saina Nehwal  
Padama Shree & Arjuna Awardee  
Badminton Player, India

**Saina Nehwal, Badminton Player:** ranked number 3 in the world by the Badminton World Federation, the current National Champion, World Commonwealth and World Junior Champion. Recently Saina won India Open Grand Prix, Singapore Super Series and Indonesia Open. Saina was born in Hisar, Haryana. She later moved from her hometown to Hyderabad to be trained by Gopichand over the past several years. Saina is the only Indian woman to reach the Singles Quarterfinals at the Olympics and the World Badminton Championships. Saina Nehwal made history on June 21 2009 by becoming the first Indian to win the Indonesia Open Super Series Tournament in Jakarta with a stunning victory over the higher-ranked Chinese Lin Wang.



Mr.Shiv Khera  
Founder, Qualified Learning  
Systems Inc. USA

**Mr. Shiv Khera, Founder, Qualified Learning Systems Inc. USA:** an author, educator, Business Consultant and successful entrepreneur, he is a much sought-after speaker. Mr. Khera inspires and encourages people, making them realize their true potential. He has taken his dynamic personal messages to opposite sides of the globe from the US to Singapore. His 30 years of research, understanding and experience have helped people on the path of personal growth and fulfillment. He is the author of 12 books including international bestseller “You Can Win”, which has sold over 2 million copies in 16 languages. His latest book “You Can Sell” has hit the bestsellers’ list. His clients include GM, IBM, HP, Citigroup, HSBC, Canon, Nestle, Phillips and many more. Tens of thousands of people have benefitted from his dynamic workshops internationally in 17 countries and over one million people have heard him as a Keynote Speaker.

## India Employability Skills Survey (2009 - 10)

by Seema Menon, Head Assessment, Aspire

In today's highly competitive employment market, jobs and roles are often described in terms of competencies which are a combination of behaviors that lead to superior performance in a job. The two major concerns of employers are finding good workers and training them. The skills-gap, which is the difference between the skills needed on the job and those possessed by applicants, is of real concern to managers and business owners looking to hire competent employees. India currently has 600 million youth below 25 years of age of which 320 million are in schools and colleges. Less than 25% of these are employable due to the skills gap!

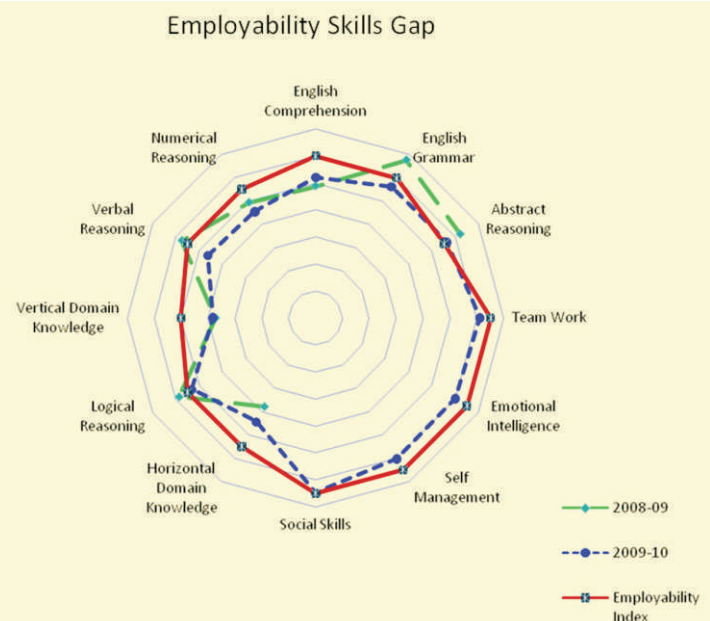
Aspire™, incorporated in July 2007, is India's leading Education Services firm delivering in-campus education that enhances employability. With over 12,000 students enrolled across 15 customers in 8 Indian states, Aspire's mission is to be the #1 Global Talent Development Brand by 2020 amongst Educators, Employers and Employees. Aspire is a social entrepreneurial firm enabling in campus education that enhances employability through world's first "hallmarked" Employability Education Management System (EEMS™).

