

Newspaper Clips

February 24, 2012

The Tribune ND 24/02/2012 P-10

Common entrance test

Relief to students, boost to learning

THE decision to replace the All-India Engineering Entrance Examination (AIEEE) and the Joint Entrance Examination with a common test for all Centrally funded technical institutes such as IITs and NITs from 2013 will foremost bring the relief of not having to take two separate tests. Besides reducing the stress and expenses, it will also lead to a more uniform assessment. The Union HRD Minister has urged the states and private institutes too to adopt the test, as students, not sure of their performance in one examination, tend to take as many tests as they can or are eligible for. A few states, including Haryana, have already accepted the proposal. Those holding out should accept it too in the interest of students and quality.

More than the common examination, what has stirred debate is the criteria to decide merit. Now at least 40 per cent weightage will be given to Class 12 score, the rest being the score in a two-part entrance test. There were apprehensions over how the varying marking patterns of different school boards would be taken into account. That has been addressed by devising a mathematical formula that takes into account the peculiarities of each. The benefit of giving weightage to board results would be a more comprehensive assessment and boost to classroom education, which was suffering under the current system. The 'coaching centre' culture fuelled by entrance tests too would go down, giving a more level field to poor students.

Despite the obvious benefits, concerns remain. Certain states want the common examination to be conducted in languages other than English and Hindi too. The level of education in the schools of different states may affect Class 12 scores. Clarity would also be needed on the formats of the two parts of the new examination. Given the multiple issues, and the fact that careers of a large number of students are involved, the government must ensure every aspect is completely thought through in advance, and there is no element of experimentation.

Single national engineering entrance exam to replace multiple tests draws ire of IIT faculty

Jyotsna Bhatnagar
Ahmedabad, Feb 23

THE decision to hold a single entrance test for all centrally-run engineering institutes from next year has stirred a hornet's nest, with three bluechip IITs writing to the Union human resource ministry opposing the proposal. Faculties of IITs in Delhi, Mumbai and Kanpur have voiced their concerns, saying introducing the test without normalising marks across state boards in too little time could affect current Class 12 students and lead to a bunching of candidates at the top of the rank list.

The Indian Science Engineering Eligibility Test (ISEET), which will elimi-

nate multiple admission tests including the IIT-JEE, is expected to reduce stress on students. The three IITs that have protested, along with the IITs in Kharagpur and Guwahati, are counted as the best among India's 15 IITs.

The institutes' primary concern is the impact on the batch of Class 12 students who appear for IIT-JEE and other exams this year. At an emergency senate meeting last week, IIT Delhi faculty members expressed concern that introducing ISEET from next year will "not be feasible and will be unfair to the current class 12 students". This is largely because while two attempts are allowed for JEE, the current batch of Class 12 is unaware that in the new

scheme of things, their board scores will carry 40% weight. "If they do not make it in 2012, then in 2013 their Class 12 marks will get counted but they were not

aware of this when they appeared for Class 12," states a note prepared by the faculty, a copy of which is with FE.

IITs are also miffed over providing weightage for

Class 12 examinations without specifying a formula for normalising marks from India's 42 secondary school boards. The JEE system so far has used Class 12 marks only as a cut-off. The institutes worry that a deadline has been set to implement the normalisation, without specifying how the process would take place. Normalisation has not been tried even in 15% of the boards and even data prepared by the Ramasami Commission evaluating the feasibility of the JEE revamp have data from only four school boards.

The institutes feel there should be at least one dry run of normalisation before implementing the formula. "It would be advisable to have a dry run. Any changed sys-

tem should come after the consent of the IIT senates," says Prof Sanjeev Sanghi, president of the faculty forum of IIT Delhi. Normalisation is seen as a herculean task involving obtaining data from all boards representing a heterogeneous mix with different levels of complexity, grading and scores, and that too by the first or second week of June.

The experience of BITS, Pilani indicates that such an exercise was turning lopsided in favour of a couple of state boards and hence that Institute shifted to an entrance exam. IITs are also apprehensive about the methodology and reported malpractices in some state board exams.

■ **Continued on Page 2**



THE INSTITUTES' PRIMARY CONCERN IS THE IMPACT ON THE BATCH OF CLASS 12 STUDENTS WHO APPEAR FOR IIT-JEE AND OTHER EXAMS THIS YEAR

Single...

