Newspaper Clips
April 5, 2012

Economic Times ND 5/04/2012
P-17

HRD Reaches Out to IITs to Clear Doubts on ISEET

OUR POLITICAL BUREAU
NEW DELHI

The human resource development ministry is reaching out to the IITs to smoothen misgivings about a common entrance examination for science and engineering.

The IITs at Kharagpur, Kanpur, Delhi, Bombay, Guwahati and Madras have raised concerns about the proposed examination reforms. The ministry has made it clear it would like the new system in place in 2013.

The meeting will be held on April 11. IIT directors, representatives of the faculty federation and some other faculty members have been invited to attend the meeting. The deliberations of the meeting will be discussed in the IIT Council meet to be held on April 14.

The divergence with the government is broadly about two issues — the test comprising solely of objective type questions, and the use of a weightage formula to consider the class XII board performance.

The IITs would also like to retain control over the eligibility test, the government's proposal gives CBSE the mandate to conduct these tests. The Senate, the highest decision making body in the institute, of some of these IITs have made clear their concern.

A senior official said that the ministry was holding consultations to finalise the "nuts and bolts" of the decision to put the Indian Science Engineering Eligibility Test (ISEET) in place. "None of the IITs are questioning the need for reform nor are they opposed to the fact that the new system should be in place by 2013. There are three or four paths to meet this objective and discussions are on to determine which path to take," an official said.

The IITs argue that the new system with higher weightage for class XII board examinations is not practical. The ministry's proposal for a statistical method for normalisation of school board scores doesn't have the approval of these engineering schools. The IITs argue the method suggested for factoring in Class-XII score in selection would not help these engineering schools admit the best students were admitted. Its their argument that since the assessment system varies among school boards, it would be not be possible to assess all students by the same scale and weightage.

Similarly the exclusive use of objective type questions in the proposed test has also not met with the IITs approval. The proposed common eligibility test will consist of two parts. The first will be an aptitude test, which will be objective type testing the students' abilities of comprehension, critical thinking, and logical reasoning. The second is an advance test based on the students' problem solving abilities for basic science subjects.

Deccan Chronicle 04.04.12 p-5

SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE

More girls to take IIT exams

N. ARUN KUMAR | DC
CHENNAI, APRIL 3

The number of girl students who would take the IIT joint entrance examination in the Madras zone on April 8 is substantially more this year than in previous years with 7,000 more opting for the exam.

The total number of applications in the zone has increased by 13,000.

A total of 5.08 lakh students across the country had applied for the examination this year, Prof. Arindma Singh, chairman of the IIT-joint entrance examination organising committee (Madras zone), told DC on Tuesday.

"This is much higher than last year when about 4.8 lakh students registered for the examination," he said.

Prof. Singh said that 78,000 students in Madras zone had applied for the examination on April 8 this year. "This is an increase of 13,000 applications over last year. This is mainly because of the Union human resource development (HRD) ministry's initiative to waive the cost of application forms for girls who apply online, though boys need to pay ₹1,800," he said.

Students would compete for nearly 10,000 seats across the country in 15 IITs, Institute of Technology, Banaras Hindu University and Indain School of Mines, Dhanbad.

Sources in IIT said that the largest pool of applications has been from Kanpur, followed by Andhra Pradesh from the Madras zone. There is a big upsurge in demand for quality education from students of middle or tier-two cities unlike the past when most of the students applied were from metro-centric areas.

UGC may regulate distance learning

■ HRD ministry panel believes UGC would be better than Ignou's DEC for time being

Kirtika Suneja
New Delhi, April 4

DESPITE an overarching body being proposed to monitor higher education, there is an ongoing tussle among the regulators with the government still unable to decide upon a regulatory body for distance education. In fact, a panel formed by the human resource development (HRD) ministry on the matter suggests that the University Grants Commission would handle the task better than Indira Gandhi National Open University (Ignou), which currently monitors distance learning.