### About NEST™ (National Employability Skills Test)

NEST™ (National Employability Skills Test) is Aspire's employability assessment which evaluates individuals on employability skills like personality and soft skills; general aptitude and reasoning; English language skills and industry related knowledge like horizontal and vertical skills. Administered online and offline, by Educational Institutions and Business Corporations, NEST™ as a dynamic tool, also offers diagnosis and skills benchmarking across 50+ axes within Aspire's Assessment Module (AAM). Aspire used an 8-axes NEST™ in 2008-09 and a 12-axes NEST™ in 2009-10 for this Employability Survey administered to 12,000 college students and entry level professionals across 11 states and 25 cities in India.

N.E.S.T typically evaluates individuals on the following axis:

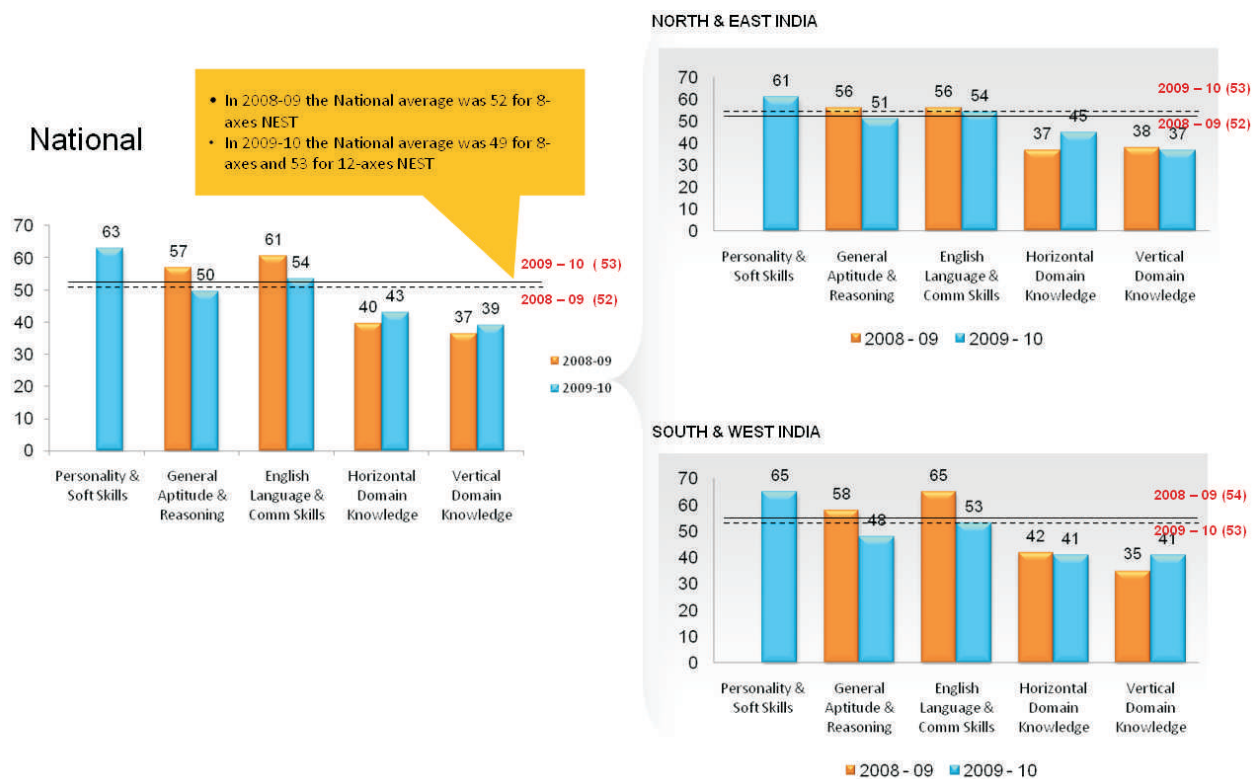
- **Personality & Soft Skills:**
  - Self-Management
  - Social Skills
  - Team Work
  - Emotional Intelligence
- **General Aptitude & Reasoning:**
  - Logical Reasoning
  - Verbal Reasoning
  - Numerical Reasoning
  - Abstract Reasoning
- **English Language Skills:**
  - English Grammar
  - English Comprehension
- **Vertical (Industry) Skills**
- **Horizontal (Role Based) Skills**



