Newspaper Clips
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Librarians root for digitization

http://www.deccanherald.com/content/493326/librarians-root-digitisation.html

Ruchira Talapatra, New Delhi, Aug 05, 2015, DHNS:

With digitisation in libraries, we will miss librarians like Lt Joe Bookman from Seinfeld (his role was most felt in Season 3, Episode 5).

Lt Bookman was known as 'the library cop' for being authoritative and a proud patron of books. Without many books in the library and readers preferring to read on their pho-nes, kindles and laptops, people no longer have to visit the library and know their librarian.

Now it's a boring saga of hardcore coding and decoding where new age librarians find themselves as engineers of these institutions, creating repositories like Shodhganga for its customers. Shodhganga, Libgen and some more have become e-libraries for many students in the country.

Subhash C Biswas retired as a librarian. He served in almost all well-positioned libraries in the country, including the National Library. He started as a government college librarian. "The highest serving libraries are academic libraries. Due to digitisation, the clientele and the librarian have nearly ended and now the role of the librarian is to go to conferences and seminars across the world, to be adept with latest technology and make a more technology-based, customer friendly environment so that the readers don't even have to visit the library," he tells Metrolife.

According to Biswas, librarianship courses are pursued only to get employment. In India, very few in this field explore opportunities that the profession offers. "When I started as a college librarian's assistant, librarians were considered clerks, unintelligent people and, in schools they came under the 'non-teaching staff'. Their salaries were lower, and most of them were not even book lovers. Some of them did not even do a course on librarianship" Kalpana Dasgupta from the READ India advisory board and former director of Central Secretariat library says, "Yes, librarians have an ideological connect with books. But creating a 'soft-copy' for every book in the world is not possible and so almost all the libraries across the world are 'hybrid' in nature. Therefore, librarians will always have a role to play."

Preservation remains the best argument for digitising libraries. Dasgupta also recounts a time when the Central Secretariat library lost two years of digital data from their library, but she refrains from naming the year this happened for obvious reasons. "The main problem is that technology is changing at a fast pace and with every upgradation, librarians are not able to pull themselves. Though data is recoverable at all times, but sometimes we lack the specialists who can do so," she says.

Dasgupta and Biswas both agree that the IIT Delhi and JNU libraries are some of the best libraries where digitisation has helped tremendously.

The IIT Delhi library now has Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) system in place. "Now students can come in anytime and issue books they require. It works just like an ATM machine and your Metro smart card. So now, the library does not shut down at five anymore," says deputy librarian Dr Nabi Hasan.

Usha Mujoo Munshi, librarian at Indian Institute of Public Administration is one of the pioneers who started

digitisation in the country. She and some other members created the first electronic journal of Indian Statistical Institute in 1999. She believes that conversion of books to digital is not a big issue and that 80 per cent of the libraries here are not even equipped enough to carry out digitisation.

“The word digitisation does not mean only transcribing books from print to digital. It also means developing innovative technology to preserve and distribute the same knowledge to a wide audience for free. Now, there is more reliable, credible information available to readers. Also, servers other than Google can offer ‘valid’ information on a topic,” says Munshi.

“Most books now have an e-version, and even students prefer that. But I think students should refer to handbooks than e-texts. It is easy to skim through an e-text but in books you tend to read more,” says Vikram Singh, a professor at IIT Delhi.

“Libraries no longer issue more than one book from publishers, because one e-book can be easily read by more than one person from their homes. Which may be a bane for publishers but not for the library,” says Hasan.

Business Line ND 05/08/2015 P-5

IIT-M to help firm develop systems for road safety

OUR BUREAU

Chennai, August 4

The Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (IIT-M) and Harita Seating Systems Ltd (HSSL), a manufacturer of seating systems in India, are collaborating to develop products to enhance road safety, according to a press release from IIT-M.

Tech know-how

IIT-M will transfer to HSSL indigenous technological know-how on ubiquitous monitoring of driver performance and behaviour.

Both IIT-M and HSSL plan to leverage their experience in product development and manufacturing to make commercially-viable products that help enhance safety for road users.

