

Newspaper Clips

August 6, 2015

Hindustan Times ND 6/08/2015

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IIT-Delhi gifts wheelchairs to disabled

Heena Kausar

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NEW DELHI: The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi has started providing free battery operated wheelchairs to physically challenged students enrolled in various courses at the institute.

The students are allowed to keep the wheelchair till the end of their academic course after

which they need to return the wheelchair to the institute.

“Students who cannot afford a wheelchair are provided these free of cost by the institute. Even students who, for example meet with an accident and need a wheelchair during their recovery period, are also provided with this aid. These wheelchairs costs around ₹60-70 thousand in the open market, but we give it to the students

for free” said S K Gupta, dean, students’ affairs.

Gupta said that students who needed the wheelchair had to send an application after which the student are given a wheelchair within a week.

Sachidanand, a student of MTech at the institute, said his parents could not afford to buy a wheelchair due to which he was forced to spend many years walking on his hands

and knees.

“When I was one year old, I suffered from polio. For 18 years of my life I used to walk on my hands and knee. My father is a farmer and we did not have enough money to buy a wheelchair. When I joined IIT-Delhi I got to know about the facility and applied for a wheelchair. It was given to me free of cost,” said the 24-year old student.

Rajasthan Patrika ND 6/08/2015

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चिंताजनक ♦ मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्री ने लोकसभा में दी जानकारी

तीन साल में 4400 छात्रों ने छोड़ा आईआईटी, एनआईटी

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patrika.com/india

पिछले तीन वर्ष में 4400 से अधिक छात्र-छात्राएं देश के टॉप इंजीनियरिंग संस्थानों आईआईटी और आईआईएम को अलविदा कह चुके हैं। पढ़ाई बीच में छोड़ने के कारणों में ‘पढ़ाई का तनाव’ भी शामिल है। केंद्रीय मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्री स्मृति ईरानी ने बुधवार को एक सवाल के जवाब में लोकसभा में यह जानकारी दी। ईरानी ने बताया कि

वर्ष 2012-13 से 2014-15 तक आईआईटी के 2060 छात्रों ने बीच में पढ़ाई छोड़ दी, जबकि इसी दौरान एनआईटी के 2352 छात्र-छात्राओं ने संस्थान को अलविदा कह दिया। ईरानी के मुताबिक, संस्थान छोड़ने के कारणों में दूसरे कॉलेज में एडमिशन, स्वास्थ्य जैसे निजी कारण, पीजी कोर्स के दौरान बीच में ही नौकरी लग जाना और पढ़ाई का तनाव शामिल है। ईरानी ने कहा, सरकार छात्रों में पढ़ाई के तनाव को

आईआईटी को कब कितनों ने छोड़ा

वर्ष	ड्रॉपआउट
2014-15	757
2013-14	697
2012-13	606

लेकर गंभीर है। आईआईटी-एनआईटी में तनाव से गुजर रहे छात्रों

एनआईटी को कब कितनों ने छोड़ा

वर्ष	ड्रॉपआउट
2014-15	717
2013-14	785
2012-13	850

की काउंसलिंग की जाती है। उल्लेखनीय है कि देश में 16

आईआईटी और 30 एनआईटी हैं। कहां सबसे ज्यादा ड्रॉपआउट

आईआईटी रुड़की 228

आईआईटी खड़गपुर 209

आईआईटी दिल्ली 169

(आईआईटी मंडी, आईआईटी जोधपुर, आईआईटी कानपुर, आईआईटी मद्रास एवं रोपड़ में वर्ष 2014-15 के दौरान किसी भी स्टूडेंट ने संस्थान नहीं छोड़ा।)

Times of India ND 6/08/2015P-12

Over 2,000 students dropped out of IITs in last three years

At 757, Number Of Dropouts Highest Last Yr

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: In the last three years (2012-15), 2,060 students have dropped out of 16 IITs. In the same period, 2,352 students dropped out of 30 NITs.