### Overall India Employability Skills

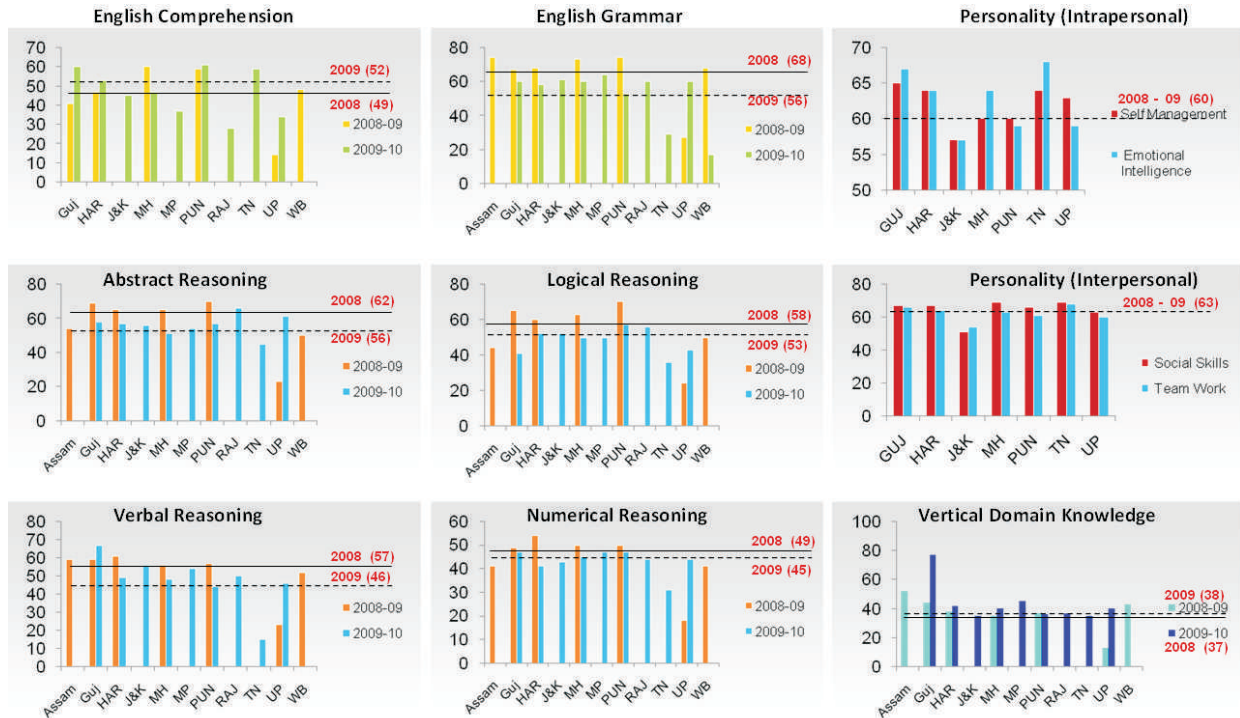
Study of the overall India employability skills indicates that Aspire's NEST Index was down 300 BP in 2009-10 vis-à-vis 2008-09 (from 52 to 49), although on an expanded criteria, the Index was up from 52 last year to 53 this year (Scale: 1-100). Further, when the scores are compared to the Employability Index (employer-driven dynamic index for entry-level skills), the survey confirms a significant skill-gap in skills required and valued by employers. Comparison of scores for the two years indicates that on the 8 axes sampled; in 5 axes the score was lower in 2009-10 as compared to 2008-09. Further analysis indicates that scores on the four aptitudes (Verbal, Numerical, Logical and Abstract Reasoning) tested have been higher in 2008-09 as compared to scores in 2009-10. In language, English Comprehension scores were higher in 2009-10 while English Grammar scores were higher in 2008-09. Interestingly, both Industry Related skills (Horizontal and Vertical Domain knowledge) have scored higher in 2009-10 as compared to 2008-09, indicating perhaps that youth sampled are becoming more aware of industry and role based information.

