

## Newspaper Clips

### April 13, 2016

Indian Express ND 13/04/2016 P-15

# A higher price for education

As IITs raise their fee, it is time to consider innovative ways of financing education for elite institutions that require a higher level of funding to support research



M. BALAKRISHNAN AND PANKAJ JALOTE

LAST WEEK, tuition fee for undergraduate education in the IITs was increased from Rs 90,000 per annum to Rs 2 lakh per annum. Earlier, last month, IIM Ahmedabad increased the fee of its flagship two-year diploma programme from Rs 18.5 lakh to Rs 19.5 lakh.

As a nation, we are in a great dilemma on the financing of public higher educational institutions. Highly subsidised quality higher education, with admissions based strictly on merit, continues to be a great hope for upward socio-economic mobility. This public demand has also ensured that there is consensus across the political spectrum on the need for setting up new IITs, IIMs, AIIMs, NITs, etc. On the other hand, as the number of such institutions increases, the budgetary requirements for supporting them will prove to be a challenge.

What are the alternatives? Globally there is a shift towards charging a higher fraction of education costs as fees — even in European countries where, traditionally, higher education was completely free. For the purpose of inclusion of students from economically weaker sections, there is the provision of education loans, often at lower-than-commercial rates. This has resulted in education-loan-driven higher education, which has clear implications for blocking the socio-economic mobility of poor people, even in an affluent country like the United States.

In a country like India, public-funded institutions where the full fee is financed through loans are undesirable for many reasons.

One, it will make education inaccessible to many who cannot afford to be burdened with such large loans. Second, heavy debt would result in higher education being seen more as capital investment. It would lead to the clear graduation objective of getting a quick return on investment. The net result would be that graduates would opt for safe career options — even more than they currently do — that provide the “highest package” and not those choices that may be low-paying but have greater social value and impact and which the graduate may genuinely want to pursue. The success of Make in India as well as Start-Up India depends on the ability of young people to take risks and become entrepreneurs. Heavy education loans are unlikely to promote these choices. Medical education in India has already fallen into this trap; with high cost of education in private and foreign institutions, the increase in volume is not resulting in enhanced access for a significant section of the population. Further, in the Indian socio-economic context where, even today, most students pursue academic programmes and careers that are forced on them by family and not out of their own choice, there is another great disadvantage. Just when we were seeing some change — in at least a small fraction of students — the increase in fees or a greater loan burden would put the clock back.

The “loan model” is gaining traction in the public discourse in India primarily driven by the stories of high-paying jobs for IIT graduates. The argument is that if they are earning so much after graduation, why should they not pay for their education. But hundreds of IIT graduates are also following their dreams in entrepreneurship, social service and many such sectors.

However, there is an innovative middle path possible for financing education, at least for the elite institutions that require a much higher level of funding to support research.

In this approach, a tuition fee based on the cost of education is computed. Every selected candidate would have an option to de-

fer payment of a significant part of the fee till after graduation. The key innovation being suggested here is that after graduation, the student would be required to pay the deferred fee, but with a ceiling that it will be at most a fixed percentage of her income for a fixed number of years — say, 15 per cent of income for seven years. The graduating student would then have the option to take up a career without worrying about the education loan hanging over her head. If the graduate chooses a career that is not financially lucrative, her payments for education would be correspondingly low.

In the present context, one more fact is important: The tuition fee increase announced by the government is only for undergraduate education and is likely to apply to only 25 per cent of the students in an institution like IIT Delhi. The reason is that in almost all the larger (older) IITs, roughly only 40 per cent of the students are undergraduates, and after the announced waivers, the tuition fee increase would apply only to 60 per cent of them. Presently, students in postgraduate programmes like the MTech are charged nominal fees, though the motivation for joining these programmes is often similar: Widened career prospects and excellent pay packets. Our proposal can be applied to all students, undergraduate and postgraduate — except, perhaps, to PhD students — as the cost of education is being paid by the graduate through her earnings, rather than by her family.

Such a proposal could evoke cynicism: What will compel the graduate to declare her income truthfully? But in a changed world where an individual's credit rating is important and tracking instruments like PAN and Aadhaar exist, it is easy to devise a system where the cost of default would be rather high, particularly as alumni need references or verification from educational institutions even years after graduation.

