

Newspaper Clips

August 7, 2013

HT Mumbai

IIT-M opens resource centre in Jodhpur to train students, teachers in technology

HT Correspondent

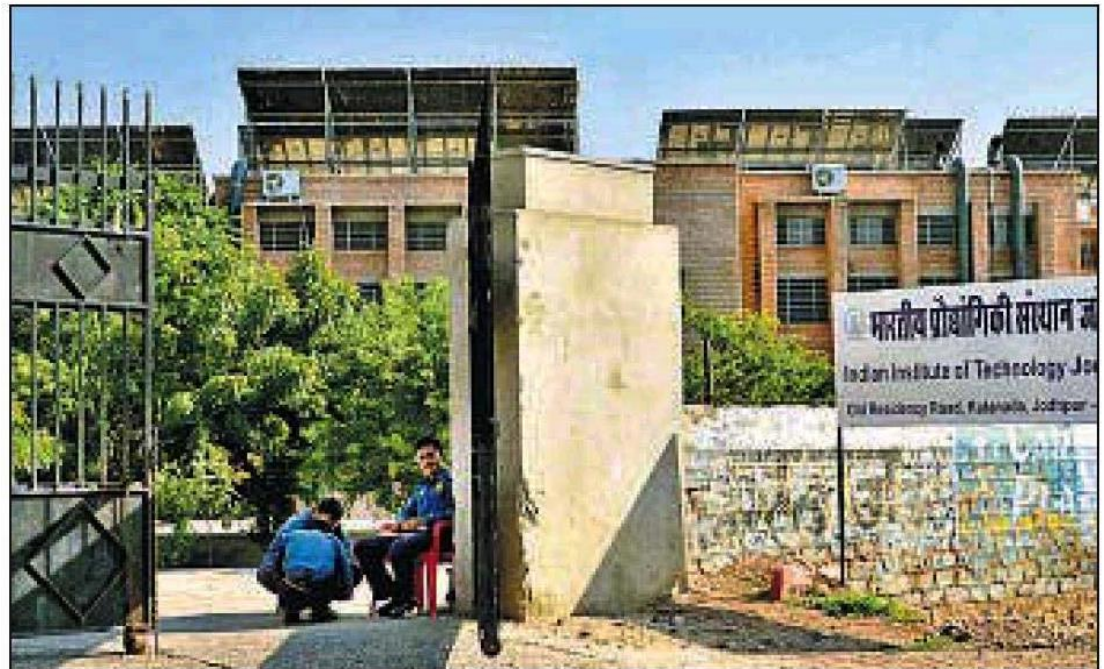
htraj@hindustantimes.com

The Indian Institute of Technology - Mumbai has opened a spoken tutorial resource centre in Jodhpur. IIT-M with collaboration of JIET Group of Institutions here, will train the teachers and students of Jodhpur division about latest software and technologies like Linux, Scilab, Latex, PHP, My SQL, Java and C/C++ Libre office through the centre.

The resource centre was formally inaugurated during a ceremony held on JIET campus at Jodhpur-Pali road recently.

NMEICT and ministry of human resource development will organise various workshops and seminars at the centre to train students and faculty members on upcoming modern technologies, especially in the field of informational technology and communications.

During the inaugural ceremo-



■ The Indian Institute of Technology - Mumbai has opened a spoken tutorial resource centre in Jodhpur.

RAMJI VYAS/ HT PHOTO

ny, centre coordinator Tripti More and Gautam of IIT-Mumbai explained the working of spoken tutorial programme undertaken by the IIT-M and

said that centre will host various education programme for the benefit of the students. Earlier, professor GS Raghuvanshi, director, JIET,

SL Mali, academic director, professor Rakesh Kothari, registrar and other JIET officials welcomed the coordinator of centre.

Indian Express ND 07/08/2013 P-8

Tech, MBA take a back seat

Maharashtra, once a key education destination, grapples with vacant seats in colleges

MIHIKA BASU
MUMBAI, AUGUST 6

ARE engineering and management courses losing their appeal, or is the growth of institutes outpacing that of students? Maharashtra, once considered a safe bet by thousands of students, is today grappling with massive vacancies in engineering, management and other courses that come under the All India Council for Technical Education.

