

# Indian univs second-grade?

## 89% Of NAAC-Accredited Institutes Are 'Average' Or Worse

Manash Pratim Gohain | TNN

**New Delhi:** If rankings and grading are any indicator of quality, Indian institutes of higher learning have a long way to go — both locally and globally. An astonishing 89% of India's accredited colleges and universities are graded either 'average' or 'below average', raising serious doubts about their quality.

While globally India's top rated institute — Panjab University — ranks between 226 and 250, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council's (NAAC) assessment is no better, with 62% of universities accredited rated average or below average. Moreover, the actual picture on the gr-

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION

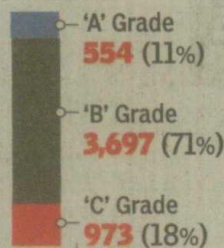
Total universities accredited in India: **179** out of 630

Total colleges accredited in India: **5,224** out of 33,000

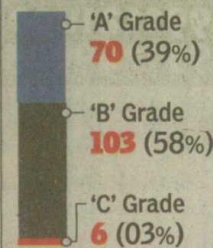
> **388 new colleges & 278 new universities** are expected to be created by the end of the 13th Plan period

Grade break-up of institutions accredited by NAAC as on October 2013

#### COLLEGES



#### UNIVERSITIES



ound is likely to be even worse since only 179 varsities and 5,224 colleges have valid accreditation out of a total of 630 varsities and 33,000 colleges.

NAAC director A N Rai said, "Only 11% of our accredited institutions are 'A' grade,

while 71% are 'B' grade. The remaining 18% are in the lowest 'C' grade. This definitely shows the quality of the institutions. But we have to consider various parameters. As most institutions are government-run, there is a serious fi-

nancial and infrastructure crunch which adversely affects the assessment. But we have to appreciate the fact that despite being voluntary they came for the assessment."

From this year, however, accreditation has been made mandatory and linked to funding under Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan.

NAAC officials, however, believe the real picture will be revealed only after these institutes which have so far shied away from accreditation are assessed.

"While there is no doubt that a lot needs to be done to improve the quality of our institutions, things could be even worse. Only time will tell," said Rai.

# Skill development needs upgradation

The quality of education in India remains a matter of concern due to lack of infrastructural support



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Whatever be the limitations of the UPA regime, it certainly seems to have clear ideas on skill development. It has figuratively rained higher educational institutions. Today, there are over a hundred Central universities — Indian Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Management, Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research, National Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Information Technology and more across the country. The Union Government had been in such a hurry to set up new institutions that the operational task, called 'mentoring', has been passed on to sister institutions.

The last IIT to be set up 'directly' by the Union Government, in a manner of speaking, was the one in Guwahati, and the last IIM in Indore. The IISER experiment seems to be under the towering shadow of a much decorated scientist. IITs are struggling for identity. The number of vice chancellors needed by Central universities, now 43 of them, is perennially more than what the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development can cope with.

Appointments remain constant at where they were when there were only seven Central universities. This is not to account for the Indian Institute of Science, the Sant Longowal Institute of Engineering & Technology, the Ghani Khan Choudhury Institute of Engineering & Technology and the numerous open universities and

distance learning institutions from Jawaharlal Nehru University to Annamalai University. The State universities and deemed universities are a matter apart.

The University Grants Commission is back in all its 'splendour' from the verge of being abolished. Its structure is exactly as it was decades ago. The turf war between the UGC and the All India Council for Technical Education continues to be fertile ground for unemployed politicians who eke a living by setting up educational institutions.

This is not to overlook an impressive addition to the number of All India Institutes of Medical Sciences and the agricultural universities. Skill formation, at least in the higher education segment, is currently a contemplation of epic proportions.

What happens to all this 'skill formation'? Why does Indian elite of any variety aspire to send its ward abroad for education and not to the institution which his class has designed? Who are we catering for and to what purpose?

