#### Newspaper Clips April 2, 2015

Indian Express ND 02/04/2015

# Crushing a broken system



PUSHKAR

Government must step aside, not bully academic institutions into submission

NORDER to appreciate the implications of the recent controversies in higher education -particularly the PMO's rejection of Sandip Trivedi as the new director of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, the resignation and its subsequent withdrawal by Anil Kakodkar, chairman of the standing committee of the IIT Council, the resignation of R.K. Shevgaonkar, director of IIT Delhi, and other similar incidents -it is necessary to see them in the broader context of the nation's broken higher education system.

Nearly a decade ago, in 2006, the newly constituted National Knowledge Commission (NKC) had drawn attention to a "quiet crisis" in higher education. That was an understatement. The nation's higher education sector was already broken by a long period of sustained and extreme political interference by state and national governments.

It is not an exaggeration to use the word "broken" to describe the state of higher education. Most colleges and universities are physically broken. They have broken classrooms and furniture, broken libraries and laboratories, and even broken, withering signboards at their entrances and elsewhere. Worse still, with the exception of a handful of institutions (a few Central universities, the IITs, IIMs and a small number of other institutions), most colleges and universities are mediocre. Of course, one could also argue that given the oppressive nature of the higher education regime, it is a miracle some of them are still able to do some teaching and research.

Much is made of the failure of our universities to count among the top 200 institutions in the world. However, that is a diversion from the real story — that the quality of education available in the majority of our colleges and universities does little to improve the life chances of our young population. Annual employability reports confirm that most graduates are unemployable. Indeed, one could make a case that colleges and universities are simply degree-granting institutions, whereas coaching

Since the NKC called attention to a "quiet crisis" nearly a decade ago, we have seen a mix of feeble, unplanned and uncoordinated, incoherent, harmful, and occasionally even well-intentioned policies being considered and/or implemented—all evidently designed to improve higher education. Other than improvements in access to education, progress on other fronts, notably the quality of education, has been negligible.

When Narendra Modi took charge as prime minister in mid-2014, many hoped that his government would inject some purpose into higher education. However, this sector has remained frozen.

# In most countries that have robust higher education sectors, public institutions are not government 'controlled'.

centres have become the relevant sites for training young people to secure employment.

The reasons for this broken state are widely known. All through the 1980s and the 1990s, which merit being labelled as the "lost decades" for higher education, successive state and national governments completely marginalised the sector. Low spending combined with extreme forms of politicisation, widespread nepotism and corruption as well as the downgrading of the academic profession destroyed the sector. Since 2006, some things have changed for the better but the damage inflicted during the lost decades seems beyond repair.

The government has so far come up short in terms of new ideas and in laying out a larger vision for the future. Indeed, recent controversies on the appointments of IIT directors and other functionaries suggest that the government—particularly the ministry of human resource development—has set for itself the singular task of asserting its supreme authority over all other stakeholders, particularly the academic community.

The perverse kind of political interference that routinely takes place in higher education is one of the primary reasons that the best of our colleges and universities lag behind. Curiously, government officials seem unwilling to learn any-

thing from some of their own initiatives. Earlier fhis year, the government formalised the Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN) during US President Barack Obama's visit to India. GIAN will bring up to 1,000 US-based academics to India each year for short periods to teach, explore avenues for collaborative research and other academic activities.

But consider the following irony. GIAN has been set up for our academics and students to "learn" best practices from USbased faculty. However, our government officials have as much to learn, from the Americans as well as from others, about how to run public universities. In the US, as in most countries around the world that have robust higher education sectors, public institutions are not government "controlled". Ministers do not have the power to approve or reject the appointments of vice chancellors and directors. Our universities will not realise their full potential unless the government stops meddling in matters it has no business messing with.

The government must step aside and not bully academic institutions into submission. Otherwise, all that it will achieve is further crushing our already broken higher education sector.

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## **Mixed Opinion on Scrapping UGC**

http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil\_nadu/Mixed-Opinion-on-Scrapping-UGC/2015/04/02/article2742863.ece

COIMBATORE: There is mixed reaction in the academic community to the recommendation made by a high-level committee constituted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) to scrap the University Grants Commission (UGC).

