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NIT-Trichy students protest over research fund

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<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/trichy/NIT-Trichy-students-protest-over-research-fund/articleshow/46306234.cms>

TRICHY: NIT Trichy research scholar association organised a peaceful protest to support the ongoing movement against the unsatisfactory response shown by research-funding agencies and ministry of human resource development (MHRD) towards demands of fellowship hike for research scholars.

More than 400 research scholars assembled in front of administrative building of NIT Trichy with banners and posters to show their protest against the recent notification from MHRD regarding fellowship hike from February, 2015.

The major agendas of the protest included the correction of irregular disposal of monthly scholarship and the increase of employment opportunities for Phd scholars. They also demanded greater transparency in the appointment of scientists and faculty, and constitution of a proper platforms for these appointments.

Union minister to see IIT-Madras's low cost housing technology

Chennai, Feb 18 (IANS): Premier technical institution Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) Thursday will showcase its low-cost housing technology using gypsum to union Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilisers Hansraj Gangaram Ahir.

According to IIT-M officials, gypsum is available in huge quantities with the Indian fertiliser companies to whom it posed a disposal problem.

The low cost housing technology developed by them can be a solution to the central government's ambitious scheme "Housing for All by 2022".

"Tomorrow (Thursday) IIT-M officials will make their presentation. I will then take it to the government for further action under the Housing for All by 2022 scheme," Ahir told IANS over phone.

He said he will also chair a review meeting of Madras Fertilisers Ltd, Thursday.

As proof of its technology, IIT-M has already constructed two storeyed apartment demonstration building of the institute constructed with glass fibre reinforced gypsum (GFRG).

Officials at IIT-M told IANS that the technology is ideal for mass housing, hostels and other similar buildings, and eight to ten storey buildings can be constructed with this technology.

The officials said the construction cost is much lower than what would be spent under conventional construction mode.

While gypsum panels have been in use for walls, IIT-M team decided to have it on floors and staircases.

The Kochi based FACT-RCF Building Products Ltd supplied the GFRG panels for the demonstration building.

During his visit, Ahir will also inspect the demonstration building.

Mr PM, do you care about research as much as industry?: Siva Ranjan Upala

<http://www.dnaindia.com/mumbai/report-mr-pm-do-you-care-about-research-as-much-as-industry-siva-ranjan-upala-2062513>

On Monday, Siva Ranjan Upala, a 29-year-old research scholar from the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Mohali, led 1.5 lakh other research scholars from IIT Delhi, AIIMS, DRDO, Delhi University, JNU, Jamia Hamdard University on a hunger strike at Jantar Mantar. Their aim is to 'expose' the central government which 'failed' to keep its promise of implementing a 50% hike in research scholarships announced in October last year.

- Research scholars say they are finding it difficult to make both ends meet with the existing fellowship

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Siva, who is doing research on solid state nuclear magnetic resonance in the field of fundamental science, has just one question for PM Narendra Modi, "Mr PM, do you really care for research in India in the same way as you care for industrial development?" Speaking to dna over phone, he said, "The [prime minister](#) is doing everything to give 'Make in India' a big push. Wish he did the same for research too, rather than just doing lip-service."

The union science and technology ministry had announced a 50% hike on stipends in October last year after continuous protests by researchers. This was dubbed as the 'biggest ever' hike in scholarships till date. The hike was aimed at 'motivating' young researchers to continue their work in India and curb the brain drain.

The announcement was followed by notifications from the ministry and the University Grants Commission (UGC), according to which the junior research fellowship was hiked to Rs 25,000 from Rs 16,000, while the senior research fellowship was hiked to Rs 28,000 from the existing Rs 18,000 a month. The stipend for post-doctoral studies went up from Rs 22,000 to Rs 36,000 (for research associate-1), from Rs 23,000 to Rs 38,000 (research associate-2) and from Rs 24,000 to Rs 40,000 (research associate-3).

