

Newspaper Clips

December 30, 2011]

Financial Express ND 30/12/2011

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Enrolling for the future

India crosses Plan targets on kids going to college

Increased competition in the job market and the realisation that education can level the odds has ensured a dramatic hike in the proportion of Indians going to college. Data from the University Grants Commission (UGC) shows that the proportion of people aged 18-23 years who entered college level courses rose from a mere 5% in 1980 to 12.5% in 2007-08 and a whopping 17.27% in 2009-10. Indeed, according to the UGC chief, the data they have used is a bit dated and the actual number may really be around 20% right now—it also speaks volumes for how data is collected that, instead of its own database, the UGC has to rely on a sample survey conducted by an outside body to know how many kids are in college. According to the UGC chief, the number could well reach 25% by 2017, the end of the 12th Plan period. The ratio of college-going people in the population is around 50 for the eurozone, 80 for the US and 23 for China (in 2008).

True, there are the usual problems of quality. IIT-Delhi was among the top 500 universities in the world in 2003 (it was ranked between 451-500) but by 2010, it was nowhere to be seen on the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) list. China has 16 universities in the top 500 (13 in engineering, 1 in medicine and 1 in social sciences) while India has just 2 (IIT-Kharagpur is in the 401-500 list while the Indian Institute of Science is in the 301-400 rank). China has 6.8% of the world's top 500 universities and accounts for 19.8% of global population—India's figures are 0.4% and 17.1%, respectively. Which is why, there are enough reports that suggest 30-40% of college graduates in India are unemployable and in need of what's inelegantly called 'repair'.

It's important, however, to keep the sequencing in mind. When you're scaling up, it's near impossible to get quality as well—the University of Phoenix in the US has nowhere near the quality Harvard has, but it has nearly 5 lakh students while Harvard has only 21,000. India's gross enrolment ratio has shot up because the market is working—young people have realised the only way to get higher salaries is to go to college. Once the market tells them they can't get promotions, or higher salaries, based on the quality of the colleges, that too will get fixed—the fact that many engineering and MBA institutions aren't able to fill their seats is testimony to precisely this.

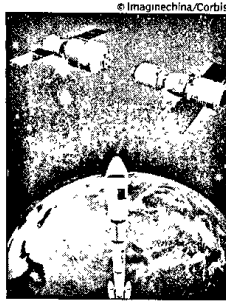
Times Of India ND 30/12/2011 p-17

Sky's the limit: China unveils space plan

By 2016, Aims To Launch Space Labs & Manned Missions Besides Starting To Work On Space Station

Beijing: China plans to launch space labs and manned ships and prepare to build space stations over the next five years, according to a plan released Thursday that shows the country's space program is gathering momentum.

China has already said its eventual goals are to have a space station and put an astronaut on the moon. It has made methodical progress with its ambitious lunar and human spaceflight programs, but its latest five-year plan beginning next year signals an acceleration. By the end of 2016, China will launch space laboratories, manned spaceship



FULL THROTTLE

and ship freighters, and make technological preparations

for the construction of space stations, according to the white paper setting out China's space progress and future missions. China's space program has already made major breakthroughs in a relatively short time, although it lags far behind the US and Russia in space technology and experience. The country will continue exploring the moon using probes, start gathering samples of the moon's surface, and "push forward its exploration of planets, asteroids and the sun".

It will use spacecraft to study the properties of black holes and begin monitoring

space debris and small near-Earth celestial bodies and build a system to protect spacecraft from debris.

The paper also says China will improve its launch vehicles, improve its communications, broadcasting and meteorological satellites and develop a global satellite navigation system, intended to rival US' global positioning system (GPS) network. China places great emphasis on the development of its space industry, which is seen as a symbol of national prestige. Its space principles — including peaceful development, enhancing international coop-

eration and deep space exploration — are largely unchanged from its previous two documents detailing the progress of China's space missions, released in 2000 and 2006. In 2003, China became the third country behind the US and Russia to launch a man into space and, five years later, completed a spacewalk.

Toward the end of this year, it demonstrated automated docking between its Shenzhou 8 craft and the Tiangong 1 module, which will form part of a future space laboratory.

In 2007, it launched its first lunar probe, Chang'e-1, which orbited the moon, collecting

data and a complete map of the moon.

Since 2006, China's Long March rockets have successfully launched 67 times, sending 79 spacecraft into orbit. Some elements of China's program, notably the firing of a ground-based missile into one of its dead satellites four years ago, have alarmed American officials and others who say such moves could set off a race to militarize space.