The IITs feel that at best, the normalised/percentile scores should be used as a filter and not contribute to final scores. The IIT Kanpur senate resolution passed earlier this month is firmly of the opinion that board marks should not be used for ranking.

IITs also feel that if expectation levels in different exams are different, a single test is not the cure. Such an exam will lead to bunching at the top with perhaps over a thousand students could score the same marks, complicating the rank allotment process.

It is also being felt that the single test won't be able to reduce stress or curb the so-called 'menace' of coaching. In fact, if school exam scores are included, coaching classes could get more business. As long as there is a big gap between the number of seats in good colleges and the number of students, it will be difficult to stop candidates from seeking extra help.

The premier IITs have proposed a two-tier JEE with a first level of multiple-choice questions (MCQ) and the second one a subjective type exam. The MCQ exam should be used only as a screening test and a second exam based on subjective type questions in physics, chemistry and mathematics administered to a manageable number of students (say, 40,000 to 50,000). In addition, if it is strongly desired by all, there could be a component of Class 12 marks, either suitably normalised or on a percentile basis, which could be weighed along with the MCQ exam, but this score is only to be used as a filter for the second exam. Finally, the responsibility of conducting these exams should lie with IITs. The IIT Bombay faculty forum meeting held a week ago recommended that the undergraduate admission process should go back to the two-tier format that existed earlier.

IIT faculties also feel slighted that they were kept in the dark by the ministry while taking such a major decision. IIT Delhi note categorically points out that "such important decisions are being taken without proper discussions" with IITs, which are not only directly impacted by this change but will also be nodal in implementing it. "The immaculate reputation of the JEE is due to the commitment and involvement of the IIT faculty at all stages. So, if there is a problem with the JEE, the solution too should come from IITs," said a senior faculty member of a leading IIT.

Taking the trauma out of tests

If the common national examination that has been agreed upon in principle for admission to engineering courses in 2013 lives up to its promise, it will eliminate two major problems: traumatic stress for students taking multiple examinations, and high costs. That would be no mean achievement, considering that the number of student appearances for different entrance examinations is of the order of 3.5 million annually. The most important feature of the new test is, arguably, its design, which uses comprehension, critical thinking and logical reasoning under the “main” section, and problem-solving ability in basic science in the “advanced” section. It emphasises aptitude assessment, which is welcome. Students can thus avoid the folly of enrolling in a technical course where they may fare badly, and choose instead a more appropriate discipline. The modalities of the scheme will become clear in the months ahead, but its potential to create a robust framework for engineering admissions is immediately apparent. There are a few hold-out States that want more time before endorsing it, but they must strike a blow for transparency and adopt it for their own admissions on merits. In any case, the States are free to give as much weighting as they deem fit to results of their Board examinations, while laying down admission requirements. What the new test will provide is just a standardised aptitude score.

An admissions scheme that gives statistically valid weighting to State Board examination results, and also uses an aptitude score can solve one of the long-persisting problems in technical education. In a “Common Entrance Test only” system, subject-based secondary school examinations get low priority among students, as they play no role in admissions other than providing a basic qualifier status. This phenomenon led to the scrapping of the CET in States such as Tamil Nadu. However, that has produced the opposite problem, of a thriving guidebook-based tuition industry exerting unhealthy pressure on the examination process. It produces high scorers, many of whom — ironically — struggle through college or fail. A testing procedure such as the one unveiled provides a good balance, and individual institutions can decide on the weighting they wish to give to the score components. That the IITs, NITs and the Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research among various Central educational institutions have agreed to go with the new procedure next year, giving 60 per cent weightage to the test and 40 per cent to State Board marks, speaks to the seriousness of the effort. The task of implementing a less expensive, academically sound and student-friendly eligibility test deserves the support of all States.