While some welcomed the proposal to establish a National Higher Education Authority instead of the UGC, others felt that it should be strengthened and given more powers to be more effective.

According to the MHRD committee, headed by Hari Gautam, a former Chairperson of the UGC, the Commission has failed to fulfil its mandate. As any reshaping or restructuring of the UGC would be a futile exercise, it should be scrapped and a National Higher Education Authority (NHEA) set up in its place, it said.

Former Vice-Chancellor of Madras University S P Thyagarajan said, "The present system does not help the UGC to discharge its functions. It is not able to monitor the entire higher education system as it has a combination of financing and policy planning functions."

He added, "There should be one system for funding and another for policy and programme development. Their roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined. So, we need comprehensive structural change. The

new set up should be in tune with higher education authorities in US and UK. It should be a turning point and futuristic. But the structure of an NHEA would need a lot of thinking, feedback and brainstorming."

"A statutory body like UGC is a necessary policy vehicle for university education and cannot be just a grant disbursal authority," said R Sethuraman, Vice-Chancellor, SASTRA University, Thanjavur. "Instead of relying on out-sourced committee reports and misguided inputs, the UGC in its new avatar must regain its statutory role and promote the spirit of performance-based recognition and not discriminate between public and private universities," he added.

However, a former member of UGC felt that the Commission had not failed in its mandate. "But over a period, due to bureaucratisation, it was unable to deliver its service effectively. Creating an alternative structure will not solve the problem. An NHEA will in fact create more problems. The UGC can be revamped and made effective. Also, there are around 350 vacant posts in the UGC, which affects its functioning," he said.

If the UGC has failed to fulfil its mandate, its scope and powers can be widened, said C Pichandy, vice-president, Association of University Teachers. Whatever the decision, he wanted teachers' organisations to be consulted and taken into confidence for effective implementation.

"One good recommendation of the committee is doing away with the 10-year professor norm for a vice-chancellor. People of integrity and impeccable character, with no charges in their professional lives, should be allowed to occupy the post," he said.

'no Immediate Decision, matter yet to be studied

The Ministry of Human Resource Development has said that the recommendations of the Hari Gautam committee are yet to be understood and analysed before any decision is taken in the matter. "The Hari Gautam committee report is yet to be examined in the ministry. News reports that the UGC is getting scrapped is incorrect and uncalled for. The mandate given to the committee was to analyse, review and recommend to the ministry, the architecture required and the ministry will have to take a view after going through it threadbare. Hence, no such decison has been taken. The UGC has been created by an Act of Parliament, and cannot be unilaterally scrapped," MHRD said in a release.

Deccan Herald ND 02/04/2015 P-7

# HRD panel recommends new body to replace UGC

#### Committee said education regulator failed to fulfil mandate

NEW DELHI: The Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry is in a catch-22 situation as a committee set up by it has recommended a new body to replace the University Grants Commission (UGC).

The same suggestion was earlier rejecated by Narendra Modi government about six months back. A four-member committee, set up by the HRD Ministry, has recommended scrapping of the education regulator and establishment of a

National Higher Education Authority (NHEA) through an

Act of Parliament in its place. The panel also suggested that any "reshaping or restructuring" of the UGC will be a "futile" exercise and so will be amending the UGC Act.

The report has put the gov ernment in a fix as the HRD Ministry had sought the panel to suggest measures for restructuring and strengthening of the UGC

"The UGC will not be



ज्ञान-विज्ञान विमुक्तये

scrapped. It is recommendation of the committee. We will look into it and take a decision." Higher Education Secretary Satyanarayan Mohanty told reporters here on

He, however, remained noncommittal when asked if the ministry disfavour the recommendation to establish a new body to replace the UGC.

The committee is headed by former UGC chairperson Hari Gautam

The previous United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government had brought a Bill in Parliament to set up a National Council for Higher Education and Research, an overarching body, to subsume all higher education regulatory bodies including the UGC and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

However, after the Bharatiya Janata Party-led coalition came to power at the Centre, it snubbed the UPA government's proposal and withdrew the Bill from the Ra-jya Sabha in September.