Such irreverent questions must be termed as sacrilegious and television anchors should bury them by inviting discussions where no panelist can speak more than two or three sentences and must keep yelling to be heard. Of course, a few luminaries of little worth in not so successful magazines can always confirm the pre-designed conclusions of the anchors. But this sham in the skill formation sector must be overhauled.

Seriously, where are the teachers for existing institu-

tions? What is the status of the laboratories in the existing institutions, let alone the new ones? The damage this situation is doing to the employment world has not even begun to be identified. The poor performance of the Indian manufacturing sector is not the least because of its endemic inefficiencies, let alone inadequate skills.

An existing IIT was assigned the task of spawning another IIT. An existing IIM was assigned the task of spawning another IIM. Perhaps it was assumed that the ability to procreate was inherent to these institutions. Nothing wrong with the idea, but did anyone check on what parameter these institutions had the capacity to replicate? Or was the case that it takes no skills to spawn new institutions?

The analogies at an individual level are equally touching. A leading public figure went to his university of doctorate work, Cambridge, and allegedly claimed that he was what he was because of his *alma mater*. The assumption being that the other educational institutions, where he had also studied contributes nothing to his growth.

He was so indebted to Cambridge that he reportedly pleaded that the colour of his turban forever be the colour of the University. Nothing wrong with that either. Gratitude is a very noble sentiment and should not be grudged. Another leading public figure went to Harvard and claimed he learnt hard work there. Why deny other co-citizens the same opportunity to learn diligence?

## IIT Madras teams up with University of Passau, Germany for doctoral programmes

IIT Madras doctoral level students will now get to visit Germany and get trained under University of Passau twice during the tenure of the programme.

IIT-M has collaborated with the University of Passau, Germany to jointly train doctoral research scholars with both the universities sending their students on 6 month stints twice to the other university. The researchers will be awarded two doctoral degrees: a PhD from IITM and a doctorate from the University of Passau.

Students initially admitted to the PhD programme will have an opportunity to visit Germany twice for a 6 month periods while scholars from the University of Passau will have similar stints at IIT-M. Faculty exchange will also be facilitated in this programme that can admit upto 15 students in the first year.

Financial assistance will also be provided to the Indian students through scholarships from DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service). The amount is supposed to cover their travel and living expenses, including insurance. Similarly, German students visiting India will be provided support by IIT-M. A tuition waiver for the students is also proposed.

The Mou was signed by in the presence of Julia Huthenrauch, representative of Consul General of Germany, Delhi and Franziska Lindhout, Director of DAAD Information Centre.

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/education/story/iit-madras-doctoral-students-to-get-a-chance-to-go-germany/1/344586.html>

## Indian Institutes of Management to launch e-learning portals

All the 13 branches of **Indian Institutes of Management** (IIMs) have decided to launch e-learning portals to make studies more interesting.

Union human resource development ministry has created a committee under IIM-Calcutta board chairman Ajit Balakrishnan to design the portal. All IIMs have been asked to make the list of courses and suggest designs to make the portal reach its target population.

On the other hand, the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) have already launched a portal, **National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning** (NPTEL), which offers video courses in engineering, science and humanities.

"Ministry has started an initiative to develop online material for management education. But it's still a big question whether video is the best way to start online study," said IIM Indore director Rishiksha Krishnan.

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/education/story/indian-institutes-of-management-to-launch-e-learning-portals/1/344589.html>

# Union ministry of human resource development begins probe into National Institute of Technology, Calicut violence

TNN | Feb 21, 2014, 05:45 AM IST

KOZHIKODE: The Union ministry of human resource development (MHRD) began a high-level investigation into events that took place at the [National Institute of Technology, Calicut \(NITC\)](#) following the death of a student in a wall collapse on Saturday.

Director of technical education, MHRD, Raju Srinivasan arrived at the campus on Thursday and sought details of the tragic incident and the sequence of events that followed. He also had a meeting with the [NITC Director Dr M N Bandopadhyay](#) and the deans of the institute.

