Newspaper Clips
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Times of India ND 27/12/2012   P9

IITs mull external peer review by eminent people

Himanshi Dhawan | TNN

New Delhi: In an effort towards greater transparency and accountability, the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) are considering an external peer review by eminent people from academia and industry every five years. Each IIT will also be expected to conduct an internal audit of every department.

This is the first time such a stock-taking exercise is likely to take place and comes at a time , when the country's institutes have barely found a mention in international rankings of top universities across the globe.
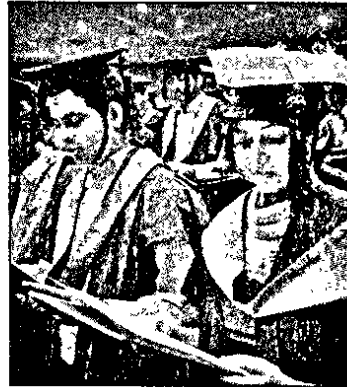
The external audit has been recommended by the standing committee of the IIT Council. A final decision is likely to be taken on January 7 by the IIT Council. The review will be made public by every institute. The proposal, if accepted, will allow parents, students and academicians to judge an institute according to the feedback.

India Education Review reported that no Indian institutions made it to the top 200 in the QS World University Rankings for 2012. The QS rankings for institutes of higher education had featured IIT-Bombay in 2010 which was ranked 187, but dropped to 225 in 2011. This year it was down to 227.

In the Times Higher Education . (THE) World University Rankings 2012-13, only IIT Bombay, Kharagpur and Roorkee figured in the list of top 400 universities across the globe.

Besides the international rankings, there is no system of judging institutes of higher education in the country. "The argument behind this is that there is no measure of the quality of infrastructure, faculty, courses offered or the research being done. The IITs are equipped to judge each other and this review will encourage improvement," a source said.

Committee members for the peer review will be selected by the chairperson of the IIT Council from a panel of 10 names given by the board of governors of the respective institute. Each IIT will be expected to undertake an in-house department wise review before any external peer review is carried out.

AIMING BETTER RANKING

Amar Ujala ND 27/12/2012

P-13

पढ़ने के साथ ही पढ़ाएंगे भी आईआईटी के मेधावी छात्र

◉) बृजेश सिंह

नई दिल्ली। आईआईटी तथा इंजीनियरिंग की अन्य संस्थाओं में अच्छे शिक्षकों की भारी कमी को देखते हुए अगले वर्ष से मेधावी छात्रों को उच्च शिक्षा के साथ ही स्नातक कक्षाओं को पार्ट टाइम पढ़ाने के लिए भी प्रेरित किया जाएगा।

स्नातक में टॉप 15 फीसदी मेधावी छात्रों में से एमटेक तथा पीएचडी कर छात्रों को यह मौका दिया जाएगा। यह प्रस्ताव सात जनवरी को आईआईटी काउंसिल की दिल्ली में होने वाली बैठक में विचार के लिए रखा जाएगा। मानव संसाधन मंत्री पल्लम राजू

◉ सात जनवरी को दिल्ली में आईआईटी काउंसिल में लगेगी फैसले पर मुहर

की अध्यक्षता में आईआईटी काउंसिल की यह पहली बैठक होगी। इसमें तकनीकी शिक्षा में सुधार तथा गुणवत्ता बढ़ाने के लिए कई उपायों तथा प्रस्तावों पर विचार किया जाएगा।

उच्च शिक्षा खासकर इंजीनियरिंग व विज्ञान के क्षेत्र में शिक्षकों की भारी कमी के चलते शिक्षा के गिरते स्तर को ध्यान में रखते हुए काउंसिल ने आईआईटी

के अलावा ट्रिपल आईटी, एनआईटी, एनसीएसईआर तथा आईसीएसईआर जैसी महत्वपूर्ण शिक्षण संस्थाओं के मेधावी छात्रों को उच्च शिक्षा के साथ ही जूनियर कक्षाओं में पढ़ाने की योजना बनाई है। यह योजना वर्ष 2013-14 से शुरू की जाएगी। इसके तहत पढ़ाने वाले छात्रों को अंशकालिक शिक्षक के रूप में जरूरी परिलाभ भी दिया जाएगा।