### India Employability Skills by Region/Skills



Comparison of scores for all the skills tested, reveal that Personality and Language scores were higher both years (2008-09 and 2009-2010) as compared to the National average. However Industry related skills; such as Horizontal and Vertical knowledge, in comparison were significantly lower than the National average. Further, study of the Regional average indicates that for both years (2008-09 and 2009-2010), South & West had a higher overall score as compared to the North & East. Also, South & West have scored higher in personality and soft skills as compared to North & East.

**India Employability Skills by State/Skills**



Comparison of scores across the 11 states sampled indicates that again Personality and Language have better scores while Industry related skills have scored lowest across states. Also, in comparison to all skills tested, Vertical Domain Knowledge skills scored the lowest across states in both years sampled. In the personality domain interpersonal skills (Social Skills & Team Work) have scored higher than intrapersonal skills (Emotional Intelligence & Self-Management). Among all the states, J&K scored the lowest in the personality aspects tested, such as interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. In aptitude, Abstract reasoning has the highest scores as compared to scores in Verbal, Numerical and Logical Reasoning. Also, across the states sampled English Grammar has higher scores as compared to English Comprehension scores. A possible reason may be that schools emphasize and introduce the child early to English writing and Grammar with very little focus on speaking and comprehension.



**Seema Menon,**  
Head Assessment, Aspire

## Job Scenario in India

The Indian economy ended the fiscal year 2009-10 with an impressive GDP growth of 7.4% as compared to a growth of 6.7% in the previous fiscal. The stock markets are booming and non oil imports are surging indicating that the Indian economy has recovered from the slowdown. The prevailing business sentiment is optimistic and employers are hiring at a faster pace which has brought back the much desired cheer in the job market.

A similar sentiment has been reflected in the Naukri Job Speak Report as well which shows that the hiring activity accelerated from Nov-09 onwards. While almost all industry sectors have seen a steady rise in hiring levels in the past few months some sectors like IT- Software, ITES, Banking and Insurance has significantly ramped up its recruitment activity. The job index for IT- Software, ITES, Banking and Insurance moved up by 56%, 19%, 47% and 33% respectively in May-10 as compared to May-09. This clearly reflects that the job market is moving in a positive direction and demand has significantly increased for many roles across industry verticals.

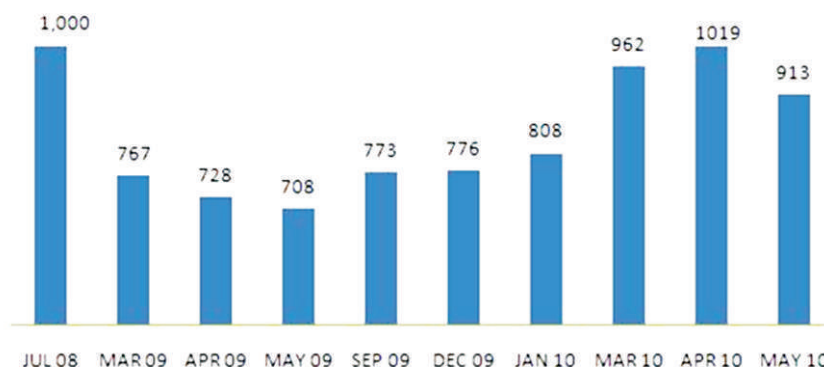
However, it is a well known fact that most of the engineers and graduates are unemployable because of their outdated curriculum and lack of right skills to make them immediately employable. Leaving aside the IIT's, NITs and a select few private institutions the quality of engineers and technicians are unacceptably poor resulting in low employability potential. The lure of service sector jobs is another issue as most of the students either after engineering or graduation start working with BPO's restaurants to earn a quick buck and digress from their area of study.

Recent studies from Hewitt have shown that less than 10 percent of the graduate and post graduate pool of 650,000 are eligible to undertake R&D related assignments. The key reason for this is that colleges emphasize very heavily on finding a job as opposed to learning. Tracking placement record of a college seems to be a key metric that gets tracked minutely.

With the gap widening and demand rising simultaneously, the need of the hour is to enable the graduates to be more employable along with promoting and supporting the creative mind. A feasible solution to reduce this gap is to get industry, academicians and students onto the same platform and work towards a similar goal.

It is here where institutes like Aspen which promote value leadership should step in and help bridge this imbalance.