The Pioneer ND 24/02/2012 P-15

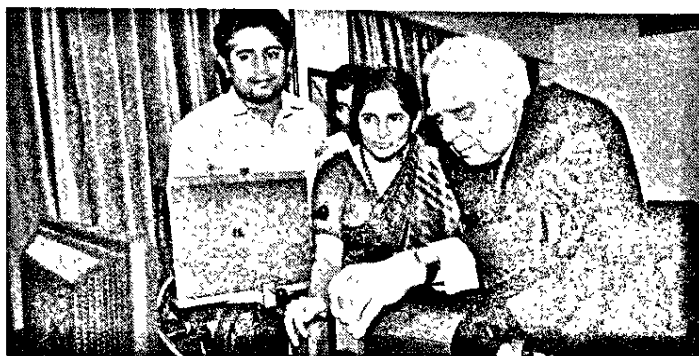
Hi-end project: Virtual labs reality now

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Now, students can perform experiments in science and engineering using the World Wide Web, a computer, and an Internet connection, without actually having to go to the laboratories.

In the race for implementation and announcement of a series of educational reforms and plans by HRD Minister Kapil Sibal, yet another hi-end educational project of "virtual laboratories" was launched by him on Thursday. It is aimed at providing easy and quality access to graduate and undergraduate students at their finger tips.

Nearly 91 such virtual laboratories were launched in nine disciplines under the 'National Mission on Education' through Information and Communication Technology. These include Electronics and Communication, Mechanical Engineering, Computer Science and Engineering,



Union Minister for Human Resource Development and Communications and Information Technology Kapil Sibal launching the Virtual Labs under National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT), in New Delhi on Thursday PTI

Electronics and Communications, Biotechnical and Biomedical engineering amongst others.

Inaugurating the system, Sibal said virtual labs would allow students to practise and learn better the science and engineering behind the experi-

ments that they are required to perform. It would also allow the sharing of costly equipments across the country. Even in the remote rural areas, students will be able to perform experiments that they would not otherwise be able to access, he added.

Nearly 300 heads of departments, faculties, and staffs from 152 institutions have been trained across the country, for the effective implementation of the project, sources said.

The project has developed two types of virtual labs - the Simulation Based and the Remote Triggered Virtual Labs Virtual Labs. In the former, the experiments are modeled using mathematical equations. The simulations are carried out remotely at a high-end server, and the results are communicated to the student over the internet.

In the case of the latter, the actual experiments are triggered remotely and the output of the experiment is communicated back to the student over the Internet.

Sibal observed that these labs will be particularly useful for engineering college students who do not have access to good lab-facilities or high-school students whose inquisitiveness will be triggered, possibly motivating them to take up higher-studies.

HRD Ministry Seeks Cabinet Nod for 50 L Aakash-2 Tablets

Datawind eligible to bid in Aakash tender

OUR BUREAU
NEW DELHI

The human resource development ministry will soon float a Cabinet note to get a sanction for procuring 50 lakh Aakash tablets, that will be distributed among college students by this year end, a project which may cost over ₹110 crore.

HRD minister Kapil Sibal showcased the Aakash-2 tablet on Thursday before the media, which comes with a faster processor and a capacitive touchscreen. The procurement price of the tablets would be capped at ₹2,276, the same at which government procured the Aakash version 1.0 tablets.

"We are planning to float a tender for Aakash-2 tablets in the next two months. The tender will be for about 50 lakh tablets. The tender will be handled by C-DoT and ITI," said Sibal addressing the media. "Existing vendor Datawind will have to supply the rest of the 1,00,000 tablets in its present contract. It can also bid for the next tender," he added.

According to sources, a Cabinet note is being prepared to get the money sanctioned from the finance ministry, as the ₹4,000-crore five-year fund of National Mission for Education expires by this fiscal.

"We will grant the contract to more vendors this time, as a capacity of 50 lakh can't be met by a single vendor. But price will be capped at a maximum of ₹2,276 per unit. Eventually we want to distribute 220 crore tablets," NK Sinha, Additional Secretary at HRD ministry said.

Only about 500 tablets have

Sky's The Limit

₹110 Cr



The cost of distributing 50 lakh Aakash-2 tablets to students

₹2,276



The procurement price of the tablets, same as Aakash-1

- The tender will be handled by C-DoT and ITI
- Datawind, the firm supplying Aakash-1 tablets, allowed to take part Aakash-2 project

been distributed so far, Sinha added. "There were problems with battery life. So, we have improved upon the specifications in new version," he added.

The government is aiming at distributing 50 lakh tablets by this year end. "Since there is limited supply, we are encouraging colleges to distribute them as books issued via libraries," Sinha added.