The visit by the top MHRD official comes a day after Union minister of state for MHRD Sashi Tharoor said that the ministry had taken a serious note of the death of a student in a wall collapse. He had also revoked the controversial decision by the NITC registrar to make the students vacate the hostel at short notice.

Thousands of students were forced to leave their hostels after the authorities threatened in a late night order on Monday that any student found in the hostels after 10am the next day would be considered as a trespasser and action would be taken against them.

Earlier in a letter to the director, Raju Srinivasan had asked the NITC director to send a detailed report on the incident and asked him not to force the students to vacate the hostel. It is learnt that the MHRD is not satisfied with the explanation given by the institute. Following the intervention by the MHRD, the NITC on Thursday removed the order from NITC website.

Meanwhile, it has emerged that even as the NITC assured the MHRD on Wednesday that it had complied with the ministry's order to admit students in the hostel, no official order has been issued by the administration yet.

# What they don't teach you at B-school

Business education should go beyond employability to mould a critically aware individual

SUNDEEP MANGHAT  
BALASUBRAMANIAM R

Management teaching in India is up against a dilemma, a choice between two propositions. The first, on the current state of business education, is that it is heavily skewed towards the American/western model of thought. The second, therefore, is in the nature of an unenviable task – to reconcile the present Indian context with the philosophical underpinnings of western management practice.

The other concern is the repeated and contrived effort by academics to portray management and its subjects as a science.

## In theory and practice

The challenge for students who intend to join the universe of business and are to become practitioners of management is to choose the models and then apply their "learning" in practice.

We believe the teaching of management should move away from "what to think" (models and theories) to "how to think" – the application and adoption of the substance and the development of critical faculties.

This suggestion should be examined in light of the nature of the

business environment and the development of the models currently taught.

The business environment is universally understood to be in a constant state of flux. This in itself contributes to the obsolescence of most management theories and the development of newer theories that seek to explain organisational and consumer activity.

The development of these models is, in most cases, founded on the identification of similarities across a few companies and/or industries and the generalisation of such findings across all companies and industries globally.

The challenge is, therefore, not just to know the models in an operational sense but also to delve into the philosophy of the models and the context within which they were developed.

The challenge for educators is to present and train the students by developing the critical evaluation skills. It is surprising to see the full force of the scepticism when the topic is politics; somehow, the same is subdued and in many cases totally absent when it comes to management studies.

## Narrow focus

The other problem area is the development of narrow prefixed degree



Off-the-shelf employees? Educational institutions must aim higher GP SAMPATH KUMAR

programmes under the pretext of employability. This will come into focus as more foreign universities are given sanction to operate in India.

Indian universities too seem to have laboured and delivered "Indian" management programmes, such as the recent announcement that one of the premier management institutes would include a course on meditation and spirituality.

A narrow focus, especially at an undergraduate level, presupposes

that the skills and knowledge being imparted will be relevant to the industry and that the student will remain stuck to a specific industry or skill set. It would, of course, be better if the student has a broad range of abilities, especially those that can be built upon at a higher level of study or by experience at the workplace.

## The thinking citizen

It is also suggested that practitioners should design management studies

based on the requirements of industry. The flaws of this argument are obvious. There is the bias of the practitioners to contend with, compounded by their lack of prescience in terms of what the future holds.

If one were to survey the current leaders of management on skill set requirement, one is more than likely to encounter contradictory responses.

It is not the function or purpose of educational institutions to provide off-the-shelf employees ready and able to generate profit. Instead, their energies should be concentrated on educating and preparing a thinking citizen. The function of moulding an employee to the nature and requirements of an enterprise must rest with the employer; business schools can assist at a later stage with specialist and tailored instruction.

So, what should a business school student be taught especially at the undergraduate level? Like most things in life, there is no single answer. The focus should be on enabling and sharpening critical thinking. A student's journey does not end with the degree certificate. In many respects, it begins from there.