Of 1.35 lakh engineering seats in Maharashtra, 53,264 or nearly 40 per cent are vacant, according to data provided by the Directorate of Technical Education, Maharashtra. In MBA, 24,213 of 36,447 seats, or two-thirds, are vacant. Pune has the most vacancies in either stream, with Nagpur and Mumbai close behind. And it is part of a nationwide trend.

"We cannot stop giving approval to new colleges if they fulfil all eligibility criteria. We will, however, take a review of the concerns of state governments before the start of the 2014-15 approval process," says S S Mantha, chairman of the All India Council for Technical Education. "We must also take into consideration the fact that these vacancies are in certain sectors and specific courses, not spread across [courses] in the same manner."

DTE officials in Maharashtra say vacancies are larger in programmes such as IT, civil engineering and electrical engineering, with students preferring courses that carry a better promise of good placements, such as computer science, mechanical engineering, and electronics and telecommunication engineering.

In Mumbai, the number of vacant engineering seats ranges between two or three in some colleges and up to 293 in one. Among reputable colleges, Veermata Jijabai Technological Institute has 27 vacant seats, Sardar Patel Institute of Technology has 19, and K J Somaiya College of Engineering 15.

In Mumbai's MBA institutes, the vacancies go up to 270 but some have filled all seats this year. The latter include Jamnalal Bajaj Institute of Management Studies, K J Somaiya Institute of Management Studies & Research, and SIES College of Management Studies.

"Students who want to take ad-



mission to engineering colleges have plateaued, but the number of new colleges has been increasing," says IIT Bombay professor Deepak Phatak. "This will result in vacancies as students have a multiplicity of choices. It takes seven to eight years for a new institute to establish itself. Only those with good intentions and sustaining capability will survive."

CAUSE & REMEDY

A committee that looked into vacancies over 35 per cent in Maharashtra identifies several reasons.

"Students want to study only at popular and good colleges in Mumbai, Pune, Nashik, Aurangabad, Amravati and Nagpur only," says the report of the 15-member committee, headed by Dayanand Meshram, joint director, DTE, and submitted recently to the Maharashtra government. "They don't want admission to courses that cannot guarantee jobs. Courses that can lead to prompt campus interviews are also high on their agenda."

Other reasons identified by the committee include high fees at non-aided institutes, lack of infrastructure in rural ones, and the emergence of colleges in other states, which has brought down the number of outstation students in Maharashtra.

It suggests limiting the number

of seats being approved, depending on an institute's facilities and whether it is accredited. For engineering, it suggests a minimum of 300 and a maximum of 420, with 600 permissible for institutes accredited with National Board of Accreditation. For MBA, MMS and PDGM, it suggests between 60 and 120, and 180 if NBA-accredited.

It recommends a 1:3 ratio between degree and diploma intakes and suggests degree seats be kept down to maintain that. It says all institutes should make public the details of their intake capacity, actual enrolment, placements, and complaints with various cells.

"Only 20 per cent of the graduates are employable today," it adds. The measures it suggests include filling up teaching posts and encouraging teachers to upgrade their skills.

TRENDS IN CONFLICT

The vacancies come alongside, and in spite of, three parallel trends across the country — a massive growth in actual student intake, relaxed eligibility criteria for admission, and the closure of a number of institutes.

In the six academic years from 2007-08 to 2012-13, the number of students admitted across technical disciplines has multiplied from 9,07,822 to 22,36,743. In engineering, it has risen from 6,53,290

MAHARASHTRA		
COURSE	SEATS	VACANT
ENGINEERING	1,35,003	53,264
MANAGEMENT	36,447	24,213
MCA	17,003	11,101
PHARMACY	8,217	2,758
ARCHITECTURE	387	167
HMCD	396	225
DIPLOMA	1,41,770	56,540

ALL INDIA

22.36 LAKH ADMITTED TO TECHNICAL COURSES (INCLUDING ENGINEERING AND MANAGEMENT) IN 2012-13, UP FROM 9.07 LAKH SIX YEARS EARLIER

17.62 LAKH IN ENGINEERING, UP FROM 6.53 LAKH

3.85 LAKH IN MANAGEMENT, UP FROM 94,704

52 ENGINEERING COLLEGES CLOSED (OR CLOSURE APPROVED) FROM 2011-12 TO 2012-13, ACCOUNTING FOR 13,463 SEATS

225 MANAGEMENT INSTITUTES (11,692 SEATS) SHUT DURING THE SAME PERIOD

106 CLOSURE APPLICATIONS FROM INSTITUTES APPROVED BY AICTE IN 2013-14

156 APPLICATIONS FOR NEW INSTITUTES CLEARED

17,61,976; in management from 94,704 to 3,85,008.