Datawind, the firm supplying Aakash-1 tablets, issued a statement saying it has been vindicated from speculation that it would not be allowed in Aakash-2 project.

The minister also unveiled the HRD ministry's ambitious project of Virtual Labs, which aims to provide simulated lectures and study material from IITs on technical subjects online. The website Vlabs.co.in will also provide online simulation of complex lab experiments. Students can book a slot on Vlabs online, to conduct simulated experiments which require high computing power.

The Aakash is falling!

Lessons in fixing the wrong problem:
An open letter to Kapil Sibal

PRASANTO K ROY



Dear Mr Sibal,

I am so relieved to read in the media that Aakash 2 will cost the same as the older one. Even though I (and others who tried) could not buy a single Aakash unit for love or money, the price is nevertheless important. Just as it was for the Tata Nano, the ₹1 lakh car that isn't selling at any price.

Perhaps "cheapest" isn't quite good enough for a technology product to work in the market? But I get ahead of myself here.

I am sorry that your honeymoon with manufacturers Datawind is over. Not unexpectedly, may I add. So, the Aakash 2 will be developed and made by C-DAC and ITI. Even if those venerable organisations do not have the design experience or capacity to make mass-market consumer computing products—but that is another story.

Is it possible, Mr Sibal, that, as with your valiant battle against the evil Facebook and Google, you're again tackling the wrong problem?

May I suggest that the problem with the Aakash wasn't the manufacturer at all? The product itself (and perhaps the category, too) was the wrong horse to back. For it is, at multiple levels, an anachronism.

Your noble objective of "a fully made-in-India" product is itself an anachronism. Nobility doesn't win a technology product race. Not in India, the US, China, or anywhere else. You cannot build the best or most competitive products and services by artificially limiting the design pool or supply chain to national boundaries. Technology products and services today draw on a global supply chain. Get used to it, sir.

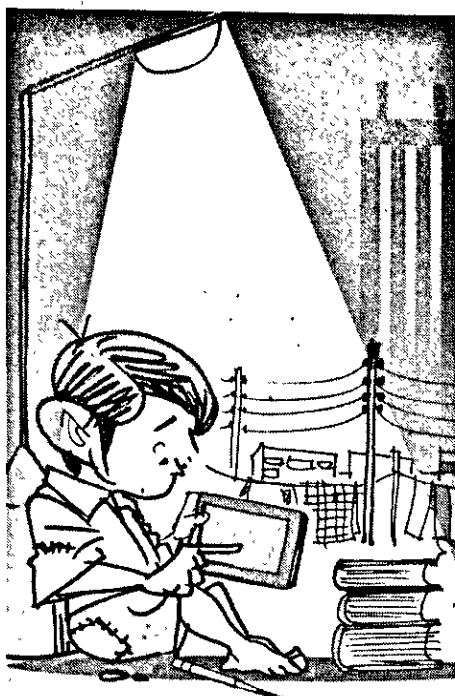
There is strategic value to a made-in-India space programme (even if it draws heavily on globally-available know-how and technology, as it should) or supercomputer (ditto). Not so for a commodity mass-market tech product category.

By the way, the Aakash is as Indian-made as single-malt Scotch. The one I opened featured off-the-shelf parts: Conexant system-on-chip

with ARM processor, Hynix memory, standard display and touch overlay, cheap battery. But I digress.

Second, the Aakash is too limited in scope and features for its objective. Kids in government schools will have trouble using it: not least of all due to its two-hour battery life and the fact that our government schools don't have desktop sockets (heck, most don't even have desks). Improving battery life to six or eight hours is a non-trivial task that would take longer than the generational life cycle of such a product.

Third, where are the applications? Both Apple and Google created an ecosystem of apps along with their tablets and platform launches. You could have leveraged some of



that, but your designers chose to limit the device to a phone platform, Android 2.2 Froyo, and cut off access to Android Marketplace (GetJar as a replacement doesn't cut the mustard). Yes, one could go browse Khan Academy videos on YouTube, but I somehow don't see basic school teachers going that far out of the box.

Fourth, it isn't easy to build to a rock-bottom price simply through sourcing and discount-shopping. That shows up in the product. The Tata Nano required years of serious R&D, innovation, invention, and patents, if they didn't want to sell a car whose fenders would fall off.