नक्सली क्षेत्रों के युवा बनेंगे हुनरमंद

आईआईटी विशेषज्ञ करेंगे सुधार की कोशिशें

राज्य शासन और आईआईटी के पूर्व छात्रों की संस्था पैन आईआईटी के बीच सहमति बनी

रायपुर। छत्तीसगढ़ के नक्सल प्रभावित क्षेत्रों के युवाओं को आईआईटी के विशेषज्ञ हुनरमंद बनाएंगे। इस योजना के लिए राज्य शासन और आईआईटी के पूर्व छात्रों की संस्था पैन आईआईटी के बीच सहमति बनी है। आधिकारिक सूत्रों ने बुधवार को यहां बताया कि पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी के जन्म दिन के अवसर पर मंगलवार को मुख्यमंत्री रमन सिंह ने राज्य के नक्सल हिंसा से पीड़ित क्षेत्रों के गरीब परिवारों के युवाओं को कौशल उन्नयन का प्रशिक्षण देने और हुनरमंद बनाने के लिए 'कौशल गुरूकुल' योजना का शुभारंभ किया। इस अवसर पर राजनांदगांव जिले के इंदावानी गांव में आयोजित कार्यक्रम में गरीब परिवारों के युवाओं को यह सौगात दी गई।

इस योजना के लिए मुख्यमंत्री की उपस्थिति में राज्य सरकार के जनशक्ति नियोजन विभाग से संबंधित राज्य कौशल विकास मिशन और आईआईटी के पूर्व छात्रों की संस्था पैन आईआईटी के बीच परस्पर सहमति के दस्तावेज (एमओयू) पर हस्ताक्षर किए गए। उन्होंने बताया कि छत्तीसगढ़ राज्य कौशल विकास मिशन के मुख्य कार्यपालन अधिकारी संतोष मिश्रा तथा राजनांदगांव जिला प्रशासन की ओर से कलेक्टर अशोक अग्रवाल और पैन आईआईटी एल्युमनी-रिच फॉर इंडिया संस्था की ओर से टी कल्याण चक्रवर्ती ने एमओयू पर हस्ताक्षर किए। पारफी नामक यह संस्था देश की 15 आईआईटी से उत्तीर्ण वहां के पूर्व विद्यार्थियों द्वारा समाजसेवी संगठन के

रूप में संचालित की जा रही है। अजीम प्रेमजी और नारायण मूर्ति जैसी राष्ट्रीय स्तर की प्रख्यात हस्तियां भी इस संस्था में सदस्य के रूप में शामिल हैं। अधिकारियों ने बताया कि मुख्यमंत्री रमन सिंह ने इस महीने

की आठ तारीख को पैन आईआईटी द्वारा कोलकाता में आयोजित सम्मेलन में इस संस्था के सहयोग से राजनांदगांव जिले में युवाओं के कौशल उन्नयन प्रशिक्षण के लिए 'स्किल गुरूकुल' योजना शुरू करने की घोषणा की थी। उन्होंने यह भी कहा था कि यह योजना अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी के जन्म दिन पर शुरू की जाएगी।

Times of India Chennai 26-12-2012 P-4

IIT to celebrate silver jubilee reunion

Chennai: Batch of 1987 of IIT Madras will celebrate its silver jubilee reunion on December 28. The programme will be held at the IC & SR auditorium in IIT. At least 150 members of the batch along with their families are expected to attend. 1977 and 1972 batches will also attend the event. Speeches, seminars and presentations are part of the event. In the first half of the day, Dr Sailesh Rao, founder and director of 'Climate Healers' will give a speech. Dr Ashok Krishna, vice-president of Technology for Global Downstream, Chevron USA, Shrikumar Suryanarayana, director general, association of Biotech-Led Enterprises will also make presentations during the occassion. TNN

Hindu ND 27/12/2012   P16

NASA to turn asteroid into space station

NASA scientists are planning to capture a 500,000 kg asteroid, relocate it and transform it into a space station for astronauts to refuel at on their way to Mars. It would be the first time a celestial object has ever been moved by humans, the *Daily Mail* reported.