In 2011, AICTE lowered the eligibility criteria for engineering programmes from 50 per cent in class XII physics-chemistry-maths to 45 per cent for general seats and 40 per cent for reserved seats.

The same year, AICTE started approving applications for closing down institutes, mostly with a large number of vacant seats. From 2011-12 to 2012-13, those shut down have included 52 engineering institutes (13,463 seats) and 225 management institutes (11,692 seats). During 2013-14, AICTE has approved another 106 of 182 closure applications. Simultaneously, it has approved 156 of 575 applications for new colleges.

Andhra Pradesh had the most closures of engineering institutes in 2011-12 and 2012-13 — 13 with 3,642 seats — followed by Rajasthan at seven institutes with 1,842 seats. In Maharashtra, three engineering colleges with 840 seats have been allowed to shut.

In management, too, Andhra Pradesh headed the list with the closure of 70 institutes with 4,080 seats, followed again by Rajasthan with 35 institutes with 2,280 seats. Maharashtra was next, with 28 institutes with 1,740 seats, followed by UP (24 colleges, 1,860 seats), and Madhya Pradesh and Punjab with 17 closures each.

A reformist-economist to play central banker

Ashok Dasgupta

NEW DELHI: The appointment of Chief Economic Advisor Raghuram G. Rajan as the next Reserve Bank of India Governor after D. Subbarao completes his tenure on September 4 has been hailed by one and all, particularly India Inc. which has been at the receiving end of the perceived hawkish policy pursued so far by the central bank. Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council Chairman C. Rangarajan has also lauded Dr. Rajan's selection as an 'excellent' choice.

And, not without reason. Dr. Rajan, who was Economic Advisor to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in an honorary capacity and took over as CEA in the Finance Ministry in August last year, is known throughout the world for his forthright and frank views. Widely acclaimed — through initially criticised — for accurately predicting the global meltdown of 2008, Dr. Rajan had foreseen as early as in 2005 that a crisis in the financial sector was looming large.

An alumni of IIM Ahmedabad and IIT Delhi, Dr. Rajan, born in 1963 in Bhopal, went on to complete his doctorate from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and was professor at the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business before taking over as CEA. During his short stint as CEA, Dr. Rajan was also actively engaged in authoring the report on financial sector reforms that was commissioned by the Planning Commission.

Wealth of experience

In fact, Dr. Rajan is one among very few Indian economists who risked criticizing the U.S. financial system at the prime of his career and

He is known throughout the world for his forthright and frank views

warned against the potential catastrophes. Having gained a wealth of experience and broad and analytic perspective on how systems work, he came up with controversial papers chaffing the finance sector. After an initial few brickbats, his views and implications on the flaws of the financial sector were later noticed when he managed to prove himself as right.

Savour this. On why stimulus has failed, Dr. Rajan, in one of his columns said: "Advanced countries will spend decades working off high public debt loads while their central banks will have to unwind bloated balance sheets and back off from promises of support that markets have come to rely on."

On the role of central banks, he said, in another write-up: "Quantitative easing has truly been a step in the dark. Given all the uncertainty, why have central bankers, for whom 'innovative' is actually an epithet, departed from their usual conservatism in adopting it?"

Back home, on why India slowed down, Dr. Rajan said: "To revive

growth in the short run, India must improve supply, which means shifting from consumption to investment. It must do so by creating new, transparent institutions and processes, which would limit adverse political reaction."

The best person

Welcoming his appointment, Dr. Rangarajan, a former RBI Governor himself, said: "Rajan will make an excellent Governor at the moment" as he has been dealing with the problems in the last one year. Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia also noted that Dr. Rajan is coming in at a tough time but he has a terrific academic and professional background.

"It's a very tough time, we need someone who can give direction...the important thing is giving leadership for the next five years on how should the Indian financial system move. I think Rajan will be the best person to do that," he said.