Dropout in IITs has been the highest (757) in 2014-15. Among IITs, the one in Roorkee faced 228 dropouts, the maximum, followed by 209 in IIT Kharagpur, 169 in IIT Delhi and 72 in IIT Bombay. Dropout in IIT Roorkee is on the rise. It was 159 in 2012-13 and 188 in 2013-14. Among the older IITs, there has been no dropout from IIT Kanpur since 2012 and only eight in from IIT Madras in 2013-14.

Giving this information to Lok Sabha on Wednesday, HRD minister Smriti Irani said reasons for dropping out "may be attributed to shifting to other colleges, personal reasons, medical reasons, getting jobs during post-graduate courses, inability to cope with academic stress etc".

Among NITs, the ones in Rourkela, Kurukshetra, Jaipur and Calicut have witnessed maximum dropouts.

Irani told the Parliament that both IITs and NITs have initiated several actions to minimize dropouts. In case of IITs, there is an adviser who monitors the academic progress and advises students about their academic per-

OPTING OUT

NAME OF INSTITUTE	NO. OF DROPOUTS DURING 2012-2015		
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
IIT Bhubaneswar	4	15	16
IIT Bombay	74	66	72
IIT Mandi	NII	NII	NII
IIT Delhi	130	249	169
IIT Indore	4	NII	3
IIT Kharagpur	197	129	209
IIT Hyderabad	32	15	39
IIT Jodhpur	NII	NII	NII
IIT Kanpur	NII	NII	NII
IIT Madras	NII	8	NII
IIT Gandhinagar	1	4	1
IIT Patna	1	12	10
IIT Roorkee	159	188	228
IIT Ropar	1	NII	NII
IIT-BHU, Varanasi	3	2	2
IIT Guwahati	NII	9	8
Total	606	697	757

U'khand HC supported IITs' right to set academic standards: Irani tells LS

While IIT Roorkee has had to re-admit students from reserved categories despite their failing to maintain required grades, the Uttarakhand HC had supported the IITs' right to set academic standards, HRD minister Smriti Irani told Lok Sabha on Wednesday. Irani told the House in response to a question that IITs have extensive support systems to help students overcome barriers such as language and their progress was tracked on a monthly basis. TNN

formance. Progress of such students is continuously monitored through class tests, laboratory tests, assignments, mid-term, end-term and supplementary examinations. She said additional classes are arranged for academically weaker students, at times during summer vacations. IITs have started student mentorship programme, peer assign-

ment learning, guided progress scheme etc. To arrest dropping out of students, NITs have the provision for additional coaching for weak students, special coaching for SC/ST students, two mid-term examinations per academic year, quarter classes and special examinations, provision of tutor guardian and motivational lectures.

HRD: Refund those who haven't joined

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New Delhi: HRD ministry has told Joint Seat Allocation Authority (JoSAA) that carried out joint counselling for admission to IITs/NITs/ISM and IIITs to return bulk of non-refundable acceptance fee/ tuition fee to students who haven't joined courses and also told them to take necessary steps to fill up 3,200 vacant seats expeditiously.

After a meeting on Tuesday attended by top officials and minister Smriti Irani, HRD ministry on Wednesday told JoSAA the practice of "refund of acceptance fee in cases of candidates who have not joined the courses or have withdrawn after joining the course is found to be not in accordance with various judicial pronouncements on the subject. Ministry said in order to "ensure that a uniform policy is adopted by all the higher educational institutions" JoSAA should follow the new procedure.

Directive to JoSAA says that if a student withdrew before the course starts, the fee collected from the student, after a deduction of the processing fee of not over Rs 1,000 may be refunded and returned by the institution to the student who has withdrawn.

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

Hindu ND 6/08/2015 P-1

IITs, NITs to refund fee if student gives up seat

NEW DELHI: In a major relief to students, IITs and NITs will refund the acceptance fee after deducting minimal processing charges in case a student gives up his allotted seat to take admission in any other institute. As per the existing rule, aspirants have to pay a non-refundable seat acceptance fee of Rs 45,000 in general category and Rs 20,000 in SC/ST categories during counselling.