Though the HRD ministry had proposed a National Commission for Higher Education and Research, which would subsume all other regulators, including Ignou, the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and Medical Council of India for distance education, it is planning to take away the regulatory powers from Ignou and hand it over to the UGC instead.

The committee constituted almost two years ago under Centre for Development Studies chairman NR Madhava Menon to suggest measures for regulating distance education has said that the UGC should be made responsible for maintaining the standards in the open and distance learning (ODL) system.

The seven-member committee has emphasised that the position of UGC, vis-a-vis Ignou, as a regulator, is stronger and more acceptable to the whole university system, including the open universities. At present, the Distance Education Council (DEC) of the

university helps in regulating and maintaining the ODL system.

"We have submitted the report to the ministry and the idea is to have a separate organisation to govern distance education. This can be done by creating a different statute for distance learning. However, in the interim, we would suggest UGC to manage the ODL," Menon told *FE*.

Moreover, there is a problem of multiplicity of regulators as the DEC governs the courses offered by Ignou whereas the AICTE governs courses in

technical streams and the UGC regulates other conventional courses.

Taking into account the irregularities in distance education in India, the committee has also recommended setting up an independent regulatory authority to be called the Distance Education Council of India (DECI), as reported by *FE* earlier. Eventually, when the National Commission for Higher Education and Research Bill is passed, DECI will get subsumed into the proposed overarching regulator along with

other existing regulators like UGC, AICTE and MCI among others.

In its report to the ministry, the committee said: "The committee is aware that passing of the proposed DECI Bill may take some time. Meanwhile, the existing ambiguity and uncertainty can not be allowed to prevail and be exploited by the foul players of the ODL system."

It added that there is a moral dilemma before the DEC in acting as a regulator of the ODL system regulating other open universities. Also, the UGC remained the regulator in respect of distance education system before the commencement and even after some years of the commencement of the Ignou Act.

Ignou is India's largest open university with 4 million students in the country and 36 other countries through 21 schools of studies and a network of 67 regional centres, around 3,000 learner support centres and 67 overseas centres.

"Keeping all this in view, the committee recommends that the government should issue a policy direction or notification to UGC for assuming the responsibilities of maintaining standards in ODL system and creating a DECI-like interim authority for the purpose. Needless to say that while doing so the UGC and the interim authority will utilise the framework and resources available with the DEC working under Ignou," the report noted.

Once the system is in place, the DECI of UGC may start the recognition of ODL institutions as per the newly developed system and enforce norms and standards laid by it in the recognised institutions.

MENON PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

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■ The committee added that there is a moral dilemma before the DEC in acting as a regulator of the distance learning system, regulating other open universities

IIT Raj caused failure of Aakash I: Datawind

Javed Anwer | TNN

New Delhi: Six months after ministry of human resources and development formally launched Aakash tablet, barely a few hundred units have reached the hands of students. The manufacturing of the device has been stopped and now the ministry and Datawind, the manufacturer of the tablet, are focusing on Aakash 2, an upgraded version of the tablet.
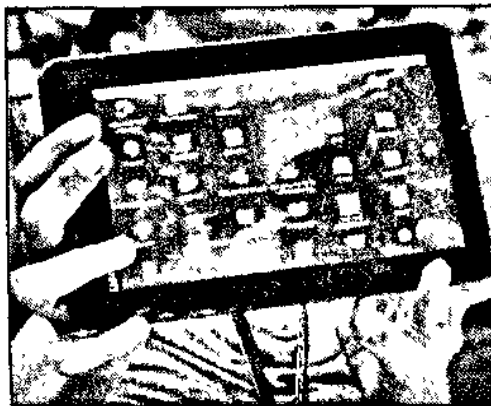
Datawind concedes Aakash tablet, which is supposed to digitize the way students study in India, has not been a success in its first version. But it squarely blames IIT Rajasthan, the nodal agency overlooking the project, for the fiasco, saying the concerns over the tablet's quality and functionality were overblown by the institute in a bid to "favour other firms".