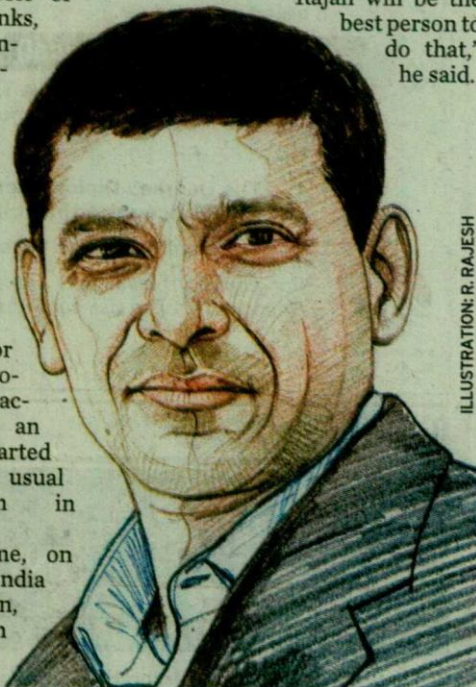


ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH



MANI GUPTA

Out of court

Multiplicity of higher education regulators is a concern for policy to address

WITH the Supreme Court's rejection, a few days ago, of the review petition filed by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), the stage is set for an arduous tussle over jurisdiction between the AICTE and the University Grants Commission (UGC). In April this year, the SC had restricted the role of the AICTE in regulating technical education provided by colleges affiliated to universities. It also held that MBA courses did not come under technical education. While the judgment was hailed by many technical colleges, in government and bureaucratic circles, the curtailment of the AICTE's powers caused much anxiety. Consequently, the government sought a review of the SC's April order.

The judgment held that colleges affiliated to a university are not required to obtain permission from the AICTE before starting a course in technical education. The SC held that the role of the AICTE vis-a-vis universities and their affiliated colleges was supervisory and not regulatory. In reaching its conclusion, the court relied on the definition of "technical institution" under the AICTE Act, which excludes a university from the regulatory purview of the AICTE, and Section 12A of the UGC Act.

Section 12A allows the UGC to regulate the fee that may be charged for certain courses. Further, the UGC may recommend that the university disaffiliate a col-

lege found violating the regulations framed under Section 12A. This section defines a college as an institution of study recognised by a university as providing instruction in a course, the qualification of which is granted by the university. Arguably, this definition is aimed at distinguishing between a college and a university. But the SC subsumed the former into the latter.

The definition of a university under the AICTE Act is in line with the UGC Act. A reading of the definition of "university" with the definition of "college" under the UGC Act leaves no doubt that the two concepts were intended to be different. Any other reading ren-

While the SC judgment was hailed by many, the curtailment of the AICTE's powers was the cause of much anxiety.

ders the AICTE Act an otiose piece of legislation, as almost all technical institutions are also affiliated to universities (which alone have the power to grant degrees under the UGC Act). It appears that the Supreme Court was inclined to read the phrase "university" in a more expansive manner to bring colleges out of the regulatory control of multiple bodies — the UGC, the AICTE and universities. Although this is a valid policy concern, it would have been best done through a legislative amendment.

The second and more perplexing conclusion concerns the pronouncement that MBA courses do not fall under technical

education. The conclusion is surprising, given that the word "management" is expressly included in the definition of the phrase "technical education" under the AICTE Act. The SC's conclusion was based on the dictionary meaning of the word "technology".

Why did the SC overlook the definition under the AICTE Act? The answer lies in the judgment itself. The petitioners were concerned with the interpretation of an MBA as technical education and had sought to exclude it from the purview of the AICTE. The judgment (as reported) does not contain any pleadings by either the petitioner's counsels or the AICTE's

counsel on the issue. In fact, this was not even an issue framed by the court. Should the court have pronounced on an issue that was not pleaded by either party? There are a number of precedents wherein the SC has held that a court should not suo moto decide any issue that has not been pleaded by the parties. Even if evidence is led on such an issue, the court should ignore the same. Clearly, the SC's attempt at interpreting an issue not argued before it has resulted in a hasty and incorrect conclusion.