HRD Ministry officials said a candidate would now get re-

fund after deduction of processing charges if the seat is surrendered before commencement of academic session.

If the candidate gives up the seat after the commencement of classes, there will be a proportionate deduction and refund of fee, the officials said, adding that refund is unlikely to be made if a seat remains vacant. -- PTI

FAILING IIT - PART II

IIT says we are background-blind, students say look at us

Some say students from reserved categories, Hindi-medium schools are at a disadvantage

UMA VISHNU
ROORKEE, NEW DELHI,
AUGUST 5

SITTING OUTSIDE a shack near Jawahar Bhawan, one of the boys' hostels at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee, a group of civil engineering students discuss what they call the "unfairness" of the

coursework and the grading system, how it's tilted against "students like us from reserved categories and from Hindi-medium schools".

Earlier this month, IIT-Roorkee had expelled 72 students for not meeting the required minimum passing grades: a Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of at least 5 and minimum credits of 22 (these students have since been

PAGE ONE
ANCHOR

taken back on probation, having got a second chance). The students outside Jawahar Bhawan were not on the list of 72 but they say they could well have been — they scraped past the CGPA limit to make it to their

second year.

An investigation by *The Indian Express* shows that 90 per cent of the IIT-Roorkee students who were expelled were from reserved categories (SC, ST and OBC) and scored average to high ranks in their respective categories in the 2014 IIT-JEE (Advanced). Once on campus, however, several factors pull them back, prominent among them a lack of fluency in English.

"English is our biggest problem," says a 17-year-old second-year civil engineering student from Rajasthan. Fourteen from his department were expelled. "We are from Hindi-medium schools, went to coaching institutes in places like Kota, where we chose Hindi as the medium of instruction, and took our JEE in Hindi. Then we come to the campus and realise it's all high-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



At IIT-Roorkee, where 72 were expelled earlier. Students say they need a leg-up once they get in as well. Tashi Tobgyal

One bar, says IIT; many levels, say students

level English — the books are all by American authors and the professors only speak English. We see students around us talking, asking questions in English and we can do none of that. *Usi se confidence khatam. Tabhi se hum peechhe rah jate hain* (That kills our confidence and we start slipping)," says the student who scored a CGPA of just above 5.

The IIT says it has its own systems to deal with these problems — language proficiency classes at the time of orientation and special mentoring programmes (started three months ago). "We have been holding tutorial classes over the weekend where students who need help are taught by senior students. So if there are issues of authority and students lack the confidence to talk to professors, they won't have that trouble with fellow-students," said Dean of Students Welfare D K Nauriyal.

But unlike many of the older IITs, these hand-holding exercises are relatively new in IIT-Roorkee. Besides, students say these "systems" usually don't work on the ground. "It's only in March that we were introduced to the mentors. By then, we just had a month to go for the exams. Besides, seniors have little time for us. They have their own classes to attend. How can they expel students without giving their own system enough time?"

"We do what we can but ultimately, there's little we can do if the student doesn't come to us," says Nauriyal. "Besides, once the students enter the campus, for us, they are all the same — irrespective of their backgrounds 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," says IIT-Roorkee Registrar Prashant Garg.

There are separate rank lists in the IIT-JEE (Advanced), among them a common merit list, an SC list, an ST list and an OBC list. To get into the common merit list in the 2014 version of the JEE, candidates

from these categories had to secure a minimum of 35 per cent of the aggregate and 10 per cent in each paper. The last SC candidate in the common merit list was 432. Which means, 1,597 of the 2,029 SC candidates who got into one of the IITs didn't make it to the common merit list or scored less than 35 per cent. Similarly, the last ST candidate to make it to the common merit list was 90 (among 856 who made it to one of the IITs). Again, 760 of them didn't make it to the common merit list or scored less than 35 per cent.

That's part of the problem, say some students and professors. Students who get a leg-up at the level of the entrance examination — thanks to affirmative action and no-English test — find no safety net once they enter the campus.

"Language will always be a problem. But then, someone from, say, Andhra will be disenfranchised if I speak in Hindi so that argument will never be settled," says an IIT-Kanpur professor who was part of the top administrative team at the institute. But, he says, there is a "deeper malaise" that schools haven't fixed.