The White House's Office of Science and technology will consider the USD 2.6 billion plan in the coming weeks as it prepares to set its space exploration agenda for the next decade.

A feasibility report prepared by NASA and California Institute of Technology (Caltech) scientists outlined how they would go about capturing the asteroid.

An 'asteroid capture capsule' would be attached to an old Atlas V rocket and directed to the asteroid between the Earth and the Moon.

Once close, the asteroid capsule would release a 50 ft diameter bag that would wrap around the spinning rock using drawstrings, the paper said. The craft would then turn on its thrusters, using an estimated 300 kg of propellant, to stop the asteroid in its tracks and tow it into a gravitationally neutral spot.

From here space explorers would have a stationary base from which to launch trips deeper into space.

"The idea of exploiting the natural resources of asteroids dates back over a hundred years, but only now has the technology become available to make this idea a reality," the report said.

"The feasibility is enabled by three key developments: the ability to discover and characterise an adequate number of sufficiently small near-Earth asteroids for capture and return; the ability to implement sufficiently powerful solar electric propulsion systems to enable transportation of the captured asteroid; and the proposed human presence in lunar space in the 2020s enabling exploration and exploitation of the returned asteroid," it said.

NASA declined to comment on the project because it said it was in negotiations with the White House, but it is believed that technology would make it possible within 10-12 years.

The technology would also open up the possibility of mining other asteroids for their metals and minerals. Some are full of iron which could be used for in the making of new space stations, others are made up of water which could be broken down into hydrogen and oxygen to make fuel. — **PTI**

Comparing Harvard apples with JNU oranges

Any ranking of global educational institutions will be problematic if it does not take into account disparities in resources between rich and poor countries

Ajay Gudavarthy and
Nissim Mannathukkaren

Indian academe is anguished that not a single Indian university has made it to the top 200 universities of the world in the recent *Times Higher Education* rankings. However, the debate so far has missed many points.

First, any discussion of evaluation of global educational standards and rankings cannot ignore the vast disparities in resources between the rich and poor parts of the world. An overwhelmingly large part of global knowledge production is concentrated in the developed world.

In 2009, Drexel University president Constantine Papadakis was the highest paid university president in America with an annual compensation of $49,12,127. That is around Rs.27 *crore* for running a university! Even the highest-paid public university president earned nearly $2 million as salary in 2011.

The endowment of Harvard University is around $31 billion — more than 1/4 th of the GDP of Tamil Nadu. Research support in developed countries runs into hundreds of millions. As *Times* itself recognises, "income is crucial to the development of world-class research."

Most in the U.S.

Is it then surprising that of the top 200 universities, 76 are in the United States and 196, no less, in the developed countries (two from China, and one each from South Africa and Brazil are the only ones from the developing countries)? [76 from the U.S. and 196 in all from developed countries. This includes the 76 from the U.S.] The crisis afflicting universities is thus, not an Indian phenomenon alone, but generalised across the "Third World."

Second, while resources are crucial, they should not become an excuse for the abysmal standards of Indian universities. Instead the debate has to be extended, from merely technical solutions like establishing comprehensive universities or addressing student-teacher ratio, to the kind of academic culture that we have nurtured.

On merit and representation

Universities, on the one hand, have to reflect social reality by representing caste, class and gender criteria in order to overcome these hierarchies in academia. Academic freedom and egalitarian relations in the departments are expected not only to foster academic brilliance but also a socially progressive culture.