While neither UGC nor the S&T ministry have implemented the hike till now, the technical [education department](#) of the HRD ministry, which disburses grants to nearly 50,000 scholars doing research in the fields of engineering, pharmacy, [architecture](#) etc, didn't even issue a notification, leading to unrest.

Siva had undertaken a 7-day padyatra from Mohali to Delhi in December to highlight the issue. "None of us have got a hike until now. Due to such step-motherly treatment, most talent research students go abroad," rued Shubham Badjate from IIT Bombay. Over 2,700 students from IIT-B led a rally against the MHRD on Wednesday.

Ratikant Panda, another research scholar from IIT-B said, "While most of my classmates who took up job are getting Rs 1 lakh per month, I took up research because I am passionate about it. I earn just Rs 18,000 a month."

Bowing to mounting pressure, the HRD ministry issued a notification announcing the enhanced scholarships on Wednesday. As per the notification, scholarships for all scholars who are drawing fellowships from MHRD-affiliated bodies like AICTE, IIT's, NIT's, IIIT's, ISc, IISER, NITIE, Mumbai, ISM, Dhanbad, NIFFT, Ranchi, NERIST Arunachal Pradesh, SLIET, Longowal, SPA's and NITTR's have been revised from February 1, 2015.

Research scholars however rejected the proposal. "The S&T ministry offers it from October 2014, UGC offers it from December 2014 and MHRD is giving it to us from February 2015. Why so much discrimination and disparity?" asked the students.

HRD minister Smriti Irani didn't respond to calls and messages.

Economic Times ND

20/02/2015 P-8

ET INTERVIEW
DAVID BODDY
 PRINCIPAL PARTNER, ASIS

UK Schools are Keen on more Indian Students

Anglo Schools International Services (ASIS), a federation of 14 of Britain's leading boarding schools, has been stepping up its efforts to recruit international students for British boarding schools and universities. With a focus on India, it is offering a scholarship programme of over ₹9 crore to attract more students and has recently tied up with Credila Financial Services, a subsidiary of HDFC, to provide loans to parents wanting to send their children to its schools. The federation is headed by **David Boddy**, principal partner, ASIS. **ET** caught up with him when he was in India recently.



KEY TARGET

(Indian students) are hardworking and bright. That is why we are putting up close to £1 million in scholarships to attract them

aboard quickly. 65% of students are 16 or 17 years of age. We can take them as young as 11 years, and 13 years is the next most popular.

How has the number of Indian students in these schools been growing over the past few years?

The ASIS international scholarship programme is only in its second year. Two years ago, the total number of students from India in UK schools was 272. Last year, with the help of ASIS, it leapt to around 800. However, having said that, these numbers are only 10% of Chinese pupils. Our schools are very keen to take more Indian students. They are very hardworking and extremely bright. That is why we are putting up close to £1 million in scholarships to attract them.

Have you escalated efforts to attract more Indian students to UK schools?

This year, we are attending premier school shows all over India, including Delhi and Chandigarh. Our exam session finishes at the end of January so we are encouraging applicants to come

What is the city-wise breakup of school students headed to the UK? Have you mapped the profile of parents?

The majority of pupils are from Delhi, Mumbai, Chandigarh, Bangalore and Ahmedabad. A small number are from Kolkata, although interest from there is growing. Most parents have some international connection or want such a connection for their offspring. They usually send their children to fee-paying schools, but want the real international experience.

Choice-based Credit System Will Foster Interdisciplinary Education

ET By Invite



ASHISH DHAWAN

CBCS is critical for India to develop employable university graduates, currently a major challenge

The Indian government recently made Choice-based Credit System (CBCS) mandatory for all 400 public universities at the undergraduate and postgraduate level beginning academic year 2015-2016. This is good news as every student should have the right to choose subjects of interest.

CBCS will encourage students to learn in an interdisciplinary manner, in which teachers from varied disciplines design a curriculum, instruct the class and grade teams. Students can opt for courses of their choice, learn at their own pace, take additional courses and get more than the required credits.