According to a 2014 report by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), of the 4.5 lakh accidental deaths reported in the country, around 1.5 lakh were attributed to road accidents. It has also been found that over 40 per cent of these deaths were caused by human error or driver fatigue.

AG Giridharan, President, HSSL, said the technical solutions provided by IIT-M will not only enhance driver comfort and safety, but also help fleet owners manage their resources better.

Deccan Herald ND
05/08/2015 P-5

IIT Roorkee to readmit expelled students

DEHRADUN, PTI: IIT Roorkee has decided to grant conditional readmission to all 71 students who were expelled by the premier institute for underperformance last month.

The decision to grant readmission to the expelled students with some stringent preconditions was taken on Monday night by the institute's senate, the Dean of Students Welfare D K Nauriyal said.

"Taking a lenient view, the senate after considering all aspects of the situation especially the future of the students took the decision," the Dean said.

The conditions for readmission put forward by the Senate include starting afresh from the first semester, scoring at least five Cumulative Grade Points Average (CGPA) or more in both first and second semester exams, not failing in any of the subjects and 75 per cent attendance in all subjects, Nauriyal added.

The relief comes to students nearly a month after their expulsion from the institute during which some of them had approached the Uttarakhand High Court for a reprieve but to no avail.

Initially, 73 students were expelled by the institute for scoring less than five CGPA in their first and second semester B Tech exams, making it the first IIT in the country to resort to expulsions on such a wide scale.

However, the two of them were taken back after some discrepancies were detected in their expulsion, bringing down the number of expelled students to 71, Nauriyal said.

Indian Express ND 05/08/2015 P-1

FAILING IIT - PART I

Good JEE rank, failing first-year: IIT struggles to find out why

UMA VISHNU
ROORKEE, KANPUR,
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 4

Students protest the expulsion of 72 students by IIT-Roorkee. They were later given a second chance.
Express

THE 72 FIRST-YEAR students of the Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee, (IIT-R) who were expelled last month — the largest single batch to have faced such action — for failing to get the minimum passing grade are back on campus, having got a "second chance". They are now on probation and will have to clear all their first-year papers and get a Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of over 5.0 (on a scale of 10 — at least 55%), failing which they will be expelled next year. Not many on campus, however, are placing any bets on the outcome.

An investigation by *The Indian Express* and several interviews with key players — professors, students and administrators at IITs — shows most of the students who were expelled were from reserved categories (SC, ST and OBCs) and scored average to high ranks in their respective categories in the 2014 IIT-JEE (Advanced), the tough entrance examination. Once they began their IIT education, however, many of them were hobbled by a range of factors: a lack of fluency in English, both spoken and written, that eroded confidence and showed up in poor communication skills; and a more general difficulty "adjusting" to the campus ecosystem.

This has key lessons, professors said, as IITs rapidly expand to meet the flood of students and struggle to build campuses and attract faculty.

A scrutiny of official records of the first-year students — the batch had 1002 students in all — who failed at IIT Roorkee shows:

- 90 per cent of them were from reserved categories (SC, ST and OBCs).
- As many as 49 of them are from much-sought after departments such as Computer Science (3), Electronics (10), Electrical (12), Chemical (7), Mechanical (3), with the maximum, 14, from Civil Engineering. Which means, these are students who did reasonably well in their categories (General, SC, ST, OBCs) to get into these departments.
- For example, the JEE ranks

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FROM THE FRONT PAGE

Good JEE rank, failing first-yr

of some of the students who failed — available with *The Indian Express* — show that among the SC students who failed is one who got an all-India rank in the top 50 (among 2,029 SC candidates who got into an IIT in 2014) and another who scored in the top 100 in the ST category (among 856 ST candidates who got into an IIT).

- Most General category students on the list of 72 who failed had ranks between 3,500 and above 7,000, barring one who had a rank close to 1,500. That year, the last general candidate to get an IIT seat was ranked 9,290. Ranks have been approximated to protect the identity of students.
- All 72 fared poorly across the curricular board — the highest any of them got in any subject was a C. "It shows there was no outlier among those expelled. They had scored poorly in every course," said IIT-R director Pradipto Banerji.