Manghat is an academic in the UK. Balasubramaniam is an independent consultant based in India

<b>10 TOP TECH ACQUISITIONS</b>	<b>25 bn</b> HP acquires Compaq   2002	<b>12.5 bn</b> Google acquires Motorola Mobility   2011	<b>10.4 bn</b> Oracle acquires PeopleSoft   2004	<b>8.5 bn</b> Microsoft acquires Skype   2011	<b>7.4 bn</b> Oracle acquires Sun Microsystems   2010	<b>7.2 bn</b> Microsoft acquires Nokia   2013	<b>6.9 bn</b> Cisco acquires Cerent   1999	<b>6 bn</b> Microsoft acquires aQuantive   2007	<b>5.7 bn</b> Yahoo acquires broadcast.com   2004	<b>4.2 bn</b> AOL acquires Netscape   1998
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In a stunning deal, Facebook values fast growing mobile messaging company WhatsApp at a breathtaking \$344 million per employee

# 55 staff + 450m users = \$19bn

In buying WhatsApp, which is growing faster than its rival Twitter and other social services, Facebook gains access to customers who prefer communicating one-on-one or with very small groups rather than sharing information more widely. Facebook also has struggled to gain traction in the message space in recent years, a big motivation for its failed offer for Snapchat. While Facebook Messenger, the company's chat platform, is popular with users, recent attempts to create its own direct messaging service have failed.

Facebook is justifying the price of this deal by citing WhatsApp's startling growth, which has been even faster than Facebook's own in its early years. On a conference call with analysts, David Ebersman, Facebook's chief financial officer, compared WhatsApp to companies with the potential to grow to 1 billion users. The two companies have held informal talks for two years, but the deal came together quickly. In the spring of 2012, Zuckerberg first reached out to Koum. The two met at a coffee shop in Los Altos, California, and spoke for an hour, then took a walk for another hour and a half. Later that year, they began a series of dinners, and continued to discuss messaging and communication services during meals and walks in the hills above Silicon Valley.

## A SWEET, SWEET VALENTINE'S DAY DEAL

- Facebook's platform is splintering. Targeted apps like Snapchat and Pinterest are taking away customers.
- Mark Zuckerberg has talked about how FB's performance in the mobile space will make or break the company. He's even said to have told his employees to only think mobile.
- The deal was negotiated over Valentine's Day strawberries meant for Mark's wife Priscilla Chan.
- Teens are deserting the social media giant in droves as it becomes increasingly populated by older people.
- FB wants to dominate the messaging app space; one of the few parts of the social web that grew over the past two years.
- The deal is equal to Bangladesh's forex reserves. It's the amount big oil companies made last quarter and bigger than NASA's budget.
- FB wants to ensure that it rules the developing world's online experience.
- WhatsApp is more efficient than FB in terms of user engagement. 61% of FB's monthly active users engage on a daily basis against 70% for WhatsApp.
- WhatsApp is more efficient than FB in terms of user engagement. 61% of FB's monthly active users engage on a daily basis against 70% for WhatsApp.
- FB's offer translates to \$6.8 billion for Koum and \$3 billion for Acton.
- It's estimated that smartphone users spend 25% of their time on WhatsApp in some developing countries.

record of success that provided WhatsApp's principal funding.

By some metrics, the cash and stock being paid for WhatsApp make it among the richest deals of all time. With 55 employees, WhatsApp is commanding a price equivalent to \$344 million an employee, or about \$28 a user. And it is the largest acquisition ever of a venture capital-backed start-up, according to Dow Jones VentureSource. Facebook had \$7.9 billion in revenue last year, most of it from advertising. Zuckerberg said that money would help give WhatsApp the breathing room to focus on growth without needing to come up with an immediate plan for making money.

In that sense, Zuckerberg is following the successful strategy he used for Instagram, allowing the service to grow quickly before gradually adding in revenue — in Instagram's case, from advertising.

WhatsApp, which is based in a small office in Mountain View, California, was founded by Koum and Brian Acton, two former Yahoo executives, in 2009.

Acton and Koum have enjoyed portraying WhatsApp as the antithesis of Silicon Valley. Unlike many young start-ups that clamor for attention, the WhatsApp founders often turn down interviews with the press.