Datawind's CEO, Suneet Singh Tuli, told TOI that after winning the bid to manufacture Aakash tablet with a cost of $49.98 for each unit, the company had supplied 10000 tablets to IIT Rajasthan. The units were part of an initial order of 1,00,000 tablets. As soon as few hundred tablets reached students as part of pilot project, IIT Rajasthan started rejecting Aakash tablet, allegedly after reports that the device was failing during pilot testing and did not meet the quality criteria set by the institute.

Tuli, however, disagrees. "IIT Rajasthan was simply trying to defame us by saying that we could not meet the quality required by it," he says. "When we were awarded the contract, there was only a specification sheet. But when we started supplying the tablets, IIT Rajasthan started rejecting the tablet based on biased and unscientific testing methodology."

"IIT Rajasthan put up roadblocks. It jeopardized the whole project. I can say the dirty tricks by the institute put us around six months behind on the project... they did it because they were favouring other firms... Even now, the institute is trying to sabotage the project," he adds.

There are reports that IIT Rajasthan has been issued a showcause notice by

FEW TAKERS

MHRD last month over the Aakash failure. The notice asks institute to explain why it did not set up a tablet testing facility and procedure in time and why it failed to resolve its dispute with Datawind. Incidentally, the institute also worked with Wishtel, a company that launched low-cost tablet called Ira last week. TOI tried contacting Prem K Kalra, director of IIT Rajasthan, over the email and phone but he wasn't available.

Datawind says that after the fiasco, it had to take back the tablets supplied to IIT Rajasthan. "We have not been paid for a single one of them. But mission is more important to us... we believe in Aakash project," says Tuli.

The company is now working on Aakash 2, an updated version of the original tablet. It will have a capacitive screen instead of resistive and hence support multi-touch. It will also have a better processor—based on Cortex A8.

"We are working with IIT Mumbai for Aakash 2 and will start supplying the tablet to government this month. Our original order for 1,00,000 units has been transferred for Aakash 2 now. After the order of 1,00,000 units is met, MHRD will invite bids for more tablets. We will bid again," says Tuli. Kapil Sibal, minister of human resources and development, said that Aakash 2 will be available in May. Datawind also sells a commercial version of Aakash tablet called Ubislate. Tuli claims the firm has received over 3 million pre-bookings for Ubislate.

Hindustan Times, ND 5/04/2012 P-13

G D Birla Awards presented

■ Union minister Jyotiraditya Scindia flanked by GD Birla Award winners Professor Subhasis Chaudhuri (left) and Professor Tapas Kumar Kundu, at Birla House. **ARVIND YADAV /HT**

'Research must be in tune with India's needs'

NEW DELHI: Underlining the huge promise of Indian scientific research, Tapas Kumar Kundu and Subhasis Chaudhuri — the winners of GD Birla Awards for 2011 and 2010 respectively — have said the position of Indian research is "up there".

"In the last 7-10 years, plenty of Indian research institutions have come up, but there should be more. The research standards in India are not so far from those in US, UK or China," said Kundu, adding Indian research should be tuned with the country's needs.

Kundu is a scientist with the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research, Bangalore.

"India has already entered the phase of consolidation. We are a very young nation but in some time we will be up there with the best," said Prof Subhasis Chaudhuri, a scientist at IIT, Bombay.

Kundu and Chaudhuri were speaking at the GD Birla Awards function. Minister of state for commerce and industry Jyotiraditya Scindia gave away the awards.

Instituted in 1991 by the KK Birla Foundation, the GD Birla Award is given for high calibre research undertaken by Indian scientists, who are living and working in India and are below 50.

The award carries an amount of ₹1.5 lakh.