The IIT said the decision to suspend the students wasn't an easy one. "Every year, we have a few students who walk out of the institute after spending four to six years but without a degree in hand. We have had parents telling us that if you thought our child wasn't doing well, why didn't you tell him then? Why waste six years of his life," said Vinod Kumar, deputy director of IIT-R., Though most of the affected students said the expulsions came as a shock, Kumar said the students were warned at every step, they were told they were slipping — after every mid- and end-semester exam.

The numbers may be staggering this year but this isn't the first time IIT Roorkee has expelled students. In 2014, 12 first-year students were expelled for not scoring the minimum credits. But after the IIT realised there had been a "notification error", the institute took back eight of them. But these eight students have been expelled this year, after their second year: six of them had "backs" (have failed) in 10 subjects, one had a "back" in two subjects and one had cleared all subjects but with a CGPA of less than 5.

"Like I keep telling my students, it's tough to get into IIT but tougher to leave without a degree," said Inderdeep Singh, who teaches mechanical engineering at IIT-R. "Even if they put in 70 per cent of the effort they put to clear the IIT-JEE, they can sail through," he said.

So are these students who are failing not cut out for science or engineering? Not quite, said Promod Agarwal, Dean of Academics at Roorkee. A CGPA of less than 5, most professors said, was more a reflection of the effort the student had put in, less of his aptitude. "If, say, a student is strong in physics, but not in English, he can easily score a higher grade in the subject he is good at and pull his CGPA above 5. CGPA less than 5 is just poor application," said Agarwal.

In the first semester, students have seven papers, of which at least four — English, Ethics and Self Awareness, Maths, Environmental Studies — are typically common to all departments. The others, department-specific subjects such as Introduction to Mechanical Engineering, are "elementary, basic" introductions to their departments. "These don't require prior knowledge of the subject. It's difficult to do badly in these subjects," said Singh.

What went wrong then? Banerji said he was "aware of the fact that the students have come in through a very competitive exam. So now, after this second chance they have got, we can put a finger on the problem. Did these children score poorly because they took first-year too lightly or are they simply not cut out for it?"

That's a tough one to answer, admit many professors at Roorkee who said "first-year students tend to lose focus", especially after going through the crushing grind of Class XII and coaching institutes. Besides, there is the pressure of achievement and expectation. "Once the students enter the campus, for us, they are all the same — irrespective of their background or whether you are from the reserved quota or not. The bar has been set (at CGPA 5 and minimum credits of 22) and that can't be lowered," said IIT-R Registrar Prashant Garg.

"*Haan, life ko thoda simply liya*," (Yes, I did take it a bit easy) said one of the failed students. He is from Bhagalpur in Bihar, the son of a policeman father and a homemaker mother, who, he said, had worried themselves to death over his expulsion. After a "96 per cent in science subjects" in his Class X from Bihar school Board, he said he scored 70 per cent in his Class XII. And then, dropped a year to study in Kota and scored a rank of 1,206 in the OBC category (3,490 OBC students got in). After one year at IIT, he "scored a CGPA of 4.92", agonisingly close to the 5-mark. "But I cracked the IIT entrance. *Iska matlab mere mein talent hai.* (This shows I have talent). Shouldn't the institute have given students like us another chance?"

By "students like us", he meant those from non-English medium schools, many of them from reserved categories. "English was my biggest weakness," he said. "In my geomatics practicals, for example, I scored 23/25, but scored 8/100 in my written exam simply because I couldn't express myself in English."

The IIT said it had its "systems" to deal with these problems — language proficiency classes at the time of orientation and special mentoring programmes (started three months ago). Besides, professors said, since September last year, students who need help are assigned to seniors in the hope that they will open up better to fellow-students, ask them questions they probably can't ask in a class of 100 or even in the smaller tutorials.

But unlike in many of the older IITs, these hand-holding exercises are relatively new in IIT Roorkee. Students say these "systems" usually don't work on the ground — seniors, for instance, have little time for them since they have their own exacting schedule to juggle.