The lack of an interdisciplinary approach is one reason why we are losing many of our brightest students to universities abroad. This year, the Institute for

International Education estimates that India is the No. 2 country of origin for foreign students in the US, with over 1.2 lakh students studying there, contributing an estimated \$3.3 billion.

Recently a wave of new generation private universities like Ashoka, Shiv Nadar and FLAME have adopted the interdisciplinary approach to higher education with success. By ensuring that all 400 public universities in India adopt international standards, the government is encouraging standards parity in higher education.

Introducing CBCS is critical for India to develop employable university graduates, a major challenge facing the country. There is a serious gap in demand and supply of work skills and qualifications to address long-term unemployment.



PARADIGM SHIFT
The grading system followed under CBCS will reduce our obsession with marks in exams

According to the International Labour Organisation, the unemployment rate in India has shown

an increasing trend since 2011 when it was 3.5%. This rose to 3.6% in 2012 and climbed to 3.7% last year. This year, the rate is expected to rise to 3.8%, according to the report by 'Global Employment Trends 2014'.

Under CBCS, students will be able to pursue three types of courses — foundation, elective and core. Students must pursue core subjects every semester and are free to pick electives from a pool of subjects unrelated to their disciplines. This means if you are a computer science student, you can still opt for history as an elective. A study of varied subjects widens students' horizon and exposure.

Further, the grading system followed under the CBCS will reduce our obsession with marks in examinations that has led to a mechanical approach to education.

Education should teach us to have clarity of thought and not merely rewrite information. Keeping in mind that individual universities might not have the necessary faculty for elective subjects, the government has created a framework for credit transfer between institutes. Thus students can transfer credits from one university to another as credits will be recognised by every university. To strengthen this system, credit transfers can either be lateral or vertical, that is, at the same or higher level, respectively.

The traditional higher education system has a non-uniform performance assessment system putting all the pressure on the student at the end of the year. With the semester system associated with CBCS, not only will the curriculum be uniformly distributed, but one can also

cover 10 subjects instead of five in a year as the student will spend more time with the faculty.

The current framework suggests allotting 50% of the total credits to core subjects, 25% to applied core subjects, 20% to interdisciplinary subjects and 5% for foundation courses. With this interdisciplinary approach, students can choose to develop different skills like communication, writing and debating through their electives and emerge as more employable individuals.

This new approach reflects the government's understanding of the uniqueness of every student. Both students and teachers have high expectations from these new guidelines. (Hope the details have no devil.)

(The writer is founder and trustee of Ashoka University. Views are personal)

RISING POLLUTION

What makes Delhi's air the worst in the world?

BY NIKITA MEHTA
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NEW DELHI

Emissions in Delhi have been progressively rising since 2010 as has the contribution of the transportation sector to the city's air pollution, according to a study by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM).

The main air quality issue for Delhi lies in particulate pollutants namely PM10 (with a size of 10 micron), PM2.5 (2.5 micron) and black carbon.

While particulate matter can settle deep inside the lungs, making people vulnerable to cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, black carbon plays an important role in climate change.

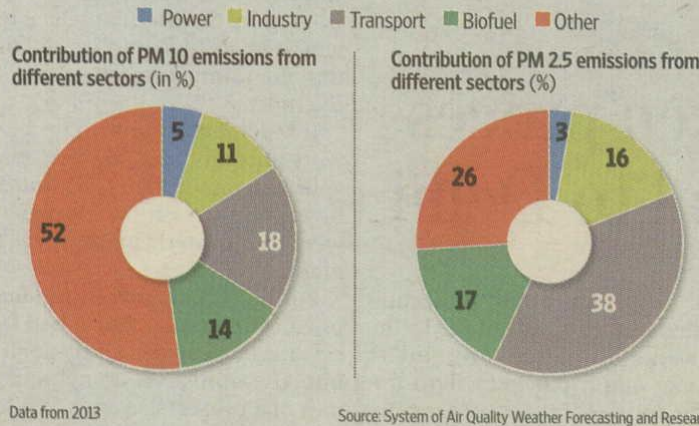
In 2014, a World Health Organization study in May and Yale study in February found the air in New Delhi to be the most polluted.