The judgment has profound, and perhaps unintended, ramifications. Based on the SC order, the Delhi High Court quashed the

show cause notices issued by the AICTE against the Indian Institute of Planning and Management in relation to its courses. This implies that all similarly placed institutes can get ongoing AICTE proceedings against them quashed. Will this help students and management education in India? It is unclear if the AICTE is merely an advisory council or if it will continue to exercise its powers over diploma-granting stand-alone institutions. And if an MBA is not technical education, then what is the status of institutions that offer MBA degrees without being affiliated to a university? Can the AICTE still conduct the common management entrance test? Given the SC's interpretation, can it be pleaded that fashion and interior design courses are not technical education either?

The multiplicity of regulatory agencies in higher education is a valid concern and perhaps the most important reform required in this space. But courts are usually not the best places to resolve such policy issues. The SC has often refused to enter into the domain of policymaking. In the present case, the court seems to have unintentionally ventured into this territory. It is almost certain that the SC's ruling will be rendered naught with an amendment to restore the status quo.

*The writer is a Delhi-based lawyer
express@expressindia.com*

MAIL TODAY ND 07/08/2013 P-16

'Harassed' scholar knocks on Pranab door



Neetu Divya and Ajay Bansal

By **Manjeet Sehgal** in Chandigarh

A RESEARCH scholar at NIT, Jalandhar, has knocked on the doors of President Pranab Mukherjee, alleging sexual harassment by her seniors.

The step, she said, had been taken after the district administration, NIT authorities and the State Women's Commission didn't pay heed to her complaint.

Ruchi Bhatia (name changed), a PhD student of Chemical Engineering Department, has written to the President, alleging that head of the department Prof Ajay Bansal and her guide Dr Neetu Divya tried to harass her. She said Dr Divya used to compel her to evaluate students' answer sheets, besides passing on her exam and teaching duties to her.

"Some of the answer sheets even have my signatures. When I objected to do it, she started harassing me and did not even sign my

Took the step after NIT authorities and state women's commission didn't pay heed to her complaint

stipend form. The payment of my stipend has been withheld for four months because of this," she told MAIL TODAY.

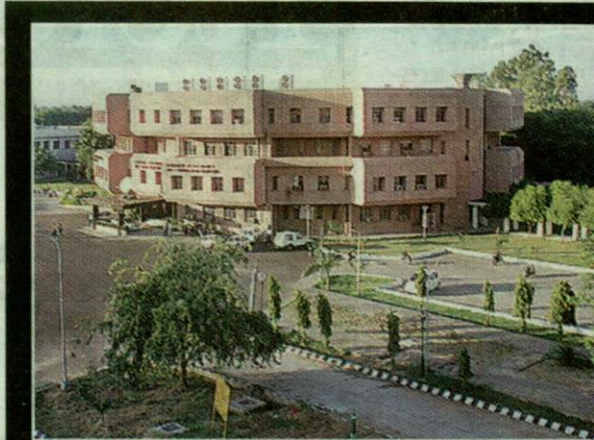
Bhatia said Prof Bansal tried to sexually harass her many times and invited her to his residence. "Bansal used to say that students should make some compromises. Come to my house to do some personal work. He told me that madam (Dr Divya) also goes to his residence," she said.

She alleged that Dr Divya and Prof Bansal conspired to jeopardise her career and Dr Divya refused to be her guide in

the middle of her research work.

Bhatia said she had not received any response from NIT director Dr Samir Kumar Das despite having complained to him about the issue several times. She had also sent a complaint to Jalandhar Deputy Commissioner Shruti Singh and the State Women Commission on June 17, 2013. No action has been taken by the authorities yet. Bhatia hails from Ujjain.

When contacted, Dr Bansal termed the allegations baseless and false. NIT Director Dr Samir Kumar Das said a committee led by Professor S Ghosh had been constituted to probe the sexual harassment case.



A student of NIT Jalandhar (above) has written to President Pranab Mukherjee alleging that the head of her department Prof Ajay Bansal & her guide Neetu Divya had tried to harass her.

PANJAB VARSITY LOSING SHEEN

■ **July 29, 2013:** A research scholar in Panjab University's Department of Tibetan Studies alleged that her guide sexually harassed her for one year. The case came to light after she decided to discontinue her PhD and asked the Vice-Chancellor of the university to strike off her name. When asked why she wanted to leave in the middle of her doctorate, she narrated her horror story to the V-C. A committee is probing the matter.

■ **May 2, 2013:** Two Panjab University professors allegedly pulled the arm of an assistant professor and hurled abuses at her. The two were later re-instated after a panel probing the matter declared them "innocent".