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Focus first on the systemic flaws

The government must take a long hard look at how to salvage our institutions of excellence

It is beginning to resemble a B-grade Bollywood potboiler **ourtake** which is dragging on endlessly. The Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) has been in turmoil for months on end ever since the government announced actor Gajendra Chauhan as the new chairman. In the latest twist to the sorry saga, some students who allegedly gheraoed the director were arrested in a midnight swoop and later released on bail. This raises the issue of the problems confronting many of our premier institutions from the IITs to IIMs and medical bodies. Most of them suffer from a lack of adequate faculty, infrastructure and funds. In the case of the FTII, many students seem to have been living on the campus for as long as eight years during which time they have either not submitted their course work or have not been evaluated for it. This is not the first time that the FTII has had such agitations. India's institutions of higher learning are nowhere in the top international rankings and little is being done to improve this situation. In this case, the government seems determined to stick to its guns with the choice of Mr Chauhan. But where it has erred is to have let the problem get so out of hand that, for quite some time now little teaching or learning has been taking place in the once prestigious institute.

The government must take a long hard look at how to salvage our institutions of excellence. Of course, leadership matters and the selection of people to head such institutions should be conducted more by experts than politicians. In many foreign universities, international committees of peers shortlist candidates for jobs in universities. This may be worth emulating here as well. A concerted effort should be made to attract the best in the field as far as faculty goes, even if it means looking outside Indian shores. As for the paucity of infrastructure and funds, these are well known problems that have been allowed to fester over the years, making many institutions almost defunct.

Students who overstay their courses, or linger on to make trouble must be dealt with firmly. In the FTII, even former students seemed to have access to the campus and participated in the agitations. A review should be undertaken of the output of institutions like the FTII, among others, in order to streamline them. Those who are found to be below par should be given enough time to pull up their socks or face remedial action. We have for far too long dwelt on the personalities that head institutions, we now really need to address the systemic flaws in higher and professional education. The FTII mess should serve as a wake-up call on this front.

Overseas Citizens of India barred from JEE

CBSE board declares OCIs ineligible to take the test

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Students with Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) status have been barred from taking entrance tests conducted for admissions to centrally funded technical institutes in India (IITs and NITs) notwithstanding equal educational opportunities guaranteed to them as a right under the Citizenship Act.

As a result, OCIs living in India with their family are facing a tough time on planning a future of their children. The Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), National Institutes of Technology (NITs) and other higher educational institutions do open doors for the OCIs under a scheme of direct admission for students coming from abroad but the number of seats under this quota is very limited. Moreover, the admission and tuition fee for OCIs charged under the direct admission scheme is too high compared to that for Indian students.

According to the home ministry's guidelines under the Citizenship Act, the OCIs must be treated on a par with the Non-Resident Indians (NRI) in "financial, economic and educational fields, except in the acquisition of agriculture or plantation properties."

However, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), which conducts the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE)-Main for admissions to centrally funded technical institutes, has declared the OCIs ineligible to take the nationwide test.

"The NRIs can still take the

JEE-Main examination. The OCI card holders were permitted to pursue higher education in India based on merit in past. The changes have been made recently," Rajanna Sreedhara, an OCI and a consultant nephrologist based in Bengaluru told *Deccan Herald*, describing the restriction put on the OCIs by the CBSE as "unfair and illegal".

Sreedhara, whose daughter wants to pursue an undergraduate programme in science or engineering subjects in India, has raised the issue with the Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry, requesting it to "immediately" instruct the CBSE, NITs and other centrally funded institutes to change "such illegal policy" of admission and allow "meritorious" OCIs to participate in the tests conducted for admissions.

"Such denial of educational opportunities to talented children who have studied in India entirely, or for most part, and would like to pursue further education in India is unfair, unjust, illegal and highly damaging to the psyche of the students," he sought in his letter to the ministry on June 15. He also brought to the notice of the ministry that Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, too has restricted OCIs from applying for award of fellowship in basic sciences under a national scheme, Kishore Vaigyanik Protsahan Yojna (KVPY), funded by the Union Ministry of Science and Technology. The HRD ministry did not respond when contacted.

Amid staff crunch & fund cuts, new tweaks hobble higher edu

Failed Experiments Add To Existing Problems, Students Suffer

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India's gigantic higher education set-up — 712 universities, 37,204 colleges, 30 million students, 1.3 million teachers — is in the grip of a simmering crisis as the hunger for better education grows.