There were 12 other cities in the top 20 most polluted cities among 1,600 studied cities.

The rise in the number of

CHIEF CULPRITS

The main contributors to particulate pollution



AJAY NEGI/MINT

vehicles has led to emissions from the transport sector growing by more than 30% between 2010 and 2014, accompanied by a marginal increase of around 5% due to rise in traffic density in terms of dust as vehicles go on unpaved roads.

Unpaved roads and construction work result in a spike in PM10 emissions.

Emissions from bio-fuel have

decreased by 1-3% even though biomass burning has seen a slight increase.

To develop the emission inventory for PM2.5, PM10, and BC, IITM divided the sources into five sectors: transport (petrol, diesel, CNG), bio-fuel (cooking-wood, coal, kerosene, open bio-mass), power (coal burning in thermal power plants), industry, and others (paved, unpaved

roads, construction activities, brick kiln, wind blown). The growth rate for PM10 was around 7% over the past four years; the major growth share is from transport sector. The total emission of PM2.5 has seen a rise of 11.5% in this period.

"Contribution of various sources of emissions, along with the high number of cooler days lead to heavy pollution in Delhi," said Gufran Beig, project director, System of Air Quality Weather Forecasting and Research which monitors air quality under ministry of earth sciences.

"The pollution concentration multiplies when the aerosols sit on fog."

The air is the worst in Connaught Place, Parliament House, India Gate, Indira Gandhi International Airport, Okhla Industrial Area, Pragati Maidan, IP Estate, Janakpuri, Meharuli, and Laxmi Nagar.

"The government needs to tackle the problem of air pollution with short-term, medium-term and long-term measures. Health advisories on a daily basis is good as a short-term measure, but we need to look at long-term strategies like emission management, and improving public transportation and connectivity," said Vivek Chattopadhyay, programme manager, clean air programme, Centre for Science and Environment.



DWINDLING INTEREST The IIM-Kozhikode campus in Kerala. For 2014, only 1.89 lakh candidates registered for the entrance test to IIMs against the 1.95 lakh in 2013

Business schools face a crisis of confidence

As they struggle to attract students, many are approaching real estate firms to sell their property or to work out an alternative land use strategy

KALPANA PATHAK
Mumbai, 19 February

Last week, a management institution from the National Capital Region approached a renowned business school in Delhi to gauge its interest in a possible takeover. It wasn't the first time that the school had been approached with such a proposal. The dean of the B-school said he wasn't interested, and suggested that the institution convert itself into a regular school.

The proposal highlighted the plight of the country's B-schools. "There are fewer takers for MBA programmes, especially in Tier III and Tier IV B-schools owing to a variety of reasons: increased awareness among students about the quality of education being provided, lack of infrastructure and faculty, and the decreasing return on investment (fees)," points out Ajay Srinivasan, director, Crisil Research.

With the average occupancy rate remaining far from comfortable at 68-70 per cent in 2013-14, Srinivasan expects "to witness more pain, that is more B-schools closing down". However, it is likely, he says, there will be a slight improvement in the average occupancy rates over the next two years.

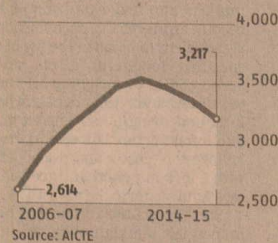
Rapid growth had helped double the number of B-schools to 4,500 between 1995 and 2005 as an off-shoot of the economy growing at an average of 7 per cent and bringing with it huge job opportunities. The demand for skilled managers led to the growth of B-schools. Then came the slowdown in 2008. Jobs began drying up and admissions started tapering off, except in the elite schools. Harivansh Chaturvedi, director, Birla Institute of Management and Technology, Noida, says that the shakeout in management education was inconceivable before 2008.