The interests of employees of these organisations needed to be safeguarded. The performance of existing regulato-ry bodies would accordingly be reviewed to identify problems and areas of weaknesses in them and undertake necessary corrective measures as required," the government then said in a statement

Subsequently, the HRD DH News Service

Ministry set up the Hari Gautam committee to review the performance of the UGC and suggest measures for its restructuring.

The panel said that the UGC had failed to fulfill its mandate. It described the working struc-ture of the UGC as ad-hoc, observing that the regional offices of the commission and even consortium of educational communication (CEC) had failed to deliver.

"It's a waste of good money and manpower," the panel said while dwelling upon over all functioning of the commission.

#### Economic Times ND 02/04/2015 P-2

# C Denies Allegations in 1,000-page Show-Cause Reply



DID NO WRONG: Dinesh Singh

#### Singh holds ground, argues all required procedures followed

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New Delhi: Delhi University Vice Chancellor Dinesh Singh has replied to a show-cause notice served by the HRD Ministry denying all allegations of impropriety. The ministry received his reply on Tuesday evening, well before his 15-day deadline axpired. Sources said he has sent across a fat dossier of documents running into about 1,000 pages. "His reply is of about 25 pages and the rest is just annexures," said a source. The government, with the approval of the visitor, had served Singh a show-cause notice last month ask-

ing him why he should not be sacked from the post of vice chancellor. The notice asks him to respond to three main allegations. Singh has to explain why he jeopardized the career of thousands of says DU collegations and the approval of AICTE to start atchnical course and the launch of a four year BTech programme with AICTE's approval. Singh's defence against the allegations hasn't changed, the source

added. In his reply, he has argued that all required procedures were followed for the introduction of FYUP. He has defended the utilisation of OBC funds for laptops on the ground that the money was replenished as soon as the UGC disbursed funds. As for the BTech course, he has maintained that DU colleges do not need the approval of AICTE to start a technical course.

Ministry officials will study the reply over the next few days to take a view on whether Singh's defence is satisfactory. The government will then send its recommendation to the Visitor, who has the final authority on this matter.

#### **HRD Ministry Rejects Media** Report of UGC Being Scrapped



NEW DELHI: The Ministry of Human Resource Development has rejected media reports of the University Grants Commission being scrapped. Describing the news report as incorrect and uncalled for, the ministry in a statement said on Wednesday that it has constituted a committee of experienced and credible academicians to recommend the re-

UGC for better performance

#### Times Of India ND 02/04/2015 P-10

# UGC can't be easily junked: **Edu secretary**

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New Delhi: The human resource development (HRD) ministry on Wednesday appeared to be sending confusing signals over the suggestion of the Hari Gautam committee that the Universi-Grants Commission

(UGC) be scrapped.

Briefing newspersons, education secretary S N Mohanty first said the ministry had not yet examined the report of the panel, which was set up to suggest ways to revamp the regulator. "We are yet to go through the report, much less analyse it," he said, adding in the same breath that the UGC cannot be unilaterally scrapped since it was created by an Act of Parliament.

But in more than one place, the Gautam committee report talks of scrapping the UGC. In the introduction (page 9), it says, "It was felt that there was a necessity to create a new regulatory agency in place of the existing UGC. It seems to be the only alternative to achieve the desired objective rather than getting entangled into repairing or re-engineering the present system.

On page 84, the report adds, "It was felt that any reshaping or restructuring of UGC shall be more or less a

futile attempt.'

It goes on to say, "Instead, the committee has therefore proposed that another autonomous powerful regulatory body in the name of National **Higher Education Authority** be created."

A member of the committee said, "Considering the decline of the UGC over the last three years, it is imperative that the change should be immediate."