"They have denounced the model of relying on ads for revenue. And in an interview last year, they made clear they were not quickly adding users with the goal of selling their business. 'Selling the company is easy,' Koum said last year. 'It happens in Silicon Valley all the time. Anybody can build a company and sell the company the next day. That doesn't make you special, it doesn't make you unique, it doesn't make you all that great.'"

## India's love affair with WhatsApp

Mahesh Murthy, founder of digital marketing firm Pinstorm, is holidaying in Peru's capital Lima. But he's also using the holiday to plan a high school reunion in Kerala some time in August this year.

Even as he soaks in the churches and monasteries of Lima, Murthy is constantly on WhatsApp to unite his jet-setting friends from Seattle, Norway and Holland at the Kerala reunion.

"It's such a smart chat app to stay in touch with the group," Murthy told TOI on the phone from Lima.



FOR A FEW BILLION DOLLARS: WhatsApp's founders Brian Acton, left, and Jan Koum at its offices in Mountain View, California

WhatsApp is India's preferred mobile messaging application. The youth are obsessed, the older folk too are increasingly shifting from SMS to mobile messaging services, especially WhatsApp. This can be a huge benefit for Facebook.

A recent survey by US-based Jana Mobile, an organization focused on redirecting advertising budgets to mobile phones, found that 55% of mobile messaging users in India use WhatsApp. Another estimate puts WhatsApp's monthly active users in India at 36 million, rival Hike's at 15 million and Line's at 16 million. There are also other messaging services including WeChat, Rocketalk, JaxtrSMS, Gupshup Messenger and Nimbuzz. WeChat says it was the second most downloaded app on Apple

iOS in India last year.

Sanjay Vijaykumar, founder of Kerala-based mobile internet company MobMe, said the company had a board meeting on Thursday and they circulated the minutes to 25-30 senior members of the leadership team through WhatsApp. "Even before we put out the minutes on paper or email, we sent it using WhatsApp. I trust WhatsApp to circulate critical information. For me, it's a simple, effective tool to connect with multiple groups and get office work done in a jiffy," he said.

Aayush Bagaria, 22, an engineering graduate, said one big attraction was that WhatsApp was free and therefore very much more cost effective than SMS. "The phone's contacts list auto syncs with WhatsApp,

which is not the case with BlackBerry or Hike. You can do group chats, and I have several groups including of my college and school friends. But the biggest advantage is the ease with which you can share files like images, videos and audios with large groups," said Bagaria, who recently gifted his aunt a smartphone, partly so that she could get on to WhatsApp.

Kavin Mittal, creator of the Hike messenger service, said India was following a growth trajectory similar to the global one in the messaging space with the proliferation of cheaper smartphones and data plans. Mittal said users will soon be able to do much more on messaging apps. "We've just scraped the surface of what's possible with the mobile internet," he added.

Company	VC/PE DEALS THAT ROCKED THE INTERNET WORLD	Company	VC/PE DEALS THAT ROCKED THE INTERNET WORLD	Company	VC/PE DEALS THAT ROCKED THE INTERNET WORLD	Company	VC/PE DEALS THAT ROCKED THE INTERNET WORLD	Company	VC/PE DEALS THAT ROCKED THE INTERNET WORLD
LinkedIn	\$9 billion	Twitter	\$25 billion	GroupOn	\$12.8 billion	Facebook	\$104 billion	Skype	\$8.5 billion
Sequoia Capital, Greylock Partners, Bessemer Venture Partners		Rizvi Traverse Management, Spark Capital, Benchmark Capital		New Enterprise Associates, The Samwer Brothers, Accel Partners		Greylock Partners and Meritech Capital Partners, Accel Partners		Silver Lake Partners, eBay, Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, Andreessen	

# IIT-Delhi graduate head of 'all things business at WhatsApp'

Fast-growing startup WhatsApp was the talk of tech town on Thursday after social media giant Facebook announced a \$19 billion buyout of the mobile-messaging application. While the deal created an instant global buzz, an Indian took centrestage in the aftermath. Having crossed 450 million active users, WhatsApp's business head Neeraj Arora (35) has had a lot on his plate in the past few months. He told an Indian business news channel in November last that WhatsApp had no plan of selling out to Facebook or Google. Now, with a stunning price tag of \$19 billion for a company that employs just 55 people, Arora's portfolio has grown remarkably.