### Naukri.com Job Speak Index



Total no. of new jobs posted in July 2008 was scaled to 1000. Index for subsequent months is relative to July 08.

**Sanjeev Bikhchandani**  
Co-founder & Chief Executive Officer, Naukri.com



## Bridging the Gap between Industry, University and Students

Pankaj Bansal, Co-founder & CEO, PeopleStrong HR Services

Do you know that the top ten in-demand jobs in 2010 did not even exist in 2004? Do you know that the amount of available technical information is doubling every couple of years? Do you know that half of what a student enrolled in a four year course has learned, would have become outdated by the time he reached the third year? This is the pace of change today that is mind boggling and is compelling students and universities to speed up so as to allow passing out students to be 'industry ready' and enable them to contribute to their organization from day one itself.

There are three main stakeholders in the employment value chain - Employers, Universities and Students. Studies indicate that there is a mismatch of expectations between students and industry, whereas the industry feels that the graduate output does not cope with industry demands.

The University, lying in the middle of the value chain, has to understand the expectations of both its students and the industry. It has to do the balancing act of walking the thin line between their expectations. However, the question arises on how to bridge this widening gap. Can greater involvement by industry at universities be the solution? Critics of this thought advocate that educational institutes must not turn into training grounds for private firms. After all, universities are supposed to be places for unruly souls who can give vent to their creativity and challenge norms! A greater focus on mere 'job ready skills' would after all, kill this spirit!

On the other hand, the cut throat competition caused by the imbalance between the number of available jobs as compared to the number of job seekers, makes it demandingly imperative that students coming out of universities have the right skills to make them immediately employable.

The question is, how do we balance both these scenarios? The answer lies in having the best of both the worlds, which can be achieved by creating a right balance between the academic rigors of universities and the imparting of skills that would enable job readiness as required by industries. The Industry, University and Students must work together towards this one goal.

Industry must consider working with the University in the long term to churn out a ready pool of 'student turned employees' year on year. As a first step industry representation should be empanelled during the curriculum formation of courses. Regular and frequent updates to the curriculum with feedbacks from the industry should be ensured. This would allow that industry specific updated content is taught in universities. Regular interactions between students and industry personnel through guest lectures, internship programs for students in industry and training & development by industry experts will go a long way to ensure that Industry, University and Students understand each other's expectation. Last, but not the least, professional agencies can also come to the aid in bridging the gap between Industry, University and Students.

Industry professionals associated with universities have the best understanding of expectations of all the three stakeholders. Mentoring and being led by such industry professionals will go a long way in fulfilling the quest of building polished professional talent in the form of students passing out of these universities.

**Pankaj Bansal**  
Co-founder & CEO, PeopleStrong HR Services



## Industry Academia Partnership for Quality Education and Research

### Education Promotion Society for India (EPSI)

With the rapid advancement of knowledge and rapidly changing technology base, it has become absolutely essential that the industry and academia work together as partners in progress for mutual advantage for each other. Industries need not only qualified manpower having knowledge and skills of handling state-of-the-art technology and decision support tools in its design, manufacturing and managerial activity but also require a regular and easy flow of technology and that could be assured by a synergetic partnership between industries and academic institutions/universities. Likewise, the academic institutions which produce the most vital pillar of strength of today's knowledge economy namely, the human capital, have to keep themselves abreast of the technology trends and respond to the current and future technology needs of the industries.

There are many ways by which we can create a vibrant Industry-Academia partnership environment in our academic institutions especially in engineering and technology institutions. We have to learn from the best practices in the leading institutions, like IITs, IISc and other reputed institutions such as, DCE, BITS, Anna University, Jadavpur University and many other institutions in our own country where the level of partnership is already quite high. If we look at the highly successful world-class universities abroad, we cannot fail to notice that a close partnership with industries and society is at the core of the success strategy of these world-class institutions. The society supports the university with endowment and industries support a large share of quality research and technology innovations in the academic departments. The net result is that industry relevant research, undergraduate and postgraduate projects aligned to the live problems of the industry and society are pursued within the institution. The partnership between Industry and Academia brings the world of work closer to the world of learning.