For the full report, log on to www.timesofindia.com

#### Millennium Post ND 02/04/2015 P-8

# Failed institution

THE COMMITTEE set up by Union Human Resource Development Minister Smriti Irani, to review the inner workings of the University Grants Commission, a statutory organisation tasked with regulating higher education in this country, has come out with its findings. In its report, the committee has found that the regulator has not only "failed to fulfil its mandate but also has not been able to deal with emerging diverse complexities". Headed by former UGC chairman Hari Gautam, the committee has gone onto suggest that restructuring the regulatory body would be a "futile" exercise and it must be scrapped. Over the years, the body has been reduced to a mere funding institution, riddled with political interference, with no serious attempts at improving the environment of higher education. There is no doubt that major appointments to the institution, especially of its Chairman, are based on political patronage. The entire saga surrounding the Four Year Undergraduate Programme in Delhi University was an example of the UGC's lack of institutional strength or vision. Under the previous dispensation, the FYUP was implemented, as part of former HRD minister Kapil Sibal's aggressive reform agenda for higher education in India. The programme was widely criticised for the hurried manner in which it was pushed through, despite widespread opposition. The UGC, however, kept silent. Only when the current HRD Minister Smriti Irani stated her intention to scrap the FYUP, did the UGC decide to enter the fray. In June 2014, the UGC finally sent a notice to the management, directing the university to immediately scrap the four year programme. Although the UGC was tasked with monitoring fund utilisation for government-run universities, the statutory body fell short of its objective. It was in December 2011, when M Pallam Raju, former HRD minister under the previous UPA dispensation, slammed the higher education regulator for its poor monitoring of fund utilisation by universities. The body itself has also seen its share of poor appointments, as mentioned in the committee's report. "Eminent educationists or men of eminence in any field should have been the natural choice but at times it is observed that businessmen, hotel owners and even readers in colleges have been made members," the report stated. The adhoc manner in which the UGC is run has shown us that the body no longer adequately performs the role it was meant to. One only hopes that the Centre has a better alternative in place.

# आईआईटी में घमासान > छात्रों के समर्थन में शिक्षक भी धरने पर

# आईआईटी-जोधपुर निदेशक की इस्तीफे की मांग, छात्र-शिक्षक विरोध में लामबंद

## छात्रों ने बैनर लगाया-वी वांट डाइरेक्टर नाट डिक्टेटर

#### जोधपुर @ पत्रिका

patrika.com/city आईआईटी-जोधपुर के प्रोफेसर डॉ. गणेश बगलेर की सेवाएं समाप्त करने के विरोध में छात्र-छात्राओं के आंदोलन ने बुधवार को नया मोड़ ले लिया। आईआईटी के बीस शिक्षक भी छात्रों के समर्थन में धरने पर बैठ गए। छात्र-छात्राओं का धरना दूसरे दिन भी जारी रहा। छात्रों के साथ शिक्षक भी डॉ. बागलेर के निष्कासन को निरस्त करने व आईआईटी निदेशक प्रो. सीवीआर मूर्ति के की इस्तीफें की मांग कर रहे हैं।

## छात्रों नेबात करने से किया मना

बॉयोलॉजी ब्रांच के असिस्टेंट प्रोफेसर डॉ. गणेश बागलेर की सेवाएं प्रोबेशन काल में ख्यू कमेटी की अनुशंसा पर आईआईटी ने समाप्त कर दी। इसके विरोध में मंगलवार को आईआईटी के छात्र-छात्राएं एकेडिमिक ब्लॉक में धरने पर बैठ गए। आईआईटी निदेशक प्रो. मूर्ति ने बुधवार को फैकल्टी की मीटिंग बुलाई, जिसमें कई शिक्षक नहीं पहुंचे। शिक्षकों की मीटिंग के बाद प्रो. मूर्ति एकेडिमिक ब्लॉक छात्र-छात्राओं से बात करने पहुंचे, लेकिन उन्होंने निदेशक से बात करने से मना कर दिया। आईआईटी-जोधपुर की स्थापना से अभी तक कार्यकाल इसी तरह स्थिति पहली बार उत्पन्न हुई है। दो दिन से लगातार विद्यार्थी निदेशक के विरोध में पोस्टर बनाकर अपना विरोध जता रहे है। पोस्टर्स पर लिखा हुआ है कि 'वी वांट डायरेक्टर नॉट डिक्टेटर ' जैसे कई स्लोगन लिखकर विद्यार्थियों ने चस्पा कर विरोध जताया।

## अब तक 18 शिक्षक छोड़ गए

छात्रों और शिक्षकों का आरोप है



आईआईटी के करीब 20 शिक्षक भी निदेशक के विरोध में धरने पर बैठ गए। छात्रों के साथ शिक्षक भी आईआईटी निदेशक प्रो. सीवीआर मूर्ति के इस्तीफे की मांग कर रहें हैं।

#### प्रो. सीवीआर मृति से बातचीत

स्वात- छात्र-छात्राएं धरना-प्रदर्शन क्यों रहे हैं?