The Aakash hasn't been through that rigour of development and testing. The touch overlay pops out, the battery is barely held into place inside, and I couldn't put all the screws back in because the threads slipped. Will it survive rough usage by kids at primary school who are not used to handling technology? I think not.

I don't suggest that the Aakash is a write-off. Judging by the response and interest, there is a market for a sub-\$99 tablet even with limited capabilities. Perhaps as a second or third device around the house, or a kid's learning device at home if you don't want her banging away on your iPad—given the apps. Or even as a special-purpose data capture device on the field, if battery life and ruggedness can be taken care of.

But it does not fit the bill for a device that will transform primary education in India.

Frankly even I (a die-hard advocate of gadgets for all) cannot suggest a device that will transform primary education, without fundamental changes in teacher training, pay and infrastructure. But if I had to put my bets on technology, I would pitch for smarter classroom technology, and greater access to connected PCs. If forced to pick a product for the child to own, I'd vote for the e-book reader, which, at ₹5,000 or so, is rugged, has a great battery life and, most of all, has ready content—every book published can be easily "ported" as a soft copy to an e-book reader.

And then there's the question of what a government's business should be. Designing and manufacturing products competing with Apple and Google? No, sir. I know our neighbouring country's military is making cheap iPad clones, but you will agree that Pakistan is no role model for India. Instead, your government could help fund, guide through policy and provide a market.

The Simputer flopped. If you pour enough money into Aakash, you can make sure that a few million units will sell—and lie around as paperweights, fading into obscurity, until a few years later when another government questions the loss of a few hundred crores to the exchequer.

Therefore, Mr Sibal, I hope you will see sense and lay off the Aakash, whatever version, and get your government back to governing.

Sincerely,
A concerned citizen and technophile

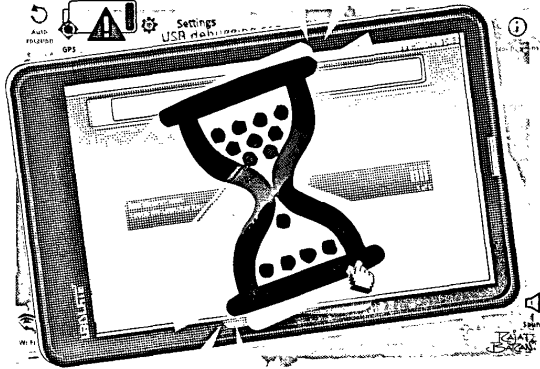
The author is chief editor at CyberMedia and can be found on twitter.com/prasanto and [pkr.in](https://www.pkr.in). Views are personal

FOCUS

20 All That Glitters
24 In 'Funds Save' Mode
30 Slipping On Oil
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Skyfall

Aakash is a great idea. But the differences between its maker and its procurer are not helping. By SUNNY SEN



2.4m
DataWind
Tablets have
already been
booked

At ₹2,500, it is the cheapest tablet in the world. On October 5, 2011, Union Telecom Minister Kapil Sibal held it before the world and declared that it would "end the digital divide". Sadly, much has changed since that October day. If anything, Aakash, the brainchild of the Ministry of Human Resource

Development, is only causing deep divisions. Over the next few years, the government wants to deploy 220 million units of Aakash as part of its National Mission on Education through ICT (information and communications technology). In the first phase, Montreal-headquartered Datawind, bagged an order for 100,000 units of the device.

However, serious differences have emerged between Datawind and the Indian Institute of Technology, Rajasthan (Jodhpur), over the tablet's specifications. IIT Rajasthan was mandated by the HRD ministry to set the criteria for and handle procurement of the tablet.

Datawind claims that it complied with the criteria specified in the July 2010 tender. On October 23, 2011, Ashish Chaudhary, Jitender Saigal and Ved Prakash, scientists with the Regional Electronic Test Laboratory in Delhi, cleared the device officially.

(The institute functions under the aegis of the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology.) They did so after testing it across 13 parameters, including temperature, functionality and drop tests.

The tablet runs on the Android 2.2 Froyo operating system, which is outdated. It has 256 MB of RAM, a 376 MHz microprocessor and three hours of battery life (see *How They Stack Up* on the next page). In effect, it is a barebones device. Opening the Google homepage, for instance, may take a while. Using multiple windows to browse is out of the question.