From UPA-2's time and in the days of the present government too, a top-driven policy of change has seen a semester system started, a four-year undergraduate programme introduced and withdrawn, a new grading system fitfully implemented and, recently, a choice-based credit system partially introduced.

These are deep-striking changes affecting millions. How have they gone down among students and teachers? How is the system, straining to accommodate a flood of students, with teachers in short supply, classrooms filled beyond capacity, and curricula being questioned for relevance, absorbing these changes? TOI found some answers talking to teachers and students across states.

In some varsities the semester system is yet to be implemented. Anil Singh, a lecturer at RML Awadh University in Faizabad, UP, says although UGC introduced it in 2009-10, it has yet to percolate to colleges of his university. "There are no teachers, classrooms, or facilities. We're barely coping in the present system. How can we run a semester system," he says.

Allahabad University runs a semester system at the PG level, but a teacher shortage is dragging it down. Over 500 posts of teachers are vacant, says Vikas, who is pursuing a political science PhD. "There are classes where 150 to 200 students sit together. Is that a desirable pupil-teacher ratio," he asks.

In MP, semesters were introduced throughout. Without adequate classrooms, laboratories and sufficient teachers, it's a load for stu-

A LOW FOR HIGHER EDU

SOME CHANGES INTRODUCED IN 2009-11

SEMESTER SYSTEM | Each annual academic year broken into two semesters with exams at the end of each semester and continuous internal tests

FOUR YEAR UNDERGRAD. PROGRAM (FYUP) | 3-year course to be converted to 4 years with curricula changes. Scrapped after protests

CHOICE BASED CREDIT SYSTEM | Students get 'credits' for attending classes and they can shift to other courses or universities with their credits

GRADING SYSTEM | Instead of marks, students to get grades



HIGHER EDUCATION - EXPLOSIVE GROWTH IN STUDENTS

| | | |
|---------|------|------------------------------------|
| 2000-01 | 8.6 | Figures in million Source: MHRD |
| 2005-06 | 14.3 | |
| 2012-13 | 29.6 | |

CUTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION (Rs Cr)

| Year | Budget | Expenditure |
|---------|--------|-------------|
| 2012-13 | 25275 | 20445 |
| 2013-14 | 26762 | 24518 |
| 2014-15 | 27656 | 23152 |
| 2015-16 | 26855 | NA |

Source: Lok Sabha, Aug 5, 2015

dents, says Kuldip, an MTech student of RG Technical University. The state decided to scrap the system last year, but under Central pressure it had to continue with it.

In Rajasthan's eight state universities and 40 private ones, the semester system is partially implemented in undergraduate courses, says Mahipal, a student of JNV University, Jodhpur. The experience has been very bad, he claims, because of a teacher shortage. "In many cases, a

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student gets his or her degree one-and-a-half years late because there are insufficient teachers and non-teaching staff to conduct exams and process results," he explains.

Shahnawaz of CDL University, Sirsa, Haryana, complains semester exams clash with the peak harvesting season. "Students travel long distances from far-off villages. They can't spend the whole day in college," he says.

Kurukshetra University has 464 regular and 400 contractual teachers, Shahnawaz says. "In many colleges, half the classes are not held. Some-

times guest lecturers are fixed up — at Rs 250 per lecture."

In Haryana, Shahnawaz says, results get delayed 6-8 months because of extended exam schedules. In Punjab, the clash with agricultural work crops up among the litany of complaints against semesters. Delayed results, mechanical division of syllabus, lack of teachers, are the others.

"The fee structure changed with the semester system and most colleges added a few hundred rupees, supposedly to meet the cost of extra work in exams etc. This caused hardship to many students," says Harinder Bajwa of Punjab University, Patiala.

In Uttarakhand, semesters have resulted in delayed results, says Dehradun's Abhishek Bhandari. This is because of a teacher shortage in the interior areas and also difficult communication.

"Many distant colleges skip internal assessments. About 50% of internal assessments are delayed. All these add up. Results of the 2013-14 academic year were declared after one year," he says.

Himachal too implemented the system at all levels. But teacher shortage has created

a "crisis", Suresh Sarwal of HP University, Shimla, says. PG departments have 300 vacancies and 120 students pack into a class, he says.