जवाब-डॉ. गणेश बागलेर की सेवा रिख्यू कमेटी की अनुशंसा पर समाप्त की गई है। जिसका विरोध विद्यार्थी कर रहे हैं।

सवाल- डॉ. बागलेर की सेवाएं क्यों समाप्त की गई?

जवाब- डॉ. गणेष्ठ बागेलर ने 10 अप्रेल 2013 को आईआईटी जोधपुर में जवाँइन किया। आईआईटी के नियमों के अनुसार पोबेष्ठनकाल में चल रहे शिक्षकों की सेवा का रिख्यू होता है। रिख्यू कमेटी में बाहर के भी सदस्य होते हैं। अप्रेल 2014 में रिख्य

कि प्रो. मूर्ति की कार्यप्रणाली से नाराज होकर पिछले डेढ़ साल में आईआईटी जोधपुर में 18 शिक्षक कमेटी की अनुश्रंसा पर उनका प्रोबेशन एक साल के लिए बढ़ा दिया था। इसके बाद 2015 में एक बार फिर हुई रिव्यू कमेटी ने डॉ. बागलेर की सेवाओं को संतोषजनक नहीं पाया। कमेटी की अनुश्रंसा पर उनकी सेवाएं समाम कर दी गई।

सवाल - आपके कार्यकाल में करीब 18 शिक्षक छोड़कर चले गए, क्या कारण रहे ?

जवाब - यह जानकारी गलत है। करीब 5 से 6 शिक्षक प्रोबेशन काल में चल रहे थे, रिख्यू कमेटी की अनुशंसा पर उनकी सेवा समास की गई। यह प्रक्रिया का हिस्सा है और यह प्रक्रिया

छोड़कर चले गए। आईआईटी में कुल 90 शिक्षकों के पद स्वीकृत है। वर्तमान में 45 शिक्षक कार्यरत मेरे पदभार ग्रहण करने से पहले से हैं। मैं सरकारी आदेशों की पालना कर रहा हूं।

सवाल - छात्रों के साथ शिक्षकों का मानना है कि आप डिक्टेटर है ?

जवाब - जब यह प्रक्रिया शिक्षकों के अनुरूप होती हैं, तो हम अच्छे होते हैं। जब प्रक्रिया अनुरूप नहीं होती हैं तो ऐसी बातें होती हैं?

सवाल - क्या आपके इस्तीफे की मांग हुई है?

जवाब - यह मेरी जानकारी में हैं। लोकरांत्र में सबको अपनी बात कहने का अधिकार हैं। मुझे उनका मांग पत्र नहीं मिला है।

है, जिनमें से 35 शिक्षक नियमित है और 10 शिक्षक प्रोबेशन पर चल रहे हैं।

## IIT-J students protest against faculty termination

 $\underline{http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/iit-j-students-protest-against-faculty-termination-115040101301\_1.html$ 

Irked by the ouster of a faculty at <u>IIT</u> Jodhpur, scores of students today staged a protest at the campus demanding sacking of the institute's director.

"We are completely disappointed with the way our director is functioning. In his stint so far, 16 faculties have been shown the door without any ground. If this continues, how would we be able to study, specially when the institute has already been grappling with the acute faculty crunch," said a student on condition of anonymity.

They termed the IIT-J director C V R Murthy a "dictator" for terminating the appointment of Ganesh Bagler in the name of unsatisfactory performance after the probation review.

The frequent terminations are also affecting our research works, they said.

On the other hand justifying these terminations, Murthy said that there was a clear procedure of review laid out during the probation period.

"We take the faculty on probation and get their performance reviewed by a committee, which we have no control over, on completion of one year and if the performance is not found satisfactory, either the faculty is given one more chance or his or her services are terminated." he said.

"We cannot compromise on the quality of faculty and let them continue merely to keep the faculty shortage under tab," Murthy said, adding that students need not understand this.

While seeking his comment on the issue, Bagler who has received world wide acclaim for his research on 'Negative Food Pairing' termed the termination an "absolute injustice".

"I had come to India after serving in Germany and US with a view to serve my own country but if this behavior is meted out to those who come with this intention, they would think twice before taking any decision on homecoming," he said.

