

Newspaper Clips

February 14, 2012

INDIAN EXPRESS ND 14/02/2012 P-5

Goodbye JEE, welcome ISEET from 2013

New test will have two parts — one to check logic, the other problem-solving; each of three hours

ANUBHUTI VISHNOI
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 13

THE successor to the JEE and AIEEE — for long the gateways to India's top engineering colleges including the IITs — will be called ISEET, the Indian Science Engineering Eligibility Test.

As reported by *The Indian Express* on January 31, the new, SAT-style exam comes into force in 2013. It will do away with multiple entrance examinations and reduce the stress levels of students.

ISEET will have two parts, Main and Advance, each of three hours duration. Both tests will be given on the

same day, between 10 am and 5 pm. ISEET 2013 will be held in either March or April.

ISEET Main will be an objective type exam, and will test comprehension, critical thinking and logical reasoning. ISEET Advance will test problem-solving ability in basic science subjects. The two tests together will indicate a

candidate's scholastic level and aptitude for science and engineering.

A student's performance in the Class 12 Board exam will be considered, with the weightage not less than 40 per cent of the total score. The combined weightage for ISEET Main and Advance will not be more than 60 per

cent; however, the weightage given to Board scores can go up to 100 per cent.

Each state government or institute will be able to decide the specific weightage it gives to Board, Main and Advance exam scores. A committee headed by Dr T Ramasami, secretary in the Department of Science & Technology, has

demonstrated with the help of the Indian Statistical Institute that school scores across various Boards can be normalised through a statistical process.

ISEET will be conducted by CBSE. Further modalities will be worked out by an academic group headed by the director of IIT, Kanpur.

DECCAN HERRALD ND 14 FEB 2012 P9

Govt to go ahead with ISEET

States to be persuaded to accept single entrance test proposal

NEW DELHI: The Human Resource Development Ministry is all set to go ahead with its plan to conduct a common engineering entrance examination from 2013, but the first nationwide test may only cover technical institutions funded by the Centre.

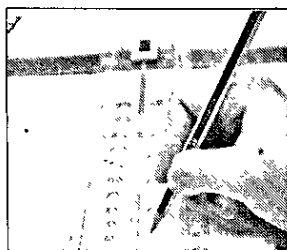
Meanwhile, the states will also be persuaded to accept the proposal to conduct a single entrance test for admission to engineering colleges under their jurisdiction.

"Ministry will go ahead with its plan to conduct a common entrance test in 2013 for admissions to science and engineering institutions funded by the Central government, if not

for all the technical institutions functioning across the country," sources in the HRD Ministry told *Deccan Herald*.

This means that the entrance test, to be conducted next year, will only cover 15 Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), 30 National Institutes of Technology (NITs), four Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIITs), five Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISERs) and few deemed universities which come under the purview of the HRD Ministry.

According to recommendations of the Ramasami committee, the single entrance, that can be called as Indian Science-Engineering Eligibility Test (ISEET) 2013, will be con-



ducted in two parts—main and advance—in April or May next year.

As per the proposal, examinations will be of three hour duration each and will be held on one single day, sources said.

For admission, a candidate must score above 40 per cent in Class-XII board examination. However, weightage accorded to the performance in

Class-XII can go up to 100 per cent. "The combined weightage for the Main and the Advance paper under ISEET shall not, in any case, exceed 60 per cent," sources said.

It is for the individual educational institutions or the state government to decide on the weightage to be accorded to the scores in Class-XII, main and advance examination, they added.

The proposal

As per the proposal, it would be up to each institution or groups of institutions or state agencies to conduct counselling and admission.

At present, there are around 15 lakh engineering colleges across the country and over

150 entrance tests are conducted for admission to these institutes. "Ministry wants to bring change in the current system in order to give relief to students of multiple tests by introducing a common entrance test for all these technical institutions. But, this requires the states' consent to the proposal for its implementation all over the country," sources said.

A meeting of the state education ministers on the issue is "tentatively" scheduled on February 22.

"At the meeting, the states will be urged to deliberate on the issue and take a view on the implementation of the recommendations of the Ramasami Committee," sources added.

DH News Service

Rashtriya Sahara ND 14/02/2012

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इंजीनियरिंग-विज्ञान प्रवेश परीक्षा में जुड़ेंगे बोर्ड के अंक

नई दिल्ली (एजेन्सी)। स्नातक स्तर पर इंजीनियरिंग और विज्ञान पाठ्यक्रमों में राष्ट्रीय साझा प्रवेश परीक्षा आयोजित करने की योजना के बीच सरकार ने इसके लिए स्कोर कार्ड तैयार करने में 60 प्रतिशत महत्व परीक्षा और 40 प्रतिशत महत्व 12वीं परीक्षा को देने का प्रस्ताव किया है।

मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय के सूत्रों ने बताया कि एकल साझा प्रवेश परीक्षा को भारतीय विज्ञान इंजीनियरिंग पात्रता परीक्षा (आईएसईईटी) कहा जाएगा और यह अगले वर्ष अप्रैल या मई में आयोजित की जाएगी। अधिकारियों कहा कि आइएसईईटी के दो हिस्से होंगे जिसमें आईएसईईटी मुख्य और आईएसईईटी उन्नत शामिल होगी। प्रत्येक परीक्षा तीन घंटों की होगी और परीक्षा एक ही दिन में ली जाएगी। उन्होंने कहा कि मंत्रालय ने हालांकि राज्यों को नियत दायरे में राज्यों को कुछ छूट देने का निर्णय किया है।

FE Labs

REINVENTING THE WHEEL

Researchers at IIT-Kanpur give a new insight into micromechanics

When you bend a rod, say made of aluminium, and then straighten it back, why doesn't it get back to its perfect shape, unlike a metal spring that retains its original frame even after being tampered with? Also, why is it easy to bend a thin rod?

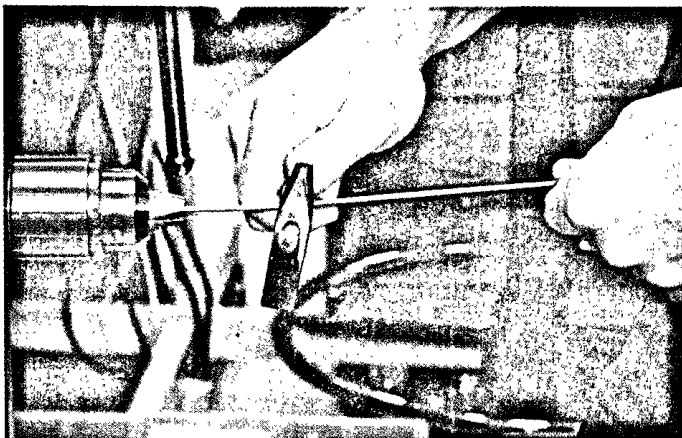
The answers to these questions have been around since the 1930s, when researchers in the field of micromechanics of materials first suggested the concept of dislocations, which are defects in the crystals or grains within the material. These dislocations not only weaken crystals, but also cause deformation by moving and leaving the crystal, the effect being permanent, in contrast to the spring which is elastic or reversible in nature.

Now, researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, (IIT-K), have come up with a new concept about these subtle goings-on inside the crystals of the materials that challenge some of the ideas that have been around over the past six decades. In this, the researchers also attempt to take forward the work on micromechanics of legends from the 1950s, like John Douglas Eshelby.

A dislocation introduces energy, and this energy is released when it reaches the surface, thus making plastic deformation irreversible. The IIT-K researchers have suggested that the slip of these dislocations might be reversible.

"We discovered something which is a double oxymoron — reversible plastic deformation due to elasticity. In the process, we discovered a new class," says Anandh Subramaniam, assistant professor at the Department of Materials Science and Engineering, IIT-K. Two papers that Anandh co-wrote with fellow researchers Prasenjit Khanikar and Arun Kumar were published last year by *The Philosophical Magazine*, one of the oldest scientific journals in the world.

Research into the micromechanical behaviour of materials, which includes areas such as dislocation dynamics, is crucial to their usage in industrial applications such as fashioning a car door out of metal. "The motion of dislocations is what allows change of shape, and impeding the motion of dislocations is what gives strength to the material. So, these are two opposite sides of the coin," explains Dipankar Banerjee, former chief controller, R&D, at the Defence Research and Development Organisation, and currently professor with the Department of Materials



While dislocations cause deformation by moving, and finally leave the crystal, it doesn't always require an external force. That's because they are automatically attracted to free surfaces, a phenomenon explained by a concept known as 'image force'

Engineering at the Indian Institute of Science.

While dislocations cause deformation by moving, and finally leave the crystal, it doesn't always require an external force for them to do that. That's because they are automatically attracted to free surfaces, a phenomenon explained by a concept known as 'image force'. It is called so because a hypothetical negative dislocation is assumed to exist on the other side of the free surface, causing an attraction towards it.

This 'image construction' is usually used for the calculation of the force and 'image forces' can lead to crystals becoming spontaneously dislocation-free.

"Over the past 60 years, people have known this concept called image force and have developed theories, etc," says Anandh. "So, the first of the two things we showed is that the image force construction theory actually breaks down when we actually want it to work."

The reason, he explains, is because when the dislocation is less than about 100 atomic spacings from the surface it causes small deformations to the surface, partly relaxing the energy and hence altering the image force. In a nanocrystal, the entire domain can deform. For example, a thin plate would bend in the presence of a dislocation. In such cases, the standard formula cannot be used, he says.

The more interesting thing their computer simulation models showed was that the image force can also be zero in some cases. This means that a dislocation moving inside a crystal can be in neutral equilibrium just like a ball rolling on a

plane or an Anglepoise lamp where mechanism of spring and lever allows it to be moved to various configurations without putting in any effort.