Today, India has 3,217 B-schools, down from 3,541 in 2012. Barring the top 75 colleges, the rest are struggling to survive. Nearly 600 have closed over the past seven years. In fact, industry players fear that with B-schools trying to do away with the requirement of reporting closures to the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), the figures for management schools closing down could be higher than reported. "Informing AICTE when shutting down an institute is a long-drawn process, so many skip it," says Chaturvedi.

The number of AICTE-approved seats in B-schools has increased fourfold from 94,704 in 2006-07 to 3,85,008 in 2012-13. The Indian Institute of Managements too

RISE AND FALL

Number of B-schools in India



have expanded, the 13 IIMs having added 3,335 seats in the last 15 years, in the process wooing away students from other B-schools.

Crisil says the B-school market grew at a frenetic pace in the past three years, with revenues rising at a cumulative growth rate of 21 per cent to ₹16,000 crore in 2013-14 from about ₹9,100 crore in 2010-11. However, most of the new schools came up in Tier III and Tier IV cities, which, according to research estimates, account for about 85 per cent of intake capacity in India.

B-schools for profit

The director of a B-school that shut shop in Mumbai two years ago says many schools were set up by edupreneurs as commercial ventures. "But little did the players realise that one needs to generate operational cash flow and have an average capacity utilisation," he says.

With the economy on a slow path for nearly five years now, B-schools have found it difficult to achieve 100 per cent placement

Many institutions have either approached real estate firms to sell their property or to work out an alternative land use strategy. The director of a real estate services firm involved in such an exercise says that many B-schools now feel that they are not utilising their land at the scale that they should. They feel it would be wiser to sell the land and building or both and put them to better use. However, according to the law, change of trust is not allowed though a change of name is permitted.

According to the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, India tops the chart in terms of number of B-schools, followed by the United States and the Philippines, which, respectively, have 1,624 and 1,259 management colleges. But no Indian B-school figures in the global top 10 across various rankings. The China Europe International Business School, a 20-year-

old business school in China, beat the 52-year-old Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad to the 11th place in the FT Global MBA Ranking 2015, while IIM-A figures on the 26th spot in the FT Ranking.

AICTE says it would be a good idea for the lesser known B-schools to collaborate with more renowned institutions within India or globally to improve their quality. Experts have also been arguing that B-schools should collaborate with industries to survive, not only to gain industry participation for guest and special lectures, but also for internship and placement.

However, with many B-schools located in industry-deficient areas, the placement process usually isn't successful. Good management schools also provide students the opportunity to interact with people in industry. Because these are not possible in B-schools in such areas, they find few takers for management seats. "Ultimately, it is the value proposition. B-schools will have to look at the content they are providing," says Shankar S Mantha, ex-chairman, AICTE. Mantha demitted office this January.

Another sore point with aspirants is the cost of management education. Students don't mind paying more to earn a degree from a well-established B-school. But they are wary of paying the high fees charged by new colleges without the guarantee of placement. Fees at B-schools have risen by up to 20 per cent this year. The Indian Institute of Management Bangalore increased the fee for its flagship Post Graduate Programme from ₹17 lakh to ₹18.7 lakh, making it the costliest among premier institutions. IIM Ahmedabad raised its charges from ₹16.6 lakh to ₹18.5 lakh. New institutions charge upwards of ₹5 lakh.

Placement is a bigger factor than academic achievement when an aspirant rates a B-school. With the economy on a slow path for nearly five years now, B-schools have found it difficult to achieve 100 per cent placement. Even the IIMs have struggled in this respect. The not-quite-impressive intake has also impacted the Common Admission Test. For 2014, only 1.89 lakh candidates registered for the test against the 1.95 lakh who registered in 2013. The number of MBA aspirants has grown sluggishly in the past 2-3 years at a CAGR of 2 per cent. But with B-schools reporting good placement figures this year, one could see an uptick in the CAT registrations.

The silver lining, however, is that with more B-schools shutting down, utilisation rates for the Tier IV schools is expected to rise. Overall, Crisil expects the occupancy rate to improve to 70-72 per cent in 2015-16 from 68-70 per cent in 2013-14.