Balakrishnan is professor, IIT Delhi, Jalote is director, IIT Delhi. Views are personal

The key innovation being suggested here is that after graduation, the student would be required to pay the deferred fee, but with a ceiling that it will be at most a fixed percentage of her income for a fixed number of years — say, 15 per cent of income for seven years. The graduating student would then have the option to take up a career without worrying about the education loan hanging over her head. If the graduate chooses a career that is not financially lucrative, her payments for education would be correspondingly low.

## Annual Business Summit organized by IIT Delhi

**B**uilding India Inc., the annual business summit organized by Department of Management Studies, IIT Delhi, is a podium to highlight the contribution of Corporate India in the Indian Economy and towards making India a developed economy. The 2016 edition of the summit held on 2nd and 3rd April, based on the theme "Revolutionizing beyond the horizon" was inaugurated by Shri Ashwani Lohani, Chairman & Managing Director of Air India. The event witnessed keynote sessions from industry stalwarts and eminent

personalities like Mr. Sudhir Chaudhary (Channel Head Zee News) and Mr. Shiv Khera (Motivational speaker, Author). Conclaves like SAAMVAAD, ABHAYA, SAMAAJKA, and INNOVISION saw some of the biggest names of corporate world coming together to deliberate on var-

ious topics concerning India. The summit also hosted AARAMBH, a B-Plan competition for the budding entrepreneurs. The summit ended on a high with an electric and chucklesome performance by comedy extravaganza PAPA CJ.



## Women to get more time for MPhil, PhD

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Acting on suggestions made by HRD minister Smriti Irani last week, the University Grants Commission (UGC) on Tuesday decided to relax criteria for women and disabled candidates pursuing MPhil and PhD degrees.

Women and those with more than 40% disability will now get a year extra to complete their MPhil papers and two years more to submit PhD theses. All women candidates will also be provided maternity leave and child care leave for up to 240 days once while they pursue these two degrees.

In case a woman scholar needs to relocate because of marriage or otherwise during her study, she would be allowed to get research data transferred to the university to which she intends to shift pro-

### Centre casts doubt on medical test

**A** day after the Supreme Court ordered the common medical entrance test (NEET) to be held from this year, the health ministry has indicated this may not be "practically" possible given the short notice. Officials said the notification for the test had to be issued by December in normal course

vided all other regulatory conditions are followed and the research work does not pertain to a project secured by the parent institution or her supervisor from any funding agency. The scholar will also have to give credit to her parent guide and institution for the part of research already done.

Indian Express ND 13/04/2016 P-10

# UGC relaxes rules for recruitment of faculty

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 12

THE UNIVERSITY Grants Commission (UGC) Tuesday amended its regulation on faculty recruitment to relax the minimum eligibility conditions for appointment of assistant professors in colleges and universities.

The higher education regulator, on the advice of the HRD Ministry, exempted candidates registered for M.Phil/PhD programme before July 11, 2009, from clearing the National Eligibility Test (NET) or the State Level Eligibility Test (SLET) in order to become eligible for appointment as assistant professors in colleges and universities. The decision was taken at UGC's meeting Monday and announced by Union HRD Minister Smriti Irani the same evening.

This exemption, however, is only valid if the candidate meets certain conditions, including that of the PhD degree being

awarded in regular mode, the research thesis being evaluated by at least two external examiners. Further, the candidate should have appeared for viva voce and published at least two papers based on the PhD thesis in research journals and, lastly, the candidate should also have made at least two presentations at conferences or seminars.

Earlier, as per the 2009 regulations on qualification for appointment of teachers in colleges and universities, the UGC made it compulsory for all PhD holders to have qualified NET/ SLET to become assistant professors.

The UGC has also relaxed norms allowing female and differently abled research scholars eight years, instead of the current six years, to complete their PhD degrees and three years, instead of two, to complete MPhil degrees. Women candidates will also be provided maternity and child care leave of up to 240 days once in the duration of their M.Phil or Ph.D programmes.

# 'New policy to change the education system'

With the New Education Policy coming up in the next couple of months, SOHA MOITRA analyses if it will revitalize education in India

The Indian education system is finally undergoing revision. Since the revision has come after a long gap it will have to take into account the socio-economic and political changes that have occurred over the last few decades. Despite having achieved significant progress, issues pertaining to quantity, quality, access, efficacy and financial outlays still remain. In fact they have built up to mammoth proportions and hence, must be tackled with utmost urgency. For three decades Child Rights and You (CRY) has been working to restore the rights of children in India. Having touched the lives of 20 lakh children across 23 States, we believe that a few critical recommendations need to be put forth to necessitate a lasting change.