"Over a range of positions, irrespective of where the dislocation sits, its energy does not change. So, this is the new concept we have found out," says Anandh.

"We can describe things between a material and a structure, which we call a structure because the defect has a crystallographic origin. So, we found out that actually we have to define a new term called material-structure, and that there can be neutral equilibrium or zero-stiffness material-structures," says Anandh.

He says further research also indicated that an edge dislocation is stable in a finite crystal, a question that's some 60 years old. However, the research is at a very fundamental level and potential applications are still to be thought on, says Anandh.

Computer simulation and modelling has been a key development over the past decade from the industrial standpoint of metallurgy, which earlier used an entirely experimental approach, says Dipankar Banerjee.

"So, you substantially reduce your experimental costs and time in introducing new shapes and materials into service," he says.

While the materials used for structural applications are fairly mature, the key focus is to reduce the costs of applying such materials and also the timescale of engineering them, he says.

— Ajay Sukumaran

EXPERTSPEAK

ANANDH SUBRAMANIAM, assistant professor at the Department of Materials Science and Engineering, IIT-K



We discovered something which is a double oxymoron — reversible plastic deformation due to elasticity, and in the process we discovered a new class.

DIPANKAR BANERJEE, professor, Department of Materials Engineering at the Indian Institute of Science



The industrial applications of metallurgy essentially demand that you shape the metal to the precise product shape that you want. The challenge of imparting the right shape and getting the right mechanical behaviour depends on understanding the micromechanical behaviour of the material because the motion of dislocations is what allows change of shape, and impeding the motion of dislocations is what gives strength to the material.

STATFACTS

MICROMECHANICS



- Nanoscale computer simulations by IIT-Kanpur researchers yields new concepts of the structure and defects in materials
- They say that existing theories about the force that causes deformations within the grain of a material may not explain certain situations
- In the process, the researchers claim to have answered a 60-year-old question on whether an edge dislocation can be stable
- While the materials used for structural applications are fairly mature, focus is on reducing costs of applying such materials

Business Standard, ND 14/02/2012

P-2

Public sector banks may not flock to IIMs

M SARASWATHY & ABHIJIT LELE

Mumbai, 13 February

The slowdown in 2009 saw many public sector organisations coming to the rescue of the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs). This placement season may not paint a similar picture.

For instance, State Bank of India (SBI) and IDBI Bank have decided not to go to the IIMs this year. Union Bank of India and Bank of India are not sure about the number of students they will get to recruit.

“We will visit all other management institutes except the IIMs, as we have had a bad experience with them,” says T R Bajalia, executive director (HR). “They tend to leave us in one to two years time.” In fact, the public sector lender has already begun visits to management and engineering institute campuses to recruit 400 graduates, including MBAs. SBI reveals it has no

plans to visit management institutes this year. It will decide its 2012-13 course of action this April. Reason: the bank is planning to recruit people entirely through their national-level entrance examination, according to Arundhati Bhattacharya, deputy managing director and CDO of SBI.

PSUs told *Business Standard* that last year, with the economy back on track, IIM students preferred private sector companies due to fatter pay packets. Government undertakings such as BPCL, HPCL, GAIL, IOCL, NTPC, SBI Cap, Sidbi, Sebi, United Bank of India and Union Bank of India, with their conservative salary structures, recruited from other B-schools in good numbers.

While PSU banks offer students a package of ₹5-6 lakh per annum, private banks pay over ₹10 lakh per annum.

Union Bank of India is

optimistic. M V Nair, chairman and managing director of the bank that was the largest recruiter from IIM-Ahmedabad in 2009, with 40 students joining the bank, said availability would decide the number of people to be recruited. “Some management graduates from IIMs did join the bank after 2008 global financial crisis,” he recalls.

The institute has a vacancy of 2,500 people in the officers cadre for the year 2012. This includes persons joining through the common recruitment process managed by the Institute of Banking Personnel and Selection.

Some banks — Bank of India, for instance — have had a pleasant experience with the IIMs. R K Goyal, general manager (HR), says, “Of around 130 students recruited from the management institutes, only three have left. So, we will continue to visit them.”

Business Standard, ND 14/02/2012 P-2

HIRING SEASON BEGINS AT TOP B-SCHOOLS

Bulk recruitments go thin at B-schools

VINAY UMARJI

Ahmedabad, 13 February

While recruiters from financial services have retained their top position during placements at top B-schools in the country this year, the numbers they are hiring have gone down. As against taking 25-30 students in one go, companies, especially in finance and IT sectors, are said to be taking only 8-12 students each, on average.

For instance, ICICI Bank, HDFC and TCS have picked up only a handful at the ICFAI Business School, Mumbai, according to Hema Sisodia, dean (corporate relations and campus placements). "Bulk recruiters have reduced the numbers," she adds. "These five or six regular bulk recruiters used to pick up over 35 per cent, but this year they have hardly picked 25 per cent."