On the other, given the excessively communitarian nature of society, universities have, only in name, provided
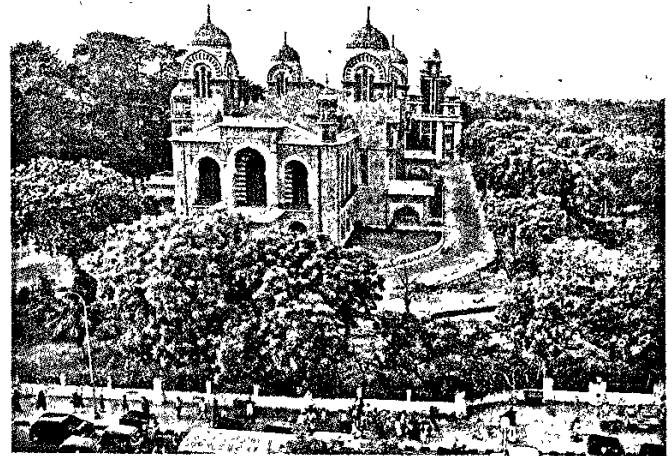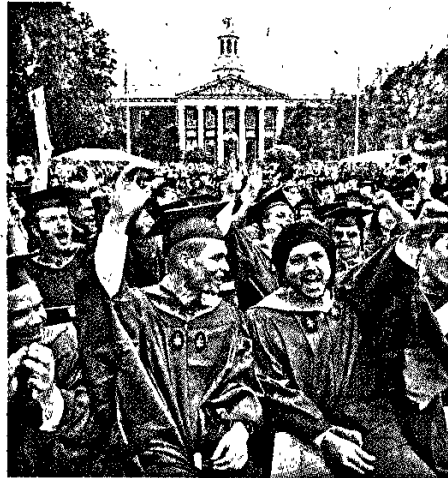
representation to disadvantaged sections. They have not actually overcome predisposed social hierarchies. Our academic culture is marked by patronage and networks or by bureaucratic hierarchies of seniority and administrative positions.

Even new political mobilisations around caste and reservations have focused only on the issues of representation without raising those of pedagogy and curriculum. There is a stalemate between merit and adequate representation.

In fact, those demanding reservations should have argued that reservation brings diversity, which develops new knowledge systems and new modes of understanding. This would, eventually, also contribute to a new institutional culture. Instead, inclusion of newer marginalised groups has only created parallel networks and patronage in defence against the existing ones of the dominant groups.

This kind of social breakdown has rarely contributed to new ideas and energies. Experimental culture has for long been supplanted by a culture of fear and insecurity, not merely among the new entrants, but also among "meritorious" social groups.

Top-down syndrome

In fact, anything new is looked at sceptically, and often succumbs to the tyranny of age. Age-related hierarchy is perhaps the worst in the Indian university system and the least-debated sacred cow. The top-down syndrome has resulted in universities' resistance to introducing student evaluation of faculty,

continued cases of victimisation of students — including sexual harassment and arbitrary evaluation, and consequently, lack of motivation among the students, translating into ills like rampant plagiarism.

Third, while Indian universities seek excellence, treating exercises such as the *Times'* ranking as sacrosanct is also problematic. Can we compare universities from America to Somalia? How do we arrive at an average from the vastly different material realities and the different starting points (which are historically and, often, violently determined) of these locations?

Faults

The *Times'* claims that it accounts for these disparities by providing a "comprehensive and balanced" comparison. But what does "international outlook" (one of the categories in *Times* worth 7.5 per cent) mean for a poor university in the global South which struggles to attract students even from the hinterlands of its own country? Or how does it go about achieving excellence in research, worth 30 per cent, and measured in terms of volume, income and reputation when the public spending on education is abysmally low?

The *Times'* rankings of 13 performance indicators also have no place for intangible features. In a university such as Jawaharlal Nehru University, students from some of the most backward regions study, thanks to its system of deprivation points. Students with very poor primary education, linguistic and writing skills, in very little time, gather confidence and become highly motiva-

ted, and look for an institutional culture that can translate this into a rigorous academic exercise. This is because of the vibrant student politics and a dominant discourse of social justice. Under what ranking can this amazing social feat of providing wide opportunity and social skills be judged?

While the poor quality of Indian universities is lamentable, does the solution lie in emulating the developed countries where high academic standards are now negated by the degenerating commercialisation of education? Thus students pay an annual fee of $40,000 for a bachelor's degree in an American Ivy League institution, and the average student-loan debt of 2011 in the U.S. was $26,500, rendering them perpetual bonded labourers of the market.