People like me have always been more excited than many others in this respect and I believe growth of knowledge sectors have made the partnerships more possible (Info-Tech, Bio-tech, Telecom, Pharmaceutical, Food Processing, Energy and Infrastructure sectors). If Intel can think of Intel Planet Lab having its research nodes in almost 250 reputed institutions around the world, some of them in India, what prevents our own high and mighty telecom industries, software industries and such like knowledge industry houses to develop such a distributed research environment in India. I suggest the following strategy to significantly improve the Industry-Academia partnership:

- Motivating students to undertake industrial training, summer/winter internships in the reputed industries and work there with the research team, product development team, etc.
- Motivating UG and PG students to undertake industry relevant minor and major projects, identify an industry co supervisor so that the project output delivers solutions to the problems of the industry with incentives as stipend or material or equipment support to the project.
- Emergence of research culture at the UG level. This is a significant advancement in the UG technical education in India and has been adopted by progressive institutions such as DCE.
- Design and development Projects, as in Auto Industry- of innovative automobile vehicles namely, Formula Student Car, Supermileage Vehicle, All Terrain Vehicle, Hybrid Car, Unmanned Aerial Vehicle and in the area of security software, robotics, nano scale devices, optical sensors and development of new materials where industry support was overwhelming.
- Ensuring R&D aligned to Industry needs: Such a concept is already finding expressions in TIFAC Technology mission projects which are being pursued in the country in the TIFAC-CORE Centres. One such centre is at DCE for Fibre Optics and Optical Communication.

It is important here to emphasise that the industry is quite conscious of the investment it makes in R&D and technology ventures. It requires a time-bound quality output and as such, the academia has to ensure that they formulate their project proposals with lot more care and implement it with a corporate mindset to ensure their timely completion. We would like to close with an optimistic note that India is on the move and that both the academic institutions and the industry now understood the value and worth of Industry-Academia partnership than ever before. As such, it is the right time to create a vibrant environment of industry-academia partnership in our academic institutions.



**Mr. Manohar Chellani**  
Secretary General, EPSI

## Aspire Fact Sheet

India currently has 600 million youth below 25 years of age of which 320 million are in schools and colleges. Less than 25% are employable! Moreover, India expects 500 million new job seekers between 2007 and 2022. The youngest nation on the planet, plagued with a severe job-talent mismatch, needs Aspire. Aspire, incorporated in July 2007, is India's leading Education Services firm delivering in-campus education that enhances employability. With over 12,000 students enrolled across 15 customers in 8 Indian states, Aspire's mission is to be the #1 Global Talent Development Brand by 2020 amongst Educators, Employers and Employees.

### About Aspire

Aspire™ is a social entrepreneurial firm. We enable in-campus education that enhances employability through world's first "hallmarked" Employability Education Management System (EEMS™). Aspire's flagship product ProHire™, available in three editions (ProHire™ Classic, ProHire™ Lite and ProHire™ Ivy League), enhances professional employability skills in schools and colleges. Aspire's EnglishPro™ product available in five editions (Junior School, Middle School, Senior School, Business and Professional) enhances English Language & Communication Skills in schools and colleges. We deploy our technology platform, EEMS™ with both of our core products (ProHire™ and EnglishPro™), offering three modules (Assessment, Training and Placement) to all four customer segments (B2E, B2B, B2C and B2G). Headquartered in Gurgaon, Aspire™ enables Educators, Employers and Employees to Grow More and can be found @ [www.aspireindia.org](http://www.aspireindia.org).

### Our Advisors and Angel Investors

**Vivek Bansal**, CEO, Plus Capital, Delhi  
**Karti Chidambaram**, Politician, Chennai  
**Gregg Cooper**, Bank Of America, Pittsburgh  
**Rajeev Grover**, Head, Global Operations & Shared Services, Mercer, Gurgaon  
**Sonny Iqbal**, Partner, Egon Zehnder, Gurgaon  
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**Jesse Lentchner**, MD, Goldman Sachs, Hong Kong  
**Stephen Liang**, President, Emerson (China), Shanghai  
**D K Malik**, CEO, DKM Online, Delhi

### Board of Directors

**Amit Bhatia**, Founder and CEO of Aspire, has over 18 years of management experience. Until recently he served as CEO of WNS Knowledge Services. Prior to WNS, Amit was Country Manager for FreeMarkets Inc., Founder and Leader of McKinsey Knowledge Center, and financial analyst at American Express.