Similarly, despite picking up students in "decent numbers", the Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar (XIMB) says firms from the IT sector have reduced bulk recruitments. "From 25-30 recruitments last year, the figure for this year has come down to 8-10," says Sabita Mohanty, faculty co-ordinator (placements). "This year, firms are making offers in a more focused manner. They are looking for the right fit. As a

result, the numbers have reduced."

Even a premier B-school like the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIM-A), agrees the placement scenario is "a little less buoyant" than the last year. "The number of offers per recruiters are likely to go down this year, with 18-20 being the maximum," says Saral Mukherjee, chairperson (placements). "However, most of these will be international financial companies. We don't know if

domestic firms will follow suit."

Management institutes had to invite more firms this year. While it invited about 300 firms, Mumbai-based K J Somaiya Institute of Management Studies and Research (SIMSR) has seen only 63 coming to its campus for placements so far. Another 20 are expected soon. N D Sharma, placement coordinator at SIMSR, says, "By now, we should have placed all our students like we did last

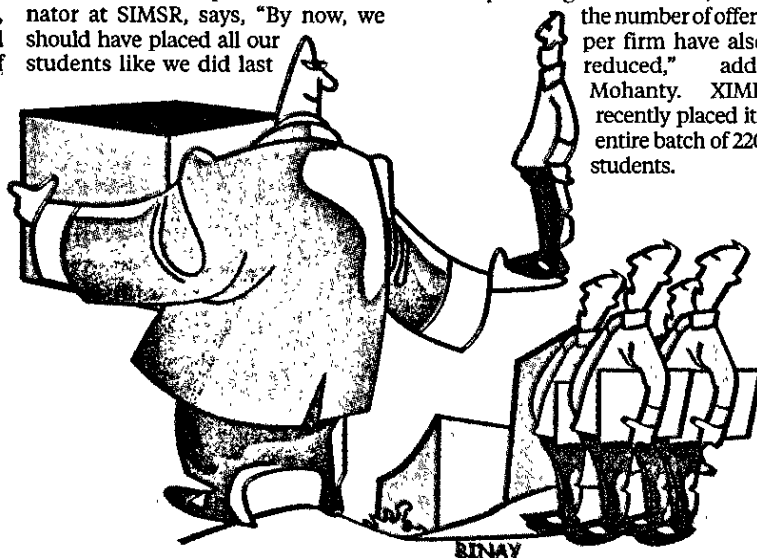
year. But so far, only 85 per cent of the 120-strong batch has been placed."

Seconding his views is XIMB's Mohanty. "We had to work a lot harder on inviting firms this year," she notes. "Some we took for granted in the finance sector took a skip at the placements. Which is why this year we saw 70 firms at our campus as against 50 firms, since

the number of offers per firm have also reduced," adds Mohanty. XIMB recently placed its entire batch of 220 students.

BCG top recruiter as IIM-A begins placements

The final placement process for the management batch of 2010-12 began on Monday at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. Global strategy consulting firms and international investment banks were invited to the campus in the first cluster. The Boston Consulting Group made the highest number of offers by recruiting 17. Others included McKinsey & Co, Bain & Co, AT Kearney, Credit Suisse, HSBC, Oliver Wyman and Accenture. The second cluster will be held on February 17.



AFTER VIRTUAL CLASSES, GOVT TO START VIRTUAL LABS

Chetan Chauhan
■ chetan@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Missed a laboratory experiment or failed to understand it, don't worry. Soon, your laptop or Aakash 2 will help you understand school and college laboratory experiments through the HRD ministry's new "virtual lab" for science and math students.

The HRD ministry with help from leading academicians will provide online facility to view laboratory tests through its education portal Sakshat.

"It will be country's first virtual laboratory in which the students will be able to conduct experiments while watching a video on the portal," a government official said. They will also be able to evaluate their performance and seek replies to their queries.

A virtual laboratory is part of the ministry's plan to provide entire school and college curriculum online. It is a precursor to the ministry's grand plan to provide low-cost tablet Aakash, first to college students and subsequently to school children.

The ministry plans to give an Aakash to 220 million college-going students in India in the next three to five years. The initial effort is expected to be launched in March, when the ministry will seek bids to supply a million Aakash tablets for distribution to students.

The new Aakash will have features to view the virtual lab on high definition with clarity in voice inputs. Videos of certain experiments will come pre-loaded with Aakash 2.

The virtual lab, to be launched next week, will try to be different by having latest from around the world on specific subjects. For instance if someone wants to understand an experiment on space science the portal will give information on the latest developments by Indian Space Research Organisation.

The virtual lab has been developed with the help of top academicians from the IIT and Department of Science and Technology under the ministry's guidance.

The Hindu ND 14-Feb-12 p15

Sahara to launch Tablets soon

Staff Reporter

KOZHIKODE: The Sahara Group has ambitious expansion programme in the State. "We intend to have a strong presence in retail, education and housing sectors in this State", Subrata Roy, Sahara Group Chairman, said at a press conference held at Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode (IIMK) here on Saturday last. He also announced that a Tablet from Sahara stable would be in the market soon.