Some 60 varsities are supposed to implement the choice-based credit system this year. But in most of those departments and teachers are unclear how it is to be done. Singh from Faizabad says it will be impossible to implement when the semester system is in doldrums. Delhi University, a laboratory for implementing these changes, has seen stiff opposition from both students and teachers.

Instead of increasing funds for the teetering higher education system so that infrastructure can be improved and more teachers appointed, the government has like the UPA, cut funding. According to a Parliament statement, in 2014-15, the allocation for higher education was Rs 27,656 crore, actual spending was squeezed to Rs 24,518 crore. This year, allocation was slashed by over Rs 800 crore and reports talk of further curbs on fund release. It doesn't look as if the government has any plans of rescuing the shaky system, headed for chaos.

Union Minister Smriti Irani lays foundation for NIT at Tadepalligudem

Special Status for A.P. being considered, wait and see, says Union Minister M. Venkaiah Naidu at foundation laying ceremony for NIT Tadepalligudem in Andhra Pradesh.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/foundation-laid-for-nit-at-tadepalligudem-by-smriti-irani/article7561885.ece>

Union Minister for Urban Development and Parliamentary Affairs Muppavarapu Venkaiah Naidu has said 14th Finance Commission is seriously considering the issue of according Special Category Status to Andhra Pradesh and when the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh visits New Delhi and meets the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, clarity will come on the issue.

He participated in the foundation stone laying ceremony for National Institute of Technology (NIT) here on Thursday along with Union Minister for Human Resources Development Smriti Irani, Union IT and Communications Minister Sujana Chowdary and Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister N. Chinna Rajappa, HR Minister Ganta Srinivasa Rao and others.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Venkaiah Naidu said that the HRD Ministry and other academic experts were finalizing modalities for setting up a Central University in Rayalaseema area. He also added that the Center was keen on bringing new Railway Zone to Andhra Pradesh, and it was firm on increasing the speed of the newly launched AC AP Express train.

He announced that as per its election promise the Modi Government was committed to laying foundation for All India Medical Sciences (AIMS) near Mangalagiri shortly.

“We will keep all the promises one after one the other and you have seen that within one year’s time we brought five all India institutions to A.P.”, Mr. Venkaiah Naidu said. However, he suggested to the Chief Minister that the Government should take stringent action against ragging.

Ms. Smirit Irani said that the Union Government would spend Rs.3,030 crores on all the five institution for which she had laid foundations in the last one or two months. She said that her ministry would spend Rs.700 crores for IIT, Tirupati, Rs.300 crores for NIT Tadepalligudem, Rs. 680 crores for IIM, Visakhapatnam, Rs.870 crores for Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Tirupati and Indian Institute of Information Technology Chittoor (IIIT).

She asked the student community of West Godavari to develop technology that will help small and medium farmers. She congratulated Endowments Minister P. Manikyala Rao who strived hard in bringing the NIT to his constituency.

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu thanked the Union Government for giving five national institutions to the State and at the same time reminded about the fiscal status of the state. However, he promised to bring autonagar and underground drainage system to Tadepalligudem.

Ministers P. Manikyala Rao, Peethala Sujatha, Eluru MP G. Gangaraju, Commissioner for Technical Education T. Udayalakshmi and others spoke.

IIT in Tirupati, IIM in Vishaka, NIT in Tadepalligudem

Thursday, 20 August 2015 19:35.

<http://www.sakshipost.com/index.php/news/state/61898-iit-in-tirupati-iim-in-vishaka-nit-in-tadepalligudem-and-many-more.html?psource=Dontmiss>

Hyderabad: The government has allocated IIT at Tirupati, IIM at Visakhapatnam, NIT at Tadepalligudem in West Godavari district and Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER). Classes have started in IIT-Tirupati, IISER and NIT at Tadepalligudem.

Union HRD Minister Smriti Irani on Friday said the government proposes to invest over Rs 3,030 crore in Andhra Pradesh by setting up several Central institutions, including IIT and IIM. The institutions include IIT at Tirupati, IIM at Visakhapatnam, NIT at Tadepalligudem in West Godavari district and Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER). Classes have started in IIT-Tirupati, IISER and NIT at Tadepalligudem and the same would begin in IIM-Visakhapatnam next month, Irani said. She was speaking at an event at Tadepalligudem, about 320km from here, where the foundation stone for NIT was laid in the presence of Union Minister M Venkaiah Naidu and Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu.