**Karandeep Singh**, Co-Founder of Aspire, has more than 17 years of financial planning and control experience across India, the Middle East, and Asia Pacific. Prior to his current role as Managing Director at Sapient, Karandeep worked in Dell, Moser Baer, Ariba and Yum Restaurants.

**Sumer Datta**, Co-Founder of Aspire and Founder of Aamoksh Leisure Living, is the ex-HR Outsourcing Leader for Asia-Pacific at Hewitt. With more than 20 years of experience in consulting and business management, he is on the Boards of American Chamber of Commerce and VLCC Health Care Limited.

Neeraj Bhargava, Founder-Steer Capital brings 20 years of management experience as Former Co-Founder & Group CEO-WNS; Founder and CEO-eVentures; and, Partner-McKinsey & Co., in the New York, London and Mumbai offices.

**Warren Weiss**, General Partner, Foundation Capital, has more than 25 years experience in the software industry, including time as president and CEO of four public and private software companies. He currently serves on the boards of eMeter.com, Guardian Analytics, InterAct, MarkMonitor, nGenera, Purfresh, Quantivo, Rearden Commerce, SilkRoad Technologies, and Silver Spring Networks.

**Samit Sinha**, Managing Partner, Alchemist Brand Consulting, has more than 20 years of advertising industry experience. His last position was Chief Operating Officer, Mudra, after long tenures at Lintas and Clarion/Bates. He has closely worked on brands for organizations such as Avaya Global-Connect, Benckiser, Bharti Telesoft, Carrier, Castrol, Dabur etc.

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**Ajeet Singh**, Partner, CCMP Capital Asia Pte. Ltd., Hong Kong  
**Amarjeet Singh**, Partner, KPMG, London  
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**Harmit Singh**, CFO, Hyatt Hotels Corporation  
**Pravir Singh**, Sun Group, Delhi/London  
**Shivinder Mohan Singh**, MD, Fortis Healthcare, Delhi  
**Rajnish Virmani**, Director - India Operations, Colt, Gurgaon

## Products & Services

### Core Products

#### Aspire ProHire<sup>TM</sup>

ProHire<sup>TM</sup>, Aspire's flagship program, uses a proprietary "Knowledge-Skills-Attitude" framework to provide 160 hours of comprehensive employability training across five modules: Aptitude, English Language & Communication Skills, Vertical (Industry) Knowledge, Horizontal (Role-based) Knowledge and Personality Development & Soft Skills. ProHire<sup>TM</sup> is available in three editions: ProHire<sup>TM</sup> Lite (Classes IX-XII), ProHire<sup>TM</sup> Classic (UG/PG) and ProHire<sup>TM</sup> Ivy League (for top-rated institutions.)

#### Aspire EnglishPro<sup>TM</sup>

EnglishPro<sup>TM</sup> focuses on Spoken English, enhancing comprehension, conversation ability and pronunciation and voice modulation for confident business and social communication in English. The 160-hour training, in four modules across Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing skills, is available in five editions: EnglishPro<sup>TM</sup> Junior School (Classes I-IV), EnglishPro<sup>TM</sup> Middle School (Classes V-VIII), EnglishPro<sup>TM</sup> Senior School (Classes IX-XII), EnglishPro<sup>TM</sup> Business (UG/PG) and EnglishPro<sup>TM</sup> Professional (for Businesses.)

### Other Products

#### Aspire Finishing School<sup>TM</sup>

Franchisee product and programs for Employability Skills training in Tier 2/3/4 cities across India

#### NEST<sup>TM</sup>

Employability skills assessment software and service for schools, colleges and early-tenured employees

#### Aspire NeoHire<sup>TM</sup>

Entry-level talent sourcing, train & hire program from Tier 2/3/4 cities, customized across verticals for employers