"What I've realised over the years is that a student who is unable to communicate with me in English is often unable to communicate with me in Hindi. If he is talking to me in Hindi and every third word of his is a 'matlab', there is a problem. This just means schools are not telling students to buckle up. How is it that children score 90-95 per cent in English but can't construct a line in the language? The books they learn in Class XII, you would think it's Class VI — no novels, poetry, plays... Where are children going to pick these skills?"

Talking of the limits of affirmative action, the IIT-Kanpur professor says, "Are there two levels or more when you walk out of IIT? No. There's no B Tech (Gen) and B Tech (SC) and so on. Reservation only gives you a chance to learn but then, you must learn. A civil engineer must learn to

make structures, at least to a basic level. Ultimately, the bridge he is building doesn't understand that it is being built by someone who doesn't meet those standards. So ultimately, once you come to IIT, if you are not willing to help yourself, nobody can."

That may be harsh but it's not far from reality. Ashish Kumar ticks all the boxes — Hindi-medium, reserved category, small town (from Jhunjhunu in Rajasthan). But with a CGPA of 7.38 by the end of his second semester, this civil engineering student is among the best performers in his class. "I understood nothing in class during my first semester. But then, I would write down all the tough words, go back to hostel and look up a dictionary. YouTube was a big help — I would watch *Game of Thrones* every day to understand how they spoke English. I would also watch Hindi lectures of professors from other IITs, compare it with my notes and then, *dhire-dhire*, things would start making sense. It's not that tough if you work hard," he says, sitting on a couch in the students' club.

He is still very diffident, happy to let his voice drown in the clamour around him as students play snooker or table tennis, or simply sit in groups and chat. "*Likh lijiye, English mein 92 mila tha Rajasthan Board se* (I got 92 per cent in English in the Rajasthan board exam)," he says, making an unsure jab at the notebook. "But I wish I had studied in an English-medium school. It would have been so much easier for me here."

"What this incident has done is that we have started looking at our own systems and are doing a full-scale review of what we need to do. We are aware that these students came in through a very competitive exam. So we will do what we can to help them cope," says Pradipto Banerji, director of IIT-Roorkee.

(Tomorrow: Looking for the safety net on campus)

मनचाही आईआईटी में लें दाखिला

कविता जोशी . नई दिल्ली

देश के शीर्षस्थ तकनीकी शिक्षण संस्थानों में शुमार किए जाने वाले भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान (आईआईटी), राष्ट्रीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान (एनआईटी) और केंद्रीय अनुदान राशि द्वारा वित्तपोषित होने वाले संस्थानों में अब छात्रों को अपने मनपसंद संस्थान में दाखिला लेने में आसानी होगी।

केंद्रीय मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय ने मंगलवार की रात को इस बाबत एक महत्वपूर्ण निर्णय किया है, जिसमें प्रवेश परीक्षा पास करने के बाद अपने मनचाहे संस्थान में दाखिला लेने पर छात्र को पहले जमा कराई गई एक्सेप्टेंस मनी वापस कर दी जाएगी और उस सीट को फिर से

भरा जाएगा। पहले आईआईटी एंट्रेंस प्रवेश परीक्षा पास करने के बाद छात्र एक्सेप्टेंस मनी के रूप में 45 हजार रुपए जमा कराता था लेकिन बाद में वो अपना निर्णय बदलकर उस आईआईटी के बजाय कहीं और दाखिला ले लेता था। ऐसी स्थिति में संस्थान द्वारा उसकी फीस वापस यानि रिफंड नहीं की जाती थी और उसके द्वारा ब्लॉक की हुई सीट को भी फिर से भरा नहीं जाता था और वो खाली रह जाती थी।

रात तक जारी होगा सर्कुलर
एचआरडी मंत्रालय के उच्चपदस्थ सूत्रों ने हरिभूमि को बताया कि इस निर्णय के बाद ऐसे तमाम छात्रों को खुशी और राहत पहुंचेगी जो पहले अपनी पसंदीदा आईआईटी में दाखिला तो ले लेते थे लेकिन उन्हें