HTC, NEW DELHI

Navbharat Times ND 05/04/12 p-4

एआईईईई : ऑनलाइन पर ऑफलाइन भारी

प्रमुख संवाददाता ॥ नई दिल्ली

केंद्रीय माध्यमिक शिक्षा बोर्ड (सीबीएसई) की तमाम कोशिशों के बावजूद कई स्टूडेंट्स को ऑल इंडिया इंजीनियरिंग एंट्रेंस एग्जामिनेशन (एआईईईई) का ऑनलाइन फॉर्मेट रास नहीं आया है। सीबीएसई ने कुछ शहरों में ऑनलाइन एग्जाम जरूरी कर दिया था ताकि ज्यादा से ज्यादा स्टूडेंट्स को एग्जाम के इस नए तरीके से जोड़ा जा सके। लेकिन स्टूडेंट्स ने इस बार भी ऑफलाइन एग्जाम पर ज्यादा भरोसा जताया है। ऑनलाइन एग्जाम के लिए सिर्फ 1.64 लाख कैंडिडेट्स, जबकि ऑफलाइन एग्जाम के लिए 10.11 लाख कैंडिडेट्स ने रजिस्ट्रेशन कराया है।

ऑफलाइन एग्जाम एक ही दिन 29 अप्रैल को होगा। ऑनलाइन एग्जाम 7, 12, 19 और 26 मई को होगा। सीबीएसई ने इन चारों में से कोई एक तारीख चुनने का ऑप्शन दिया था। बोर्ड अफसरों के मुताबिक, ज्यादातर स्टूडेंट्स को उनकी तरजीह वाली एग्जाम डेट ही मिली है। 26 मई को सबसे ज्यादा स्टूडेंट्स ऑनलाइन एग्जाम देंगे। सीबीएसई की वेबसाइट पर स्टूडेंट्स के

लिए डायरेक्टर (स्पेशल एग्जाम) की ओर से जारी नोटिस में बताया गया है कि ऑनलाइन एग्जाम के लिए क्वेश्चन पेपर के कई सेट तैयार किए गए हैं। हर सेट में सवालों का स्टैंडर्ड एक जैसा होगा।

बोर्ड ने इस बार दिल्ली- एनसीआर (फरीदाबाद छोड़कर) समेत कई शहरों में केवल ऑनलाइन एग्जाम का ऑप्शन

अधिकतर स्टूडेंट्स नहीं देना चाहते ऑनलाइन एग्जाम

ही स्टूडेंट्स को दिया था। दिल्ली के सेंटर्स पर इस बार केवल ऑनलाइन एग्जाम होगा। इसके लिए सीबीएसई ने स्टूडेंट्स को वेब बेस्ड मॉक टेस्ट करने का मौका भी दिया है। एआईईईई के जरिये देशभर में नेशनल इंस्टिट्यूट ऑफ टेक्नॉलजी (एनआईटी), इंडियन इंस्टिट्यूट ऑफ इंफर्मेशन टेक्नॉलजी (आईआईआईटी), डीम्ड यूनिवर्सिटीज और सरकारी मदद वाले इंस्टिट्यूशंस में बी.ई/ बी.टेक, बी.आर्क/ बी. प्लानिंग कोर्सेज में एडमिशन मिलता है। बी.ई/ बी.टेक की सीटें करीब 27 हजार और बी.आर्क/ बी. प्लानिंग की सीटें एक हजार से ज्यादा हैं।

शिक्षा क्षेत्र पर टैबलेट निर्माताओं की नजर

2011 में भारत में टैबलेट का इस्तेमाल करने वालों की तादाद तीन लाख तक पहुंची

पियाली मंडल
नई दिल्ली, 4 अप्रैल

कॉरपोरेट जगत में काम करने वाले व्यस्त अधिकारियों के हाथों में दिखने वाला टैबलेट पीसी अब तेजी से छात्रों के लिए आवश्यक उपकरण में तब्दील होता जा रहा है। शिक्षा जगत में भारी मांग से उत्साहित कई कंपनियों ने पिछले एक साल के दौरान छात्रों को ध्यान में रखते हुए टैबलेट पीसी को पेश किया है। इस सूची में सबसे नया नाम माइक्रोमैक्स और एचसीएल इन्फोसिस्टम का है।