IIT-J currently has 45 faculties, against the sanctioned strength of 90 faculties, out of which only 35 are permanent.

According to the IIT-J spokesperson Amandeep Sharma, seven faculties have been terminated either on unsatisfactory performance or completion of contract since September 2013.

The students have demanded a fair investigation in all these cases.

# Bionic ants could power tomorrow's industries

# Robots To Follow Work System Of Natural Colonies

Representation of the state of

The developers, German technology firm Festo, say it's not just the unusual anatomy of real-world ants that inspired the bionic version — the collective intelligence of an ant colony was also something they wanted to replicate.

The bionic ants cooperate and coordinate their actions and movements to achieve a common aim—in the same way individual ants complete tasks for the whole colony. Festo says that in the future production systems will be based on intelligent individual components that adjust themselves to different production demands by communicating with each other. The ants are able to complete complex tasks like transporting large, heavy loads, that they wouldn't be able to achieve individually, by working together.



FUTURE'S FACTORY WORKERS: The robotic ants will collectively perform tasks like transporting heavy loads that they wouldn't be able to achieve individually

The robot features a stereo camera and a floor sensor that together allow the ant to work out its location and identify objects to be grabbed by grippers at the front of its "head". The antennae double up as chargers for lithium batteries that power their movements. A radio module in the abdomen allows them to communicate with each other wirelessly. Just like their natural counterparts, the ants have six articulated legs.

Festo says the way the ants are constructed is unique too. The bod-

ies of the bionic ants are made from a 3D printed plastic powder melted layer by layer with a laser. The circuitry is also 3D-printed on top of the body. Festo says this is the first time the techniques have been combined.

The ceramic legs and pincers are flexible actuators that move quickly and precisely without using much energy Again, Festo says the application of this so-called 'piezo' technology to miniature robots like its bionic ants is a first. REUTERS

### HRD panel accepts architectural plans for new IITs, IIMs

http://www.prepsure.com/news/hrd-panel-accepts-architectural-plans-for-new-iits-iims/

The HRD ministry panel headed by education secretary and KV Kamath, chairperson, ICICI and others jointly, has accepted the architectural plans for the new IITs and IIMs. Six new IITs would be established in Jammu, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala. Five new IIMs would come up in Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Bihar, Orissa and Rajasthan.

According to the Hafeez Contractor's recommendations, NITs with 6,000 students should be constructed on 150 acre campus. IITs with 10,000 students should have a 260 acre campus at the same time Central Universities with 10,000 students should have 250 acre of campus. IIMs with 1,000 students should be built on 5 to 10 acres of land, while area of IIMs with 2000 students should be 60 acres.

Earlier in the month of January, government had decided to seek suggestions from software giant Infosys and famed architect Hafeez Contractor to develop a model architectural plan for setting up new <u>IITs</u> and <u>IIMs</u>.

During a meeting of panel to determine land requirement for central higher educational institutions, it was also suggested that these institutes be set up in areas which are accessible by air and in vicinity of business or industrial hubs to get quality faculty and opportunities for students to take up internships. The panel was set up in November last year by the <a href="https://example.com/html.com/htm

## तकनीकी संस्थानों के डिस्टेंस लर्निंग कोर्स पर रोक, यूजीसी ने लगाई रोक

http://www.bhaskar.com/news/EDUC-EDNE-ugc-bans-distance-learning-course-in-technical-institutions-4950601-PHO.html

देशभर की यूनिवर्सिटीज़ ओपन एंड डिस्टेंस लर्निंग मोड में इंजीनियरिंग और टेक्निकल कोर्सेस नहीं संचालित कर सकेंगी। यूजीसी ने अपने नए फैसले में इस पर रोक लगा दी है। जिन संस्थानों को पहले से इसकी अनुमित मिली है या जिन्होंने इसके लिए आवेदन किया है, उन्हें भी इससे वंचित रहना पड़ेगा। ऑल इंडिया काउंसिल ऑफ टेक्निकल एजुकेशन डिस्टेंस लर्निंग के जरिये केवल एमबीए और एमसीए को मान्यता देता है, बशर्ते उसे यूजीसी की मान्यता हासिल हो।