Mr. Roy said a Sahara team had already visited Kerala and taken stock of the market conditions. The finer points of the group's business plans were being worked out. Sahara already had a presence in the housing sector.

Mr. Roy said the emphasis of his ventures in the retail sector would be on quality which he believed was at a premium in retail stores.

Sahara would have one lakh retail outlets across the nation by March next year. The first of these would be opened in Rajasthan this March. Sahara retail outlets would open in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand by June. Sahara would also be in the education sector and reach homes through TV channels with quality educational programmes. Another major Sahara venture would be in the Tablet market. The design for Sahara tablet was ready. Mr. Roy was confident that a 7 inch tablet could be priced around Rs.5,000 and an 8 inch tablet about Rs.9,000.

Go on, get a vocation!

The apartheid between education & employability is starting to end but this is only the end of the beginning

One of the biggest tragedies in Indian higher education is the partition in the cerebral cortex of Indian parents when they think of their kids' educational activity; they send their kids to vocational institutes for jobs/skills and send them to colleges for the social signalling value of a degree. While this partition has deep roots and complex causes, most of this tragedy is a child of a vicious separation of vocational training and higher education. Employability and education are horizontal but the government is organised vertically. But change may be on the way; the ministry of HRD announced last week that the National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF) will go live from the 2012-13 academic session in polytechnics, engineering colleges and other colleges under the university system. NVEQF is a descriptive framework that provides a common reference for linking various qualifications to translate various qualifications from schools, vocational training, technical education, colleges and universities. NVEQF has many upsides but two are most important; multiple on and off ramps and vertical mobility between certificates, diplomas and degrees.

The multiple entry and exit ramps are an important and overdue innovation; the current higher education system largely serves kids between the 18-23 years of age who pass their Class 12 exams. But every year as many as 100 lakh of the 260 lakh kids who take the Class 10 exam fail. And 80 lakh of the 160 lakh kids who take the Class 12 exam every year fail. Of the 80 lakh who pass Class 12, only 50 lakh enter higher

education. The current higher education system obviously does not have much flexibility or solutions for the 210 lakh kids who made it to Class 10 but didn't go to higher education and chose work or non-degree education. But the bigger dilemma is faced by students who dropped out before Class 10 or people who entered the workforce early and want to re-enter the higher education system. Our estimate is this NVEQF could change the lives of about 30% of the workforce—420 million "education outsiders"—by creating flexibility.

One of the biggest myths in skills has been an irrational social stigma about vocational training. This stigma is hardly irrational; most vocational training in India has traditionally not led to a job nor did it offer any possibilities of vertical mobility into the higher education system. Skill programmes with high employment outcomes hardly suffer the stigma. But the optics and uptake of non-degree programmes—certificates or diplomas—would substantially improve if students had the option of using them as an opening balance to enter or re-enter the higher education system. Experience shows that only 30% of the students may actually exercise the option of vertical mobility



MANISH
SABHARWAL

100 lakh of 260 lakh who take the Class 10 exam fail, just 80 lakh pass Class 12, and only 50 lakh go to college. Vocational skills are the answer. But turf wars over NVEQF could derail everything

that have sunk many policy moves; the intersection across central ministries and the intersection between a central government who sets strategy and state governments who control delivery systems and execution. The relationship with the National Council of Vocational Training needs to be ironed out because increasing the employability is surely an objective of NVEQF. This employability requires

over their lives but this option has real value. NVEQF will also allow more effective integration of vocational skills into school education though I personally believe that fixing schools may be a better idea than vocationalising them because Class 10 is already the new Class 8 but that is another article. NVEQF will create vertical mobility between certificates, diplomas and degrees by enabling credit transfer and recognition of prior learning. So the social signalling value of a degree—80% of matrimonial ads require one—will now be available. But more than a substantial bump up of overall social signalling value, NVEQF will allow institutions and individuals to craft a more seamless blending of practical skills with theoretical knowledge.

Realising the true upside of NVEQF requires navigating intersections

active involvement of employers and I submit that the sector skill councils of NSDC would be a better trustee of NVEQF than the currently proposed AICTE. If the AICTE mandate is an interim arrangement until Sector Skill Councils are able then it is fine, but history shows that jurisdiction shifts—particularly in education—are hard to unravel even though original intentions envisaged an expiry date.

NVEQF has the potential to be one of the biggest innovations in Indian higher education regulation over the last decade. But as with any complex policy innovation, the idea is only the end of the beginning. The complexity of operationalising credit transfer and equivalence, recognition of prior learning, credit for on-the-job training, etc, have the potential to overwhelm any framework.