(Tomorrow: After the entrance, the exam)

Hari Bhumi ND 05.08.2015 P-4

देश में उच्च शिक्षा बदहाल क्यों

हालात

डॉ. विशेष गुप्ता

अभी हाल ही में सेंटर ऑफ वर्ल्ड यूनिवर्सिटी रेपुटेशन रैंकिंग्स से जुड़ी-2015 की सूची जारी हुई है। इसमें दुनिया की टॉप दस यूनिवर्सिटी में अमेरिका और ब्रिटिश की ही यूनिवर्सिटीज हैं। अफसोस की बात है कि भारत की कोई भी यूनिवर्सिटी दुनिया की शीर्ष 300 में भी शामिल नहीं हैं। दरअसल, यह संस्था शिक्षा का स्तर, शोध की गुणवत्ता, रोजगार के अवसरों की उपलब्धता और उसमें छात्रों का प्लेसमेंट, पेटेंट के लिए आवेदन तथा संस्था की अंतरराष्ट्रीय शाख जैसे महत्वपूर्ण बिंदुओं पर विश्व की उच्च शिक्षण संस्थाओं की रैंक तय करती है। कहने की जरूरत नहीं कि दुनिया के दस हजार शीर्ष विश्वविद्यालयों में अमेरिका की हार्वर्ड यूनिवर्सिटी लगातार तीसरे साल भी पहले स्थान पर ही है। चीन, जापान, फ्रांस, फिनलैंड, न्यूजीलैंड, दक्षिण अफ्रीका, सिंगापुर, दक्षिण कोरिया, थाइलैंड, इजराइल व ताइवान जैसे छोटे देश उच्च शिक्षा के इस अंतरराष्ट्रीय बैंचमार्क में भारत से काफी आगे निकल गए, परंतु हमारे संस्थानों की अंतरराष्ट्रीय रैंकिंग लगातार नीचे गिर रही है।

हमारे देश में उच्च शिक्षा का विकास समान आधार पर नहीं हुआ है। टॉप पर आईआईटी, आईआईएम, एम्स व केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालय जैसी लगभग दो सौ संस्थाएं हैं जिनमें बमुश्किल एक लाख छात्र प्रवेश पाते हैं। दूसरी ओर निचली पायदान पर तीन सौ राज्य विश्वविद्यालय और लगभग बीस हजार से अधिक कॉलेज हैं जिनमें डेढ़ करोड़ के लगभग छात्र पढ़ते हैं। इसके मध्य में डीम्ड विश्वविद्यालय हैं जिनमें कुछेक को छोड़कर शेष को औसत अथवा निम्न स्तरीय श्रेणीक्रम में रखा जा सकता है। अंत में स्ववित्त पोषित संस्थाएं हैं जिन्होंने उच्च शिक्षा की गुणवत्ता की परवाह किए बिना स्वयं को एक बड़े बाजार के रूप में विकसित कर लिया है। इसी कारण राष्ट्रीय उच्च शिक्षा मूल्यांकन परिषद ने भी अपनी सर्वेक्षण रिपोर्ट में साफ किया है कि भारत में 68 फीसदी विश्वविद्यालयों और 90 फीसदी कॉलेजों में उच्च शिक्षा की गुणवत्ता या तो मध्यम दर्जे की है या दोषपूर्ण है। इन संस्थाओं के 75 फीसदी डिग्रीधारी छात्र बेरोजगार हैं। देश के 60 फीसदी विश्वविद्यालयों और 80 फीसदी कॉलेजों से निकले छात्रों के पास न तो तकनीकी कौशल है और न ही भाषा दक्षता। यही कारण है कि ऐसे छात्र उचित रोजगार के लायक नहीं हैं।