In a January 12 letter to the HRD ministry, Pankaj Mohindroo, President of the Indian Cellular Association (ICA), highlighted the device's shortcomings. "The use of less than 1/1.2 GHz processor in computing and tablet devices is unheard of now," it states. "Anything which is being launched in 2012 is primarily on Android 3.0 or 4.0 and necessarily carries a 1/1.2 GHz processor, which is essential to have a good browsing experi-

DATAWIND

Says tablet manufactured as per specifications

Cannot be manufactured at same cost to meet new specifications

Claims to have given more value than specified in tender

IIT RAJASTHAN Says device is slow and touchscreen is ineffective

Has rejected 3,000 tablets

Has revised specifications from the original tender

ence." Mohindroo also came down hard on the 'resistive' touchscreen of the device, saying it was "painfully slow".

Defending their product, Aakash's makers say it is a beginner's device meant to provide children with internet access. How interested a child will be in a low-speed device is anybody's guess.

But the fault may not lie with the makers. Clearly someone messed up while drawing up the specifications. "The specs are extremely poor," says Rajeev Karwal, Founder and CEO of Milagrow, which also sells tablets in India.

Thus far, Datawind has already delivered 10,000 units to various institutions. In all, it claims to have received 2.4 million orders (including commercial orders) for Aakash and an upgraded version of the device.

Alarmed by the negative feedback from every quarter, including IIT students who user-tested Aakash, IIT Rajasthan went the other extreme. It revised the criteria, demanding that the device be shock-proof, water-proof and meet United States military specifications, including crash tests in vehicles.

Datawind has cried foul, stating that it has adhered to the original requirements. "It will be impossible to make a tablet with those (US military) specifications at that price. IIT knew about the specifications while calling for the tender," says DataWind CEO Suneet Singh Tuli. "Were they sleeping all this while?"

BT made several attempts to contact Professor Prem Kumar Kalra to get IIT Rajasthan's response, without success. On February 2, media reports suggested that the



WORDSMITH
(NEW WORDS IN BUSINESS)

Workstream

Meaning: A vaguely described task in which no tangible progress can possibly be made.

Origin: The word has been around but this particular usage began in the latter half of the last decade.

Usage: "Each team member adds an additional workstream to his KRA."

Business Line, ND 24/02/2012 P-8

Private sector needed in higher education

C. Jayanthi

The infrastructure crunch for higher education in India has resulted in a paradigm shift. Private sector participation, once viewed with suspicion, is now a given in that sector.

As a recent news report shows, it has also led to fly-by-night "one-room universities" in no less a place than the Capital of the country.

In most developed nations including the US, over 50 per cent of the population goes into higher education. For decades, India has seen a dismal figure of 10 per cent of her population going into higher education, until recently. This scenario appears to have changed for the better.

ENROLMENT RATIO

The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for the country for higher education currently stands at about 13.8 per cent, with western India, comprising the States of Maharashtra and Goa combined, having the highest GER of 21.3 per cent, according to the latest report on the sector brought out jointly by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and the leading global accountancy firm, Ernst & Young.

The state of Maharashtra alone has a GER of 26 per cent, which is the highest in the country.

This kind of imbalance can be corrected with higher participation of private institutions in the field of higher education. The



Private universities can help bridge the infrastructure gap.

States or central government can only increase the infrastructure for higher education to a limited extent, given that 65 per cent of the country's population is below the age of 26 years.

It is to be noted that India has over 31,000 institutions of higher learning, among the highest in the world. Central universities comprise 7 per cent of the total, state universities 46 per cent and state private universities comprise 16 per cent; deemed universities, 21 per cent; Institutes of National Importance, about 9 per cent of the total.

Overall, the number of institutions in the country has grown at the rate of 11 per cent. Rapid growth of institutions, mostly private, has allowed students in dire need of qualifications to pay the

requisite sum of money and attempt to acquire them.

ELITE INSTITUTIONS

Most private institutions do not receive aid from the government, whereas 52 per cent of the grants of the University Grants Commission (UGC) go to central universities, catering to less than one lakh students.

The top higher educational institutions in the country, such as the Indian Institutes of Technology, the Indian Institutes of Management, among others, cater to 1 per cent of the population, making them highly elitist, whereas in several countries in Europe such as France and Germany, the elite institutions in various fields cater to 10 per cent of their much smaller populations.