NVEQF is an idea whose time has come but the antibiotic reaction from stakeholders outside the ministry of HRD—state governments, traditional academics, senates of universities, state governments and the ministry of labour—has begun. These are strong-willed organisations that have different ideas about jurisdiction and may have the power to slow down if not block NVEQF. As Stephen Hawking said, the biggest obstruction to progress is not ignorance but the illusion of knowledge. We must try to get everybody on the same page but, if that does not happen, somebody must decide the page. If there was ever an issue that deserved issuing a fatwa in Indian education, NVEQF is it.

*The author is chairman,
Teamlease Services*

Unaddressed issues in education

► **Specific socio-religious groups could lag behind the rest in educational attainments.**

Abusaleh Shariff

India is today seen as one of the leading economies in the world and counted among the top five. China and India could vie to take the first and second slot in about 30-40 years.

But is this a true and real picture of India while a large portion of our citizens languish under poverty, deprivation, even lack of food and high malnutrition? Also, India still has one of the largest illiterate populations, both in terms of absolute size and in proportionate terms.

Let us take a look at literacy and education as an example and assess what it would take for India to ensure credible presence in the 'league of top nations'.

Accomplishments since Independence in terms of literacy, spread of institutions, participation and equalisation of educational opportunities have been quite significant.

There has been a phenomenal increase in the number of educational institutions, faculty, in teachers and students. The 1991 census saw India across the 50 per cent literacy mark, and by 2011 the literacy level has reached 74.5 per cent.

Yet the rural-urban disparities in literacy have remained, although there has only been a marginal decline in gender disparity of late.

To understand future prospects in literacy and education, one needs to analyse process indicators such as enrolment and quality of education.

PRATHAM-ASER SURVEY

Pratham, a well-known civil society organisation, undertakes 'annual assessment of education' and brings out a report identified as ASER. The seventh such report with

reference year 2011 provides a conflicting scenario — that practically all children 5-14 years are enrolled in the schooling system, over one quarter of them attend private schooling, but a substantial proportion of children in government schools have very low levels of learning in terms of language, comprehension and numeracy.

While there is something to cheer about in terms of enrolment efforts, with the private sector doing its bit, there are serious problems in the process, impact and outcome of the education sector in India.

The quality of schools and schooling is poor in the government system, although the government-appointed teachers are well educated compared with the purely private schools.

The private schools, excepting for Kerala (actually, government aided schools in Kerala), can also be of unsatisfactory quality, and tend to appoint poorly trained and poorly paid teachers. Thus, overall the situation is akin to sowing seeds on the land, with no crop to reap at the end of the season.

I wish the ASER report had explored a few factors which impact school continuation rates.

There is a debate as to the impact of mid-day meals on continuation of schooling; similarly, provision of drinking water and toilets is expected to help improve girls' schooling.

The high cost of education is considered an impediment to schooling, yet one finds large increase in private schooling in India. How can this trend be explained?

During the last two or three years, there has been an emphasis on pre- and post-matric scholarships — what is its impact?

While it is true that there has been a slow increase in literacy, enrolment and continuation rate in India, deficits are likely to be concentrated among specified population groups or socio-religious groups.

It would have been useful, if information on language of



The declining standards of government schools are hard to explain.

instruction had also been analysed, especially with respect to learning ability of English.

This dimension in the dynamics of literacy and education can also be a separate chapter in ASER, at least as a supplementary report of 2011, and certainly as an integral part of its report in 2012.

That said, ASER-2011 should be appreciated for being a rare analytical measurement of learning ability and change over the last seven years, with the annual series of data available.

However, sampling and non-sampling errors cannot be ruled out. The recent survey was undertaken about the time Census of India 2011 was in operation, which could have led to absence of teachers from school.

Similarly, often the basic literacy programmes are implemented in various formats — for example, there can be special campaigns when quality of learning can increase, albeit temporarily, and so on. Analysis on learning abilities in arithmetic has also been evaluated and the scenario is much worse than the one enunciated in case of reading alone.

All India Literacy Rates over the Years

	All	Male	Female
1951	18.3	27.2	8.9
1961	28.3	40.4	15.3
1971	34.5	46.0	22.0
1981*	43.6	56.4	29.8
1991	52.2	64.1	39.2
2001	64.8	75.3	53.8
2011	74.4	82.1	65.5

*From 1981, the population was taken as 7 years and above, against 5 years and above earlier.

WORRYING INDICATORS

The ASER report has indicated that what is measured as enrolment does not reflect school attendance.

The latter has remained very poor; in States such as Bihar, UP and West Bengal there is a sharp decline in school continuation. Another disturbing factor is an increase in multi-grade classrooms, which could be a factor for children shifting away from government to private schools in most states.

ASER divides the schooling identities into government and private; although it refers to un-aided schools which can be considered private schools, what is disputable is

to consider aided-schools as private. Here, while community groups manage the primary and elementary school, most of the expenditures including teachers' salaries are met by the state budgetary mechanism.

Overall, however, the private primary and elementary schools appear to produce relatively better levels of literacy compared with the government schools, although if other factors are controlled for, this advantage may disappear.

Further, the fact that private tutoring would sustain levels of learning somewhat has been enunciated through this research, although generally it is only complementary to the quality of schooling itself.