उच्च शिक्षण संस्थाओं की गुणवत्ता वहां संस्था में श्रेष्ठ शिक्षकों की नियुक्ति, उनका पठन-पाठन, शोध कार्य व शिक्षक-छात्र के उचित अनुपात पर निर्भर करती है। भारत सरकार के मानव संसाधन मंत्रालय ने जो ताजा आंकड़े उपलब्ध कराए हैं उनसे ज्ञात होता है कि देश की उच्च शिक्षा से जुड़े आईआईटी, आईआईएम, एनआईआईटी जैसे प्रतिष्ठित संस्थान औसतन 35 फीसदी शिक्षकों की कमी से जूझ रहे हैं। इस कमी के मामले में आईआईटी सबसे अव्वल है जहां 39 फीसदी शिक्षकों के पद रिक्त हैं। वहीं दूसरी ओर केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालय में 38 फीसदी शिक्षकों के पद रिक्त पड़े हैं। इस मामले में राज्य विश्वविद्यालयों की तो हालत और भी खराब है। यहां यह भी आश्चर्य है कि नए आईआईटी संस्थान 22 फीसदी तथा पुराने आईआईटी संस्थान 41 फीसदी शिक्षकों की कमी से जूझ रहे हैं। आईआईएम की हालत भी सुखद नहीं कही जा सकती। उच्च शैक्षणिक संस्थानों में शिक्षक-छात्र अनुपात यूजीसी के मानकों के अनुसार स्नातकोत्तर छात्रों के लिए 12 छात्रों पर एक शिक्षक तथा स्नातक छात्रों के लिए 15 छात्रों पर एक शिक्षक निर्धारित है, परंतु आंकड़े बताते हैं कि वर्तमान में यह अनुपात 23 छात्रों पर मात्र एक ही शिक्षक है।

पिछले दिनों संसद की स्थाई समिति ने भी ऐसे समय में उच्च शिक्षा पर यह प्रश्नचिह्न लगाया है जब दुनिया के शीर्ष 300 विश्वविद्यालयों की सूची में भारत का कहीं नाम नहीं है। गौरतलब है कि दुनिया में कैम्ब्रिज, ऑक्सफोर्ड व हार्वर्ड जैसे बड़े उच्च शिक्षण संस्थान अपने शिक्षण व शोध की गुणवत्ता के कारण ही विश्व में अपना स्थान बनाए हुए हैं। भारत की स्थिति यह है कि यह विकसित देशों से अभी बहुत पीछे है। आज दुनिया के विकसित देश अपनी उच्च शिक्षा पर कुल बजट का नौ से दस फीसदी तक खर्च कर रहे हैं, परंतु भारत में राष्ट्रीय आय का मात्र एक फीसदी से भी कम ही उच्च शिक्षा पर खर्च किया जा रहा है। 1964 में शिक्षा में सुधारों के लिए बने कोठारी कमीशन ने शिक्षा पर 6 प्रतिशत खर्च करने का सुझाव दिया था। भारतीय ज्ञान आयोग ने भी अपने सुझाव में उच्च शिक्षा पर राष्ट्रीय आय का 15 फीसदी खर्च करने की बात कही थी, परंतु देश की आजादी के 67 सालों बाद भी हम उच्च शिक्षा पर खर्च को मात्र एक फीसदी तक भी पहुंचा नहीं पाए हैं। यह अनुमान स्वतः लगाया जा सकता है कि उच्च शिक्षा के इतने सीमित बजट में कैसे शिक्षण और शोध की गुणवत्ता को बढ़ाया जा सकता है।

पिछले ही दिनों एनआर नारायणमूर्ति ने भी अपनी टिप्पणी में कहा था कि भारत में पिछले 60 सालों में ऐसी कोई खोज नहीं हुई जिसकी वैश्विक स्तर पर गहरी पहचान हो। नारायणमूर्ति का यह कथन इसलिए वाजिब लगता है क्योंकि देश की आजादी के बाद देश में उच्चस्तरीय तकनीकी संस्थानों की स्थापना के समय जो स्वप्न देखा गया था वह तकरीबन अभी अधूरा सा ही है। उच्च शिक्षा केवल पठन-पाठन और शिक्षण का ही माध्यम नहीं है, बल्कि इसका सीधा संबंध शोध की दिशा व उसकी गुणवत्ता से है। सही बात यह है कि पिछले एक दो दशकों में देश में जो शिक्षा का व्यवसायीकरण हुआ है उसने देश के तमाम उद्योगपतियों को रातों-रात शिक्षाविदों में रूपांतरित कर दिया। परिणामतः देश की उच्च शिक्षा का काफी बड़ा हिस्सा पूंजीगत उद्योग में बदलता चला गया और मुनाफा इस कारोबार का बड़ा हिस्सा बनकर उभरा। देश के कुछेक उच्च शैक्षिणक संस्थानों को छोड़ दें तो बाकी उच्च शैक्षणिक संस्थानों की छवि लगातार धूमिल ही हो रही है। वहां पढ़ाई-लिखाई की बात तो दूर ये संस्थान राजनीति के बहुत बड़े अड्डे बन गए हैं।