निजी संस्थानों में जाने वाले छात्रों को फायदा

अब अगर इन संस्थानों में प्रवेश परीक्षा पास करने और एक्सेप्टेंस मनी जमा कराने के बाद अगर कोई छात्र दाखिले के लिए निजी शिक्षण संस्थानों का रुख करेगा तो भी उसे एक्सेप्टेंस मनी का 45 हजार रुपए वापस किया जाएगा।

बदल गया पुराना नियम

यूपीए सरकार के दौरान किसी छात्र द्वारा आईआईटी, एनआईटी में दाखिला लेने के लिए पैसा जमा कराने के बाद उसमें दाखिला न लेकर किसी दूसरे संस्थान का रुख किए जाने पर उसकी एक्सेप्टेंस राशि (45 हजार) वापस नहीं की जाती थी।

Hindu ND 6/08/2015 P-9

IIT-Tirupati commences functioning

Staff Reporter

TIRUPATI: It was a momentous occasion on Wednesday for the students as the 19th Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) began its functioning in the temple city of Tirupati. Students and parents took part in the orientation day at the transit campus housed at Krishna Theja Educational Institutions in Chadalawada Nagar on the city outskirts. The event was marked by a series of speeches by Ministers and IIT professors.

Union Minister for Human Resource Development Smriti Irani addressed the first batch of students through videoconferencing from New Delhi. In her brief address, Ms. Irani urged the students to dwell upon the current issues in the country, especially the problems surfacing in its march towards development.

State HRD Minister Ganta Srinivasa Rao assured that a state-of-the-art campus of IIT-Tirupati would soon come up in the location earmarked for its construction at Merlapaka village of Yerpedu mandal.

IIT convocation on Bihta campus today

Hindustan Times (Patna)

The Indian Institute of Technology, Patna (IIT-P) would hold its 3rd convocation ceremony and 7th foundation day function in its permanent campus at Bihta on Thursday.

This is the first convocation ceremony which the institute would be holding on its new campus. Students of B Tech, M Tech and PhD courses would be awarded certificates at the ceremony. In all 23 medals and awards would also be handed over to the deserving candidates. These awards include gold and silver medals given to best students of different departments and three awards to distinguished academicians for their contribution to the field of engineering.

President of Boeing India, Pratyush Kumar, would be the chief guest at the function and he would deliver the foundation day lecture, while former director of IIT- Guwahati Gautam Barua would be the guest of honour. Chairman of IIT-P board of governors Ajai Chowdhury would preside over the event.

St Michael's winner in INTACH quiz

Salman Muzaffar and Priyanshu Raj of St Michael's High School emerged victorious in 'India Heritage Quiz', a written quiz competition organised by the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) in association with Xpress Minds Entertainment on Wednesday. It was the regional round of the event, in which 110 students from 11 schools participated. Each school had sent five groups comprising two students each. The winners would now move on to a zonal round to be held at Ranchi on August 12.

Freshers' day at PWC

New students of BA and B Sc courses of Patna Women's College (PWC) were welcomed to the college at the freshers' day function on Wednesday. Cultural programmes were presented by the students, including Krishna, Pooja and Rajashree. Principal of the school Sr Marie Jessie gave a motivational speech on the occasion.

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

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.

<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/good-jee-rank-failing-first-year-iit-struggles-to-find-out-why/>



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 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 any 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

90% IIT-Roorkee dropouts are backward caste: A case against affirmative action?

The revelation that 90 percent of the students that IIT Roorkee gave a second chance to after expelling them for poor performance last month belong to backwards castes (SCs, STs and OBCs) is hardly surprising because the writing has always been on the wall.

Affirmative action (reservation in Indian terms) does give backward caste students opportunities for engineering education in the country’s premier institutions, but once admitted, many of them struggle to cope with the twin-pressure of academics and neglect by a merit-driven ecosystem. Many of them drop to the bottom and, as the Roorkee experience shows, gets ejected from their dream of a high-paying profession and class transition.