The worrying fact is that compared with previous years, the learning levels in government school system have declined, while the private school has maintained its own quality of education.

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A museum for matters of the heart

GEORGE JACOB

EVER since the famous British chocolatier Richard Cadbury created the first box of Valentine Day chocolates in 1868, 14th February has become a commercial behemoth spurring jewellery, flower and greeting card sales, running into an estimated \$15 billion business worldwide. With a zillion hearts aflutter sensing the approaching St. Valentine's Day, the hopes and heartaches of many assume meanings and metaphors that occupy the very core of all human emotions — love. It is the magical muse that has launched a thousand ships, a million dreams and left scorching ruins of scars etched in history triggered by love spurned, left smouldering through time, unrequited...immortalised in songs and sonnets of yearning across cultures.

While love brings passion, hope and joy to the lucky few, it often leaves a trail of broken relationships in its wake for those who were left wanting. Or, were plain unlucky! People have dealt with it in myriad ways through history. Battles have been pitched, duels fought. But, when film producer Olinka Vištica and artist Dra en Grubišić of Croatia decided to break-up amicably, they decided to do it creatively. They conceived the creation of a unique Museum of Broken Relationships!

The urge to protect poignant memories of heart-break turned into an installation at the Zagreb biennale in 2006 and evolved into a travelling exhibit that invited objects and personal stories from the visitors willing to share from the *schadenfreude* (this German word, now loaned to English means - pleasure derived from the misfortunes) to the more sensitive subtleties of frayed emotional state. Last year, the exhibition formally moved into a museum dedicated to human relationships in the upper Zagreb locale of Gronji Grad, strewn with 14th century neo-gothic churches connected with winding, cobbled streets.

The residue of love

Winning the prestigious Kenneth Hudson European Museum of the Year Award in 2011, for innovative thought, the Museum of Broken Relationships echoes the fragility of human relationships in their social, political and personal context encouraging acknowledgment, reflection and discussion through experiential journeys of others. The miasma of emotions embodied in objects on display swing from anger, fury, sadness, longing, depression to hope, joy, comfort and inspiration. These objects are often of little, if any, intrinsic worth, but they hold value because of the person who gave them. Whether these objects are kept, binned or burnt, or are worn as *talisma*, they always

Museums are moving beyond showcasing the fossilised history. A museum in Croatia, now travelling the world, explores the fragility of heartbreaks by encouraging acknowledgment, reflection and discussion through experiential journeys of others



Photo: Dario Babic

mean something special.

Drawing on the French philosopher Roland Barthes for its inspiration, the museum affirms that every passion, ultimately, has its spectator and that there is no amorous offering without a final theatre. The permanent exhibition is themed along the lines of *Allure of Distance - Intimations of Proximity, Whims of Desire, Rage and Fury, Rites of Passage, Tides of Time, Paradox of Home, Resonance of Grief and Sealed by History*. The accompanying text and the socio-cultural context of objects allows for a cohesive interpretation of the museum experience in conjunction with its collections.

The memorabilia

For instance, "Tides of Time" includes objects related to love

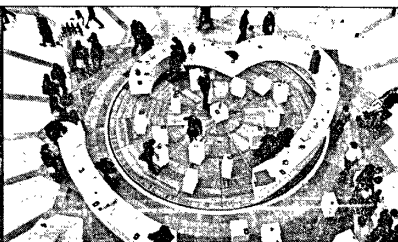
across distances, generations and time-zones, "Sealed by History" addresses relationships across inter-ethnic and international relationships, "Whims of Desire" has exhibits with suggestive and explicit erotic fantasies, "Rites of Passage" includes topics of marriage, and "Resonance of Grief" dwells on the more difficult realm of illnesses and passing of life.

An old, worn-out Nokia mobile phone is exhibited with a note from an anonymous donor that reads: "It lasted 300 days too long. He gave me his mobile phone so I couldn't call him anymore." Following the war in the Balkans in the 1990s a Croatian man sent a note along with a prosthetic leg. "In a Zagreb hospital I met a beautiful, young and ambitious social worker from the Ministry of Defence, who taught me how to

use the prosthetic limb. Sadly, the leg endured more than the love. It was made of sturdier material...", he wrote. A funny annotation on a suspender belt, purchased in Sarajevo in 2003, muses: "I never put them on. The relationship might have lasted longer if I had."

And yet another quirky note on a tin-box sold as "Love Incense", merely reads, "Doesn't work." Some are humorously sarcastic. The label caption by a blue Frisbee reads: "Darling, should you ever get the ridiculous idea to walk into a cultural institution like a museum for the first time in your life, you'll remember me." Some are flippantly casual, like a cheap clock that celebrates "We broke-up over Skype".