इन्हीं वजहों से यूजीसी की उपादेयता पर भी प्रश्न चिह्न लगने शुरू हो गए हैं। निश्चित ही देश की उच्च शिक्षा के मूल्यांकन का यह उचित समय है। सही मायनों में हमें आज राष्ट्रीय आवश्यकताओं के अनुरूप उच्च शिक्षा के ढांचे को वैश्विक रूप प्रदान करने की महती आवश्यकता है। साथ ही अपनी संस्थाओं को बेहतर बनाने के लिए उन्हें ढांचागत, शोध श्रेष्ठता, शिक्षक-छात्र अनुपात व मानकों के अनुरूप शिक्षकों की अविलम्ब नियुक्ति व शोध जैसे मुद्दों पर गम्भीरता व त्वरित गति से काम करके अपनी उच्च शिक्षा की ग्लोबल रैंकिंग में उच्च मानक पाया जा सकता है।

InnoFest to be held at IISc on Aug 22

Bengaluru, Aug 4:

http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/features/smartbuy/tech-news/innofest-to-be-held-at-iisc-on-aug-22/article7499451.ece

iSPIRT has announced the launch of InnoFest, an event focused on kickstarting the next wave of innovation in the country.

It will be held at the Indian Institute of Science on August 22 and will see participation from Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister for Communications and Information Technology, Government of India; Arvind Panagariya, Chairman, NITI Aayog; Jayant Sinha, Minister of State for Finance, Government of India; Nandan Nilekani, former Chairman of Infosys and former Chairman of UIDAI, and Mohandas Pai, Chairman of the Board, Manipal Global Education.

"If we are going to increase productivity, employment and opportunity for everyone in this country then we need a grassroot movement that will bring the best ideas to the table," said Pai.

According to Sharad Sharma, Co-Founder of iSPIRT and Co-Convenor of InnoFest, “If companies can innovate and transform their functioning and performance radically, why can’t countries."

Future of education is e-learning: IIT Prof.

http://www.thestatesman.com/news/odisha/future-of-education-is-e-learning-iit-prof/80275.html

The Massive Online Open Courses (MOOC) created by 53 autonomous institutes of the country will prove to be the game changer for the entire educational scenario, observed Deepak B Pathak of IIT, Mumbai, a pioneer in the field of e-learning activities.

Inaugurating the A N Khosla Centre for Technology Enabled Learning at the National Institute of Technology of Rourkela here on Tuesday, Pathak emphasized on the expanding reach of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). He felt that this would enable the faculties to develop better pedagogical tools for imparting education.

The Principal Investigator of the Teach 10000 Teacher (T10KT) of National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology, Government of India, Pathak said, “faculties must improve quality of teaching through technical support system”.

Besides, he felt, “there is an urgent need for the teachers to reach the underprivileged of the society to enhance their knowledge base and bring them to a level where they can compete with others”.

“It is a request to all the faculties to adopt technology in teaching and especially the greater advantages of ICT”. He was of the opinion that teaching should not remain confined to class room teachings only it should move beyond he campuses. Only then will, “teaching reach millions at one point in time enabling many to learn”.

Director NIT Rourkela, Sunil K Sadangi said the future of education is e-learning and no one can stop this, so the faculties, mostly the younger lot, should learn the intricacies of it”.

Several educationists, directors of institutes and technical varsities participated in the workshop that followed the inaugural function. Sarat Kumar Patra of NIT Rourkela made a presentation on use of different pedagogical elements in the teaching learning process.

The convener of the workshop Suchismita Chinara, of Computer Science Engineering Dept, who will incidentally lead the Centre conducted hands on practice on the course management for the faculty members of NIT Rourkela.