The decision of the Roorkee IIT to expel 73 students with poor performance (measured in terms of CGPA — cumulative grade point average) was an eye-opener to the condition of many kids who make the near impossible entry into the hallowed IIT campuses. On Wednesday, [The Indian Express](#) reported that 90 percent of them were from SCs, STs and OBCs. The proponents of meritocracy will like this statistic because they have long been arguing that technical education is not for everyone and merit should be its bedrock.

The alleged suicide of a Dalit student at IIT Mumbai last year provided a glimpse of the suffering of backward caste students in institutions such as IITs: his performance in exams had been poor, he had uncleared papers for three years, and was a victim of taunts by general category students and even a faculty member. Reporting the case, [DNA said](#) that about 56 percent of students at the institution under reserved categories felt discrimination. More over, about 60 percent of them also felt more pressured by academics than the general category students. Their difficulty showed up in their CGPA as well — while the average CGPA for the general category students was 8.09, for the OBC-students it was 6.6, and for the SC/ST, 5.9.

This is a serious problem — governments upholding the country’s constitutional guarantee to a level playing field for students from backward castes, but failing to ensure that they benefit from it. About 50 percent of the seats are set aside for them, but if substantial number of them fall through the cracks — as the Roorkee figures

show — it serves no purpose. Even if they sail through, what's the use of an average CGPA of 5? Will any company hire students with such a low CGPA? A wasted guarantee and opportunity indeed.

This social chasm is not without underlying reasons. An [earlier study](#) by the prestigious Centre for Development Studies in Thiruvananthapuram that analysed the academic performance of all the engineering colleges in Kerala during 2004-08 showed that only 17.7 percent SC/ST students passed their final exams. The corresponding figure for the OBCs was better at 40 percent. According to CP John, a member of Kerala's state planning board, this was because of poor fundamentals. Reservation helps the backward caste students to gain admission, but their poor schooling pulls them back. "The SC/ST students who come from these schools (poorly run government schools) and get into engineering colleges cannot comprehend what is being taught there."

This is exactly what's happening in the IITs too. The Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) for admission to IITs is the toughest admission test in the world. Although about 9000 students get shortlisted from about 13.5 lakh aspirants, only those within the first 2000-2500 rank can get a good course and a decent location. The rest end up doing undesirable courses in also-ran IITs. This means that only 0.2 percent of the candidates make the final cut. Although this top layer students are extremely competitive, many of them also succumb to pressure and lose out. An anonymous post on Quora categorises them as hope, dope and rope. Yes, it's tragic that a few of them end up in drugs, while some even commit suicide.

In such a competitive environment, reserved category students with limited preparation (mostly because of poor schooling and poor exposure to a fierce exam-based academics) are at a far greater disadvantage, which is not going to disappear until the reservation policy is deepened with a greater sense of purpose. It calls for a system-revamp to ensure that the backward caste students get good school education right from elementary levels (means strengthening government schools and a lot more scholarships) and an additional layer of affirmative action — in the form of extra tuition classes, one-on-one consultations etc — even after they gain admission into places such as the IITs.

What we see now is the problem of an impersonal, quota-based system. Governments and political parties don't mean any purpose, than wooing their vote-banks, while setting aside quotas and filling them. Every single case needs to be audited and taken to its logical end. And it has to start all the way from the bottom when children are enrolled in schools.

Call it SDA-IIT Metro station, demand locals

Hindustan Times (Delhi)

NEW DELHI: The residents of Safdarjung Development Area (SDA) near Hauz Khas, opposite the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi (IIT) have demanded that the upcoming Metro station in their locality must be named after the colony.



TRIBHUWAN SHARMA / HT PHOTO The station to come up as part of the Delhi Metro's phase-3 project has so far been named IIT Metro station.

The Metro station to come up as part of the Delhi Metro's phase-3 project in 2016 has so far been named IIT Metro station. The residents in a request to the Delhi Metro chief Mangu Singh have demanded that the name be changed to SDA-IIT.