A greater demand for education calls for a strong foundation in schools so as to achieve the desired learning outcome. Learning outcomes are a combination of several factors. These include overall health and nutrition, school infrastructure, qualified teachers, regular attendance, pedagogy and assessment processes and the environment provided to children in school and at home.

Quality infrastructure and qualified workforce are both critical for a good start and the Right to Education Act 2009 has rightly emphasised on these two components, setting deadlines which we have unfortunately failed to meet.

According to the latest available District Information System for Education (DISE) data (2014-2015), less than 65 per cent schools have playgrounds and boundary walls. While 87 per cent schools in the country have toilets facilities, ground realities, however, reveal that there are several instances where toilets are non functional, mostly due to non availability of water.

In a seven-State study conducted recently, Andhra Pradesh was found to have the highest number of schools without drinking water and toilet facilities. A huge percentage of schools studied in the East and North were not electrified with Jharkhand, Bihar, J&K, Orissa and MP having more than 70 per cent schools with no electricity. Improving the basic infrastructure in terms of availability of all weather classrooms, drinking water facilities and functional, accessible toilets is essential since it will have a direct bearing on the attendance and, consequently, the learning outcomes.

Teachers are pivotal to the learning process but lack of enough and qualified

teachers has often been a disabler. According to the 12th five year plan there are five lakh teacher vacancies in the country and another five lakh teachers are required to meet the RTE norms on pupil-teacher ratio. Furthermore, 2.25 lakh in-service teachers are still untrained as indicated by DISE (2013-14). Need-based and on-site training of teachers should be given utmost importance as it not only brings in an element of innovation and interest in the teaching-learning experience but also helps teachers to identify and course correct problems faced by children like slow learning, lack of interest, disciplining etc.

A balanced pupil-teacher ratio allows for individual student attention and thus, affects the effectiveness. The RTE Act allows for a certain teacher-student ratio to be followed in both primary (30:1) and secondary schools (35:1). However the latest DISE data shows that in some States like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, more than 50 per cent schools have pupil-teacher ratio above the prescribed RTE norms.

Studies conducted by the National University of Educational Planning and Administration reflect an urgent need to improve children's learning outcomes. Three cycles of surveys conducted for Classes III, V and VIII since 2001 show that the average achievement of students in selected subject areas vary greatly across states and UTs. The results also reflected that achievements varied greatly based on socio-economic backgrounds of children, with students from general category performing better than their SC/ST/OBC counterparts.

Discriminatory practices based on issues like caste, religion, gender, disability etc force children to miss classes, eventually leading to their dropping out. Inclusivity in education should not only end all forms of discrimination from and within the school system but should also cater to the learning needs of children from disadvantaged background.

Education is not simply a preparation for the future but an investment on our children in the present. That's why it is important to ensure an effective interplay of a range of supportive factors; an enabling policy and an enabling home, community and school environment. Guaranteeing this would require the strong will of all stakeholders particularly the Government.

The writer is Soha Moitra, director, Child Rights and You

## **10-member committee for 'Namami Gange' formed, IIT-R prof on board**

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/dehradun/10-member-committee-for-Namami-Gange-formed-IIT-R-prof-on-board/articleshow/51800655.cms>

Roorkee: Union ministry of water resources has constituted a multidisciplinary committee of 10 members for Central government's ambitious Namami Gange mission. The committee, which includes a professor of Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee (IIT-R), would work in the capacity of a thinktank to provide inputs to the ministry on various aspects of rejuvenation of river Ganga.

"I have received the copy of a notification of the ministry of water resources, river development and Ganga rejuvenation on Monday which says that my name has been included as a technical expert in the thinktank on Namami Gange project," said Kamal Jain, 56, a professor of civil engineering.

The thinktank will advise the ministry on various conservation efforts such as river basin planning, pollution abatement, and biodiversity conservation. The committee will also undertake field visits and participate in online discussions with other experts.