Students are not trained to become critical thinkers, but foot soldiers of the establishment. Therefore, they graduate without pondering over what it means when the university gives its presidents multimillion dollar salaries and its janitors $7 per hour. It is in this culture that people like Papadakis are able to double student enrolments and generate revenue surpluses rivalling multinational corporations.

Ultimately, the ranking debate is not just about Indian universities entering "the top 200," but also the need for a radically new academic culture, reducing inequalities of global academia, the ends of education, and the limitations of the ranking exercise itself.

(Ajay Gudavarthy and Nissim Mannathukkaren are with Jawaharlal Nehru University, and Dalhousie University, Canada, respectively.)

SPIRES APART: *While Indian universities seek excellence, treating exercises such as the* Times' *ranking as sacrosanct is also problematic given vastly different material realities and starting points. The pictures are of Harvard Business School (left) and Madras University.* — PHOTOS: REUTERS, R. RAGU

'Net overuse leaving kids brain-dead'

'Google Generation' Losing Creativity And Practical Skills, Warns Expert

London: A 'Google generation' which relies on the internet for everything is in danger of becoming 'brain-dead', a leading British inventor has warned. Trevor Baylis, who invented the wind-up radio, said children are losing creativity and practical skills because they spend too much time in front of screens.

The 75-year-old from Twickenham, south-west London, said he fears that the next generation of inventors is being lost, with young people often unable to make anything with their hands, the 'Daily Mail' reported.

He said children could rediscover vital skills if schools

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LOSING GEN-NEXT INVENTORS?

used practical toys like Meccano, a model construction system. "Children have got to be taught hands-on, and not to become mobile phone or computer dependent," Baylis said. "They should use computers as and when, but there are so many people playing with their computers nowadays that spend all their time sitting there with a stomach," he said.

"They are dependent on Google searches. A lot of children will become fairly brain-dead if they become so dependent on the Internet, because they will not be able to do things the old-fashioned way," he said. PTI

The Pioneer, New Delhi

HRD forms IBA to cut burden of AICTE!

In a move raising eyebrows, the HRD Ministry on Friday announced a new regulator for technical and management educational institutes named Indian Board of Accreditation (IBA) but which will have functions, objectives and parameters identical to the existing National Board of Accreditation (NBA) under the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

Making the announcement, HRD Minister MM Pallam Raju said the new regulator will be statutory body just like the NBA, which too caters to accreditation and renewal related work. "It would also handle the anticipated rush of accreditation in near future. In the coming years, IBA will follow the best practices of different countries and come out with new methodologies of evaluation," Raju said. He justified the new body saying it was created in view of the rapidly growing volume of work with AICTE. According to HRD Ministry, AICTE is overburdened with thousands of institutes and over 60,000 programmes.

At present, programmes are accredited by the NBA, set up by AICTE in 1994, in order to assess the qualitative competence of educational institutions from the Diploma level to the Post-Graduate level in Engineering and Technology, Architecture, Pharmacy, Town Planning and Management.
The IBA too will assess the quality of the various constituent elements of the educational institutive infrastructure, physical resources, human resources, supporting systems like library resources, computational resources, and avenues for moulding and developing the student's personality and learning characteristics.

The only difference between the IBA and the NBA is that the former will also accredit the distance education B Tech programmes with some riders. The NBA does not accord accreditation to the institutions as a whole but at the programme level like the four-year under-graduate engineering degree course (after 10+2) in Mechanical Engineering (or any other branch). AICTE chairman SS Mantha said the new body will help take care of the rising pendency of applications towards approval and renewal of technical and management institutes. Further, from next year both (UGC and AICTE) will issue regulations making accreditation mandatory for higher educational institutes. The regulations are likely to be notified by February 2013. This is in view of the pending National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for Higher Educational Institutions Bill, 2010 in the Parliament.

Higher Education Secretary Ashok Thakur said "The UGC is already in the process of issuing regulation which is going to make regulation mandatory. We are preparing for that and we are working in advance".