माइक्रोमैक्स ने अपना नया फनबुक टैबलेट महज 6,499 रुपये में पेश किया है। इसके ठीक एक दिन पहले ही एचसीएल इन्फोसिस्टम ने माईएडु के नाम से अपना टैबलेट पेश किया था जिसकी कीमत 9,999 रुपये है। साइबरमीडिया रिसर्च के आंकड़ों के मुताबिक वर्ष 2011 के दौरान भारत में करीब 4,75,000 टैबलेट की बिक्री हुई। फ्रोस्ट ऐंड सुलिवन शोध कंपनी की रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक

भारत में टैबलेट पीसी का इस्तेमाल करने वालों की संख्या में भी इजाफा देखने को मिला है। वर्ष 2010 में जहां भारत में 60,000 लोग टैबलेट का इस्तेमाल कर रहे थे और वर्ष 2011 में इनकी संख्या बढ़कर 300,000 हो गई है। इसमें बताया गया है कि समग्र तौर पर पीसी उपभोक्ताओं का आधार 107 फीसदी सीएजीआर के आधार पर बढ़कर वर्ष 2017 तक 2.338 करोड़ हो जाएगा।

वर्ष 2010 की चौथी तिमाही के बाद से पांच तिमाहियों के दौरान भारतीय बाजार काफी प्रतिस्पर्धी हो चुका है जब पहली बार देश में

सैमसंग ने पहला टैबलेट पेश किया था। आकाश टैबलेट को पेश किए जाने के बाद इसे व्यावसायिक तौर पर मिली उत्साहजनक प्रतिक्रिया ने अन्य कंपनियों को इस क्षेत्र में कदम रखने के लिए प्रोत्साहित किया है। आकाश टैबलेट को पिछले साल अक्टूबर में दूरसंचार मंत्री कपिल सिब्बल ने पेश किया था और इसे दुनिया के सबसे सस्ते टैबलेट में शुमार किया जाता है। हालांकि इसकी कीमत 2,276 रुपये है लेकिन इसे छात्रों को सब्सिडी दर पर महज 1,500 रुपये में उपलब्ध कराया जाता है।

मानव संसाधन विकास

मंत्रालय इसं साल के मई तक आकाश के अपडेटेड संस्करण को पेश किए जाने की योजना बना रहा है। साइबर मीडिया रिसर्च में अग्रणी दूरसंचार विशेषज्ञ नवीन मिश्रा ने बताया, 'प्रतिस्पर्धा के आगे और भी तेज होने की संभावना है क्योंकि वर्ष 2012 के दौरान अन्य कंपनियां भी अपने टैब को पेश किए जाने की योजना पर काम कर रही हैं। फिलहाल अभी शिक्षा क्षेत्र में सबसे ज्यादा इसे अपनाए जाने की मांग है और इस क्षेत्र के लिए बड़ी संख्या में मॉडल उपलब्ध हैं।' कंपनियां न केवल हार्डवेयर को पेश कर रही है बल्कि इसे छात्रों की आवश्यकताओं केअनुसार भी ढाल रही हैं। मसलन माइक्रोमैक्स ने पियर्सन और एवेरॉन के साथ करार किया है ताकि छात्रों को शिक्षण सामग्री मुहैया कराई जा सके। इसकेअलावा इसने बिग फ्लिक्स, जेंगा और इंडियागेम्स के साथ भी करार किया है ताकि वह मनोरंजन और गेमिंग संबंधित सामग्री मुहैया करा सके।

संभावनाओं को भुनाने की कवायद में		
कंपनी	**टैबलेट का नाम**	**शुरुआती कीमत रु. में**
डेटाविंड	आकाश	2,500
क्लासटीचर लर्निंग सिस्टम्स	क्लासपैड	7,500
माइक्रोमैक्स	फनबुक	6,499
एचसीएल इन्फोसिस्टम्स	माईएडुटैब	9,999
विशटेल	आईआरए और आईआरए थिंग	4000 से 5,500 रु.