That the program is run by the military has made the US reluctant to cooperate with China in space, even though the latter insists its program is purely for peaceful ends. AP

Financial Chronicle, ND 30/12/2011 P-1

Hiring set to pick up; IT, education to see job rush

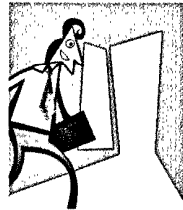
S SHYAMALA
Chennai

DESPITE uncertain economic conditions, hiring seems to remain stable in 2012. Industry players say sectors, including IT, education and healthcare, are expected to be the major recruiters next year.

The organised sector was expected to see a slow-

down in hiring during the present quarter due to reasons such as higher cost of fund raising and uncertain conditions like labour unrest in the manufacturing sector. The segment is expected to end the year with a shortfall of about 220,000 jobs, against the projected 1,600,000.

E Balaji, managing director and chief executive



officer of recruitment firm Ma Foi Randstad, says, "Though we see a sluggish mood in hiring toward the end of 2011, this could only be a temporary problem as long-term growth story of India is still intact. Many sectors still enjoy favourable excess demand and it is important that they overcome the



immediate challenges, protect the growth potential and generate jobs."

At the beginning of 2011, the organised sector labour market was 4.5 crore. Apart from the regular top recruiters such as healthcare, hospitality and IT-ITeS, manufacturing sector (non-machinery products) was the surprise

package that projected to add about 220,000 jobs. However, it started slowing down since mid-2011 due to labour unrest and rising interest rates. Despite the slowdown, hiring by manufacturing firms may pick up mainly because they are boosting their R&D activities.

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Education, energy sectors to be among top recruiters in 2012

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In the face of intense competition, manufacturers have no choice but to sharpen their R&D operations. For instance, leading commercial vehicle firm Ashok Leyland presently employs over 1,000 engineers and intends to actively ramp up further in the coming months, says its managing director, Vinod Dasari, one of the largest recruiters, the IT-ITeS industry as a whole, is inducting a good number of employees, especially after academic institutions started to allow hiring during the seventh semester itself this year. The top three companies — TCS, Infos-

ys and Cognizant — have already made over 60,000 campus offers. According to Nasscom, the IT and BPO sector would be creating about 2,50,000 jobs next year.

S Mahalingam, executive director and chief financial officer of TCS, says: "Unlike last financial year when we initially announced 36,000 (hiring guidance), then 40,000, later 50,000 and finally ended at over 60,000, the guidance for this year was more stable. We announced 60,000 and are well on track to achieve the goal. Though some uncertainties remain, especially in client decisions and currency fluctuations, hiring seems to

have stabilised."

Apart from IT and BPO, healthcare, education and energy sectors would be active recruiters in 2012, says James Agrawal, consulting director and head of BTI Consultants, the executive search division of Kelly Services India.

"When the whole organised sector was busy analysing the actual cause and effect scenario, the situation got much worse by currency fluctuations. The coming year is going to be belonging to e-commerce related technologies playing a vital role and it is nobody's guess any more now that how mobile/internet technologies have already started de-

terminating the way forward. Sectors to be watched would be education, healthcare, energy and retail," he adds.

Though Kelly considers the banking sector to be a laggard in recruitment in 2012, public sector and small private banks have announced substantial expansion plans in rural and semi-urban regions for the coming years. Expansion would naturally lead to more recruitment.

Over the past few years, public-sector banks spent most of their time and funds on establishing core-banking solutions. Now that the systems are in place, these banks have to do some catching up in terms of

branch expansion.

For example, Indian Overseas Bank is on an aggressive branch expansion spree and is looking at adding over 400 new branches over the next couple of years. The branches would be spread across tier I to tier V cities, says the bank's chairman M Narendra.

It is not the established firms alone that may actively hire in 2012. Start-ups, mainly in the e-commerce sector, are also a segment to lookout for as a lot of investor money is flowing into it. As the sector is heating up, so is hiring.

"Employees are not apprehensive about working for start-ups anymore," says Sandeep Ko-

maravelly, head-marketing, Snapdeal.com. He said, "Hiring is not challenging but hiring the right people is definitely difficult. Specialisation in one domain alone, say technology, may not be helpful anymore. People with added experience in retail are also required; they should understand customers and the dynamics of the business. Growth in the business is rather steep over the last two years. Recruitments are also growing fast."

(With inputs from R Srividhya & G Balachandrar)

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