From an axe used in fury by a jilted lover to destroy furniture that he gave her (called ex-Axe),



NOT A LAUGHING MATTER

Mr Davdas is no more a laughing stock. He needs help! With an excessive focus on the evolution of mind, little attention in our education has been spared for managing the fragility of human relationships, feels Dr Ranjay Vardhan, a senior assistant professor of sociology at PGCCG, Chandigarh. He founded a unique society called 'Toote di prabandhak committee' (The Broken Heart Rehabilitation Centre) in 1998 to help the young and old come to terms with life despite their heartbreaks. Reasons for a broken heart are peculiar in Indian society; if you are a loser in academics, career, immigration, marriage and of course love, you are at the receiving end of social scorn. The society with 150 active members has a team of four counsellors at hand to offer help. And, request for help pours in from Indians settled across the world. Based on his experiences, he has also penned a book titled 'Coping with Broken Hearts - World's First Self-Help Book for Broken Hearts'.



(clockwise from left) From an amazing collection of over 700 personal experiences of heartbreaks on display from different cultures and histories at the Museum of Broken Relationships, an exhibit titled ex-Axe.

An artist's impression of a jilted lover.

The jigsaw puzzle of a broken heart!

emotional effect." Their passion echoes with the romantic Irish poet W.B. Yeats' verses "The wrong of unshapely things / is a wrong too great to be told; / I hunger to build them anew..." (The Rose in the Deeps of His Heart).

The global heartache

The Museum has since amassed an amazing collection of over 700 personal experiences, from different cultures and histories, offering universal patterns of self-discovery and perhaps deeper insights into something more meaningful. "The museum tackles the interface between material objects to communicate an intangible moments. Curators are more 'close to psychotherapists here with the museum experience as a therapeutic revelation of sorts," says Dr. Darko Babic, Professor and Researcher at

the University of Zagreb's Heritage Management Programme.

Creativity extends into their "Brokenships", the museum retail shop that has souvenirs including teddies and t-shirts with their famous tear-drop icon. Perhaps the most popular item sold is a simple pencil eraser which says "Bad Memories Eraser".

Last week their new travelling exhibit on 'Love Shards and Broken Promises' opened at the National Centre for Craft and Design at Lincolnshire, UK. Dubbed as the 'Hub of Love', the exhibit explores the power of simple objects over human psyche when objects absorb meaning. Their exhibits have travelled to South Africa, Germany, Turkey, United States, Greece, Macedonia, Sarajevo and other parts of the world evoking curiosity and attracting visitors from all age groups and demographic pools.

The business of love

Oblivious to the beheading of St. Valentine who was martyred on February 14 some 1700 years ago, at the behest of the Roman Emperor Claudius II, who prevented men from getting married fearing low enrolment in his army, his legend lives on eternally for secretly aiding cupid in the universal language of love across generations.

Love is also serious business. With Hershey Kisses sales jumping over \$1.8 billion on Valentine's Day alone, and on-line florists having an ever-increasing field day, technology has certainly influenced love. 16 million e-valentines flew across the internet last year in the United States and this year it might quadruple. With millions of users and members on match-making sites, access and availability, love-based "connectivity" has jumped to unimaginable proportions.

The meteoric 8 year rise of the social networking site Facebook with its mushrooming millions of users, culminated on February 1, 2012, with the filing of an astronomical \$5 billion IPO that will hit the share-market in May this year.

If the business of love brings profits, technology is detrimental to love. Last October, Jake Reilly - a 24 year old copywriting student from Chicago unplugged from social media for 90 days. Calling it the Amish Project, he disconnected from email, texts and mobile phone, acutely aware that we are not being present in the moment and spending far more time with gadgets than building and nurturing "true" relationship with those we care. Sending on an average 1500 text messages a month in addition to 700 minutes on the phone is an addiction that rules the roost with increasing number of users, undermining the role of love in life. Causing heartbreaks.

(The writer is a well known museologist whose work spans many countries.)

Online theft of IDs at Microsoft store

Company Says Card Details Not Stolen

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Hackers, calling themselves the Evil Shadow Team and reportedly based in China struck at www.microsoftstore.co.in on Sunday night, stealing login IDs and passwords of people who had used the site for shopping.

According to reports, the IDs and passwords were stored in plain text files without any encryption.

Evil Shadow later posted a message on the Microsoft website, saying the “unsafe system will be baptized”.

A Microsoft spokesperson said they were investigating a “limited compromise” of the company’s online store in India. “Customers have already been sent guidance on the issue and suggested immediate actions. We are diligently working to remedy the issue,” the spokesperson said.

In its email to customers, Microsoft reportedly claimed that databases storing credit card details and payment information were not affected during the security breach. At the same time, the company is said to have acknowledged that the exposed account details may include non-financial information, including email addresses, passwords, order details and shipping addresses.

Last year, hacker groups like Lulzsec had carried out several highprofile break-ins, putting the focus on security measures companies put in place. Sony allegedly suffered several security breaches and hackers stole user IDs and passwords of customers.

Lulzsec had said that with its actions it was trying to draw attention to the poor security methods used at websites, even by multinational firms.