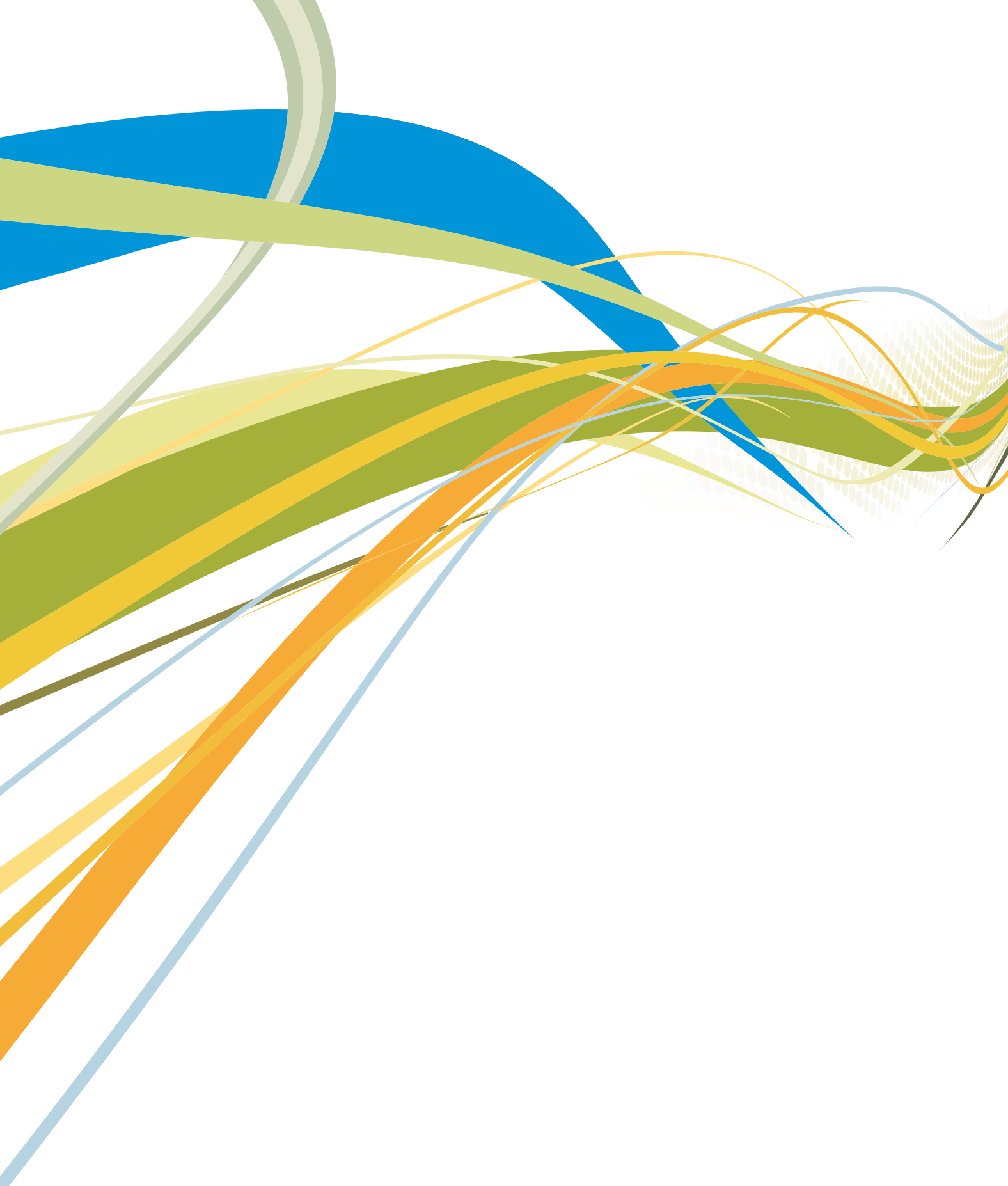
“Aspire is doing a wonderful job of supporting students in schools and colleges by improving their employability skills, building their confidence and creating talented professionals.”

**Saina Nehwal**  
Brand Ambassador, Aspire



**Incorporated:** July 2007; Employees: 84 including 32 Trainers

**Locations: 17** Ahmedabad | Allahabad | Bangalore | Chennai | Coimbatore | Delhi & NCR | Dehradun | Hyderabad | Jalandhar | Jammu | Kolkata | Ludhiana | Mumbai | Mysore | Pune | Srinagar | Trichy



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