“The colony came up in the 60s and was located just opposite to the institute. The famous SDA market has a historical and cultural significance of its own. The name of the area where a Metro station is coming up must be familiar with the people living there as well,” said Ashok Mehta, general secretary, local RWA.

The residents' body in a meeting with the Delhi Metro officials last year put forward the proposal. After this meeting, they were told to submit the proposal in writing. The proposal to change the name has further been forwarded by the DMRC to the local MP Meenakshi Lekhi this January, said the RWA.

“However, we are going to have a meeting in this regard again with the Metro officials. We have asked for an appointment with the Metro chief. The officials told us that the request has been forwarded to the committee which includes Delhi government officials to name/ rename stations,” told Mehta.

The colony, which is home to many renowned politicians and former judges came up in 1960s as an extension of Safdarjung Enclave, is located in the vicinity of the major heritage site, Safdarjung Tomb.

The upcoming underground IIT Metro station is coming up on Gamal Abdel Nasser Marg. The DMRC has proposed two exits on Rose Garden side and one exit on the opposite side of the road, near IIT main entrance on outer Ring Road.

DMRC spokesperson, confirming the request for the name change, said, “We have received their communication and have forwarded it to the naming/ renaming committee of the Delhi government. However, there has been no response yet from the committee.”

Many requests for nomenclature have been received, however, it depends on the familiarity of the name with those living in the area. Before a said station is conceived, community interactions are undertaken to decide on a suitable name, which has a greater reach. The final decision on the name of a particular station is taken before it is set for inauguration.

The IIT Metro station is set to open in 2016-end, before which final consultations will happen, he added.

Quality of Ph.D. Research

http://www.business-standard.com/article/government-press-release/quality-of-ph-d-research-115080501708_1.html

While no dedicated study for assessing the quality of Ph.D research in the country has been undertaken, as informed by the University Grants Commission (UGC), the UGC Review Committee constituted by the Central Government in July, 2014 has observed that there is a Mushroom growth of substandard Ph.D. degrees. The report of the Committee further observed that acquiring Ph.D. degree has now become a necessity in view of the minimum qualification for recruitment at entry level and requirements for promotion.

In order to serve national purpose of maintaining standards of Higher Education and to bring uniformity in the procedure of award of M.Phil / Ph.D. Degree UGC has framed UGC (Minimum Standard and Procedure for the awards of M.Phil/Ph.D. Degree), Regulation 2009. These Regulations have been notified in the Gazette of India dated 11th-17th July, 2009 and are available at UGC website www.ugc.ac.in . The UGC has written, on 6th July, 2015, to the Vice-Chancellors of all Universities that it has come to the notice of the UGC that some Universities are hiring the services of the Supervisors who do not happen to be the regular teachers of the Universities or its affiliated Post Graduate (PG) colleges/ Institutes awarding the M.Phil/ Ph.D. degree. It has been observed that this practice is in violation of UGC (Minimum standards and procedure for award of M.Phil/Ph.D. Degree) Regulations, 2009.

The UGC has advised the Vice-Chancellors that Universities shall allocate the supervisor from amongst the regular faculty members in a department or its affiliated PG Colleges/ Institutes depending on the number of students per faculty member, the available specialization among the faculty supervisors and the research interest of the student. It has been further clarified by the UGC that any Ph.D. / M.Phil degree awarded by a University under the supervision of a Supervisor who is not a faculty member of the University or its affiliated PG Colleges/ Institutes would be in violation of UGC (Minimum standards and procedure for award of M.Phil./ Ph.D Regulations, 2009.)

This information was given by the Union Human Resource Development Minister, Smt. Smriti Irani in a written reply to the Lok Sabha question.

3 DIE IN IIM-INDORE BOUNDARY WALL COLLAPSE

Hindustan Times (Chandigarh)

INDORE: A woman and two minor boys were killed on Wednesday when a portion of the boundary wall of Indian Institute of Management, Indore, collapsed due to heavy rains and fell on an adjacent hut. The deceased, who were relatives, have been identified as Seema Lucky and Kalu police said. They said investigations are under way.