Arora has two US patents to his credit — methods and systems for email attachment distribution and management and second for an email integrated file delivery.

According to Arora's LinkedIn profile, he takes care of "all things business at WhatsApp". He has previously worked at Google as a senior member of the corporate development team. Arora, who is an Indian Institute of Technology-Delhi graduate, also led Google's acquisitions and strategic investments across products and geographies.

Before working for Google, Arora worked as chief manager at Times Internet Limited, working closely with the investments and corporate strategy team at Indiatimes, a subsidiary of The Times of India Group.

**[Read: WhatsApp: From food stamps to \\$19 billion dollar deal](#)**

Arora's LinkedIn profile page says he is a "self-learnt hacker" who "built pieces of the core technology" at Accellion, a developer of enterprise software for mobile file sharing. He is also a management graduate with a degree from the Indian School of Business.

With Facebook's plan of making no change in the way WhatsApp functions, Arora will have to drive the integration of the business operations of the messaging platform with the social networking website. "Nothing will change," he replied on Thursday to a query by one of his 4,769 followers on Twitter: "As a loyal WhatsApp user, I'm pretty sad it's been sold to Facebook. Privacy is a key concern, another is unnecessary add-ons to the app. (sic)"

Arora also denied that WhatsApp's development engineers were based outside the United States. "Everyone is in Mountain View," he tweeted after a follower posted, "Note WhatsApps entire dev team in Russia. Anti-immigrants working hard to keep foreigners out. Shows they don't need to be here anymore (sic)."

Many of the engineers at the Silicon Valley-based firm earlier worked remotely — most of them from Russia. WhatsApp's co-founder Jan Koum today provides recommendations for a few of them on his LinkedIn page.

One of his major achievements in India was to convince Anil Ambani's Reliance Communications to bundle unlimited use of WhatsApp with a ₹16/month data plan. The scheme was an instant success. Arora also pushed Tata Docomo to offer unlimited WhatsApp usage for ₹15 for 15 days.

Arora, who is based out of San Francisco and Hyderabad, did not respond to an email query by HT.

(With inputs from M Rajendran)

## TECHNICALLY MARRIED

The deal between Facebook and WhatsApp brings together two of the most popular brands in social media

**\$6.8 bn** (₹42,200 crore)  
WhatsApp co-founder Jan Koum's estimated net worth after the deal with FB

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**\$3.0 bn** (₹18,600 crore)  
WhatsApp co-founder Brian Acton's estimated net worth after the deal with FB

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**\$55 mn** (₹341 crore)  
What each of WhatsApp's 55 employees will make from the deal over 4 years

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**Daily traffic on WhatsApp**  
53 bn messages | 600 mn photos | 100 mn videos



WhatsApp's Facebook page

REUTERS

### FINE PRINT

- WhatsApp's messaging product & Facebook's messenger app will operate independently
- WhatsApp is very popular in India, Brazil and Mexico
- Deal could help Facebook attract more teen users and bolster position internationally
- Even if all WhatsApp users pay fees, it will get only \$450 mn in revenues

### DEAL LOGIC

- FB now owns four of the world's leading phone apps: Facebook, FB Messenger, Instagram and WhatsApp

### RIVAL SERVICES

- The value of competitors like Viber, WeChat, Line, Hike and BB Messenger will rise as investors expect FB rivals to snap them up

### COMMUNIST CONNECTION

- WhatsApp doesn't ask for any user details because such questions remind founder Jan Koum of Soviet era secret police in Ukraine

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/1186299.aspx?s=p>

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