Jain, faculty in the civil engineering department of the institute since 1985, has been associated with Uttar Pradesh government's mega project to develop Gomti riverfront in Lucknow on international pattern. He is involved in studying the environmental impact of the project. He completed his Bachelor of Engineering (Honors) in civil engineering from BITS Pilani in 1982. He also has a Master of Engineering degree from Roorkee University (now IIT Roorkee). He also has a PhD in digital photogrammetry.

## **IITB STUDENTS MAKE VIDEO AGAINST FEE HIKE**

<http://paper.hindustantimes.com/epaper/viewer.aspx>

MUMBAI: The recent decision of the HRD ministry along with the Standing Committee of Indian Institutes of Technology ( IITs ) to hike fees by more than a 100% has not gone down well with students across all centres. Unlike earlier fee hikes, where the increased charges were applicable only to the new batches, the latest hike will be applicable to current batches as well. On Tuesday, students of the ECell at IITBombay ( IITB ) released a video highlighting how this decision to increase fees will affect the future prospects of students, especially those who are planning to work around entrepreneurial ventures instead of blindly running after money. "The enormous hike directly translates into a hefty loan, which leaves us with no choice but to chase jobs just for money and would eventually reduce our enthusiasm to start new ventures," states the video, which is available on the IITB ECell page on Facebook and has already got 18,000 views and 398 shares within the first few hours. Stating an economic survey of 2008, the video highlights how for every rupee invested on an IITian, Rs 15 is returned eventually; and that every IITian who starts their own venture ends up giving jobs to many others. "This move will ultimately affect the entrepreneurial ecosystem," states the video, highlighting the # i\_quit\_iit hashtag.

## **Framework to help institutions, students and industry**

<http://paper.hindustantimes.com/epaper/viewer.aspx>

With the release of the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF), Indian institutions should now be able to introspect on their weaknesses and strengths and improve themselves. Rankings will help create an ecosystem conducive for them to participate in global ranking systems. As for students and parents, rankings based on objective data will be useful for taking decisions regarding choice of institutions for study for themselves or their wards. With enrollments in Indian institutions crossing the 30 million mark, no ranking agency can afford to ignore India, say experts.

Professor Surendra Prasad, who is part of the core committee involved in devising the ranking framework, says, “For teachers, and more importantly for the aspiring faculty, rankings offer similar help in identifying the right institutions where their talents can be best used or honed. For the employers in the industry, they know which campuses can provide them with the kind of manpower that they need for their business or professional growth.” Ashok Thakur, former secretary to the government of India, department of higher education, HRD ministry, says, there are several institutional ratings floating around in the country often with contradictory findings, creating confusion in the minds of the public and the students at large. “NIRF, on the other hand, is sponsored by the government and is based on upfront stated parameters worked out by leading academics of top institutions like IITs . The ranking system keeps institutions and the faculty on its toes to perform better year after year. It can start a virtuous cycle of good education leading to good ranking which, in turn, leads to attracting good students and faculty. For the industry, it facilitates efficient campus recruitments both for employment as well as research.” Another pertinent question is whether this will help Indian institutions make a mark globally. “The exercise initiated under NIRF will definitely create an ecosystem conducive to participation in ranking systems, including international ones. Since broadly the parameters and processes in both remain the same, it could prove to be a good training ground for the eventual storming of the international rankings by our top educational institutions in future. India being one of the largest higher education systems in the world with enrollments crossing the 30 million mark, no ranking agency worth its name can afford to ignore it. No wonder these ranking agencies were more than willing to conduct India specific ranking system even before it was decided that it should be done in house,” says Thakur. A section of experts feels that at the moment, NIRF may be of little help in going global. Karthick Sridhar, vice chairman, Indian Centre for Academic Rankings and Excellence Pvt Ltd, says, “Our universities have started appreciating the importance of data collection. They have performed poorly in global rankings such as QS and THE because of absence of quality data. Institutions such as IITDelhi , University of Delhi and Mumbai University are all lagging behind since ranking agencies have little data on them and these institutions have done little to improve that. “A classic example is IISC Bangalore. When it took professional assistance and put together the right data, understood the rules of the game better, its rankings went straight into the top 5 of the QS BRICS Universities Rankings. Indian institutions must all appoint a nodal officer and ensure the availability of right data which will help immensely improve their positions in NIRF, besides QS & THE Rankings.”