The Centre proposes to invest about Rs 700 crore in IIT-Tirupati, Rs 300 crore in NIT, Rs 680 crore in IIM-Visakhapatnam, Rs 870 crore in IISER near Tirupati and over Rs 480 crore in other institutes of higher education. The institutes were being set up in Andhra Pradesh as part of promises made by the Centre at time of the State's bifurcation last year. If you add this up, then in the higher education department alone, Government of India has proposed to invest over Rs 3,030 crore for the development of Andhra Pradesh, she said.

The Chief Minister has a dream to make Andhra Pradesh as an education hub in the world and the Centre's initiatives will help in achieving the goal, she said. My request, especially to the students of NIT Tadepalligudem is that if you can help infuse technology with agriculture and find new ways of benefiting our farmers then I am absolutely sure, that apart from fulfilling IT dream of Andhra Pradesh, you will also help agriculture in Andhra Pradesh soar to new heights, she said.

NITs, IIITs Special Admission Revised Seat Allotment List Announced

<http://indread.com/9310/nits-iiits-special-admission-revised-seat-allotment-list>

India: Central Seat Allocation Board CSAB has announced the NIT, IIITs special round of admissions revised seat allotment list result at their official website, csab.nic.in.

NITs and IIITs along with government funded technical institutes are in a form for admission process. The team of many institutes has conducted special round of admissions and revised seat allotment results will be declared on Thursday, today by 12 PM at the official website of Central Seat Allocation Board, csab.nic.in.

There was chance for around 5,000 students to get admission in various engineering colleges under IIIT and NIT. On August 17, Central Seat Allocation Board has conducted special round of admissions and allotted seats for all the students who participated. But there was an issue that more than 1000 students complained that the allocation of seats is not properly made as per their ranks.

Due to this, the Board thought of revising the admissions process and accordingly, they have announced the results today at 12 PM. Counting all the seats in Central Universities, there are over 5500 total for which around

1.5 lakh members are in competition race. Joint Seat Allocation Authority also took its part in the admission process for which 2300 students joined with new registrations.

After an issue, the Board has requested to re-submit the choices online. And have given three – Slide, Float and Freeze. Slide option is for those who want to stay in the same institute but opt for a better course. Whereas Float is for students who want to change institutes and Freeze is to keep their seat as it is booked.

IIT-M aims high with 15-cr 'hub in the sky'

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/IIT-M-aims-high-with-15-cr-hub-in-the-sky/articleshow/48566886.cms>

CHENNAI: 'Hub in the sky', a social and intellectual meeting ground to ideate growth opportunities and inventions under the IIT Alumni Industry Interaction Centre (AIIC), plans to rope in a high number of IIT alumni to boost research initiatives and start-ups in the country.

The centre, announced at the IIT-Madras Research Park in Taramani on Thursday seeks to leverage skills and brain power of IIT alumni as a collective, and serve as a hub for their interaction with students, faculty and industry professionals.

"Chennai is home to nearly 10,000 IIT alumni, but many of them are not even aware of the existence of such a centre," said IIT AIIC president Suresh Kalpathi. About 450 alumni are registered with AIIC. "The centre hopes to raise the number to at least 1,000 members shortly, and bring in more corporates," he said.

Kalpathi said the 'hub in the sky' involves an investment of about 15 crore. Built on the upper floors of the research park, across 35,000 sq feet, it is expected to become functional sometime next year. With the centre being located close to IIT-M where 85% of the faculty members reside, members say there will be a high faculty involvement in the center.

Prof Ashok Jhunjhunwala, faculty-in-charge, IITM Research Park, said a center for alumni was missing in the original conception of the IIT-M research park. "Alumni are extremely important when it comes to innovations. So we thought of creating a premium and informal space for them. Happenstance interactions can add a lot of value and provide new perspectives," said the professor who expressed the hope of attracting at least 50 alumni per day to the centre. The center is also open to other entrepreneurs or companies who want to contribute to the growth.

IIT-M director Bhaskar Ramamurthi said the centre would be a thriving social setting where new ideas are tested and taken up with vigour. "We want to change the face of the country. People of all walks must want to come here to pave a sustainable path forward."