Earlier, private sector participation in higher education has been in highly specialised areas such as engineering, management and medicine. However, the government's inability to invest heavily in higher education to take care of growing needs has left the field wide open to the participation of private players in this arena.

In the future, we are likely to see a significant rise in the number of private universities in India, as universities, under one umbrella, can provide general undergraduate courses, as also specialised courses such as engineering, management, journalism, law, and art and design, among others.

SIMPLIFY RULES

To encourage greater private sector participation in higher education, the government must simplify the regulatory framework, while focusing on quality.

In India, a university must have a minimum of 22 acres of land, pushing private players to buy land in remote areas, whereas in countries such as Australia and New Zealand, smaller private universities are just a set of buildings.

They can operate close to the city centre, and develop links with industry and commerce.

In India, significantly, once the infrastructure is complete, the UGC usually conducts a field visit to check if proper procedures are followed. This can take more than a year.

This results in some confusion,

as the regular teaching schedule may be on, and if the UGC so decides, it can withdraw approval, which would tantamount to playing with students' lives and careers.

This has happened in the past, during 2004-05, when universities that were located in the main, outside Chhattisgarh region, even as far as Delhi, got themselves affiliated to Chhattisgarh University, and started dishing out degrees.

Once this kind of affiliation was declared null and void by a Chhattisgarh High Court ruling, the degrees that were issued were not worth the paper they were printed on, and students lost out on their career through no fault of their own.

No private university should be allowed to offer courses until all the regulations are complied with from day one, so that students do not end up suffering. The one-room universities allegedly found in old Delhi would be a thing of the past if rules and norms are strictly adhered to.

Notably, India's youth population of 18-24 years is expected to increase by 13 per cent between 2005 and 2020, against the global average of 4 per cent.

Institutions, private or otherwise, would have to keep up with the growing population, so that students do not lose out on higher learning due to lack of infrastructure.

(The author is Assistant Professor, Apeejay Stya University, Haryana)

Now, outsource research work to scientists of top universities

Xerox India Research comes out with 'Open Innovation' model

T.E. Raja Simhan
Chennai, Feb. 23

A company that employs a number of researchers to work on a complex problem can instead outsource it to scientists and researchers from top Indian academic institutions to find a solution. That's what Xerox India Research, the youngest global research lab of the \$22-billion leading company, is doing.

Through a concept called Open Innovation, Xerox India Research has brought together top-notch scientists, along with the company's researchers and engineers, to work on complex projects that Xerox wants to implement.

And the partnership is not restricted to the India centre,



Ms Meera Sampath

but researchers from global Xerox Research labs have access to the "best of the Indian brains" in this global hub, Ms Meera Sampath, Director of Xerox Research Centre India, recently told *Business Line*.

Open Innovation is today the core of Xerox India research. The centre has eight partnerships with top academic institutions, including IIT-Madras, IIT-Bombay, IIT-Kharagpur, Indian Institute of Science, IIT-Mandi and Srishti Labs.

Research partnerships cover a broad range of topics such as cloud computing, services marketplace design, multi-lingual technology development, personalised information delivery, video-based patient monitoring and rural technology initiatives, she said.

Even before Xerox started its research centre in India in 2010, the company decided that this lab would be built on a model of 'open innovation' and

started working with local universities. Xerox has such a model in the US and Europe but in India this will be the fundamental to how "we operate," she said.

Ms Sampath said the India centre acts as a traditional research lab with its own researchers collaborating with colleagues in other global labs. In addition, the lab is a central hub to connect people from the Europe, US, with institutes like IIT-Madras, IIT-Kharagpur and the School of Design.

"One of the goals internally is that every researcher hired in India will not only work on their core research work, but also with one or two open innovation projects. For us, it is not the size of the people we

have inside the lab, but it is the strength and size of this whole ecosystem that we are building. Every university gives an opportunity for us to work with one or two professors and three or four students," she said.

It is not just more people working for you, but also tapping in to a skill that "we may not develop as a core competency in-house." Within the company we have researchers working on cloud computing but for things like user design it makes sense to tap experts outside and leverage their expertise. For the students too, this helps as they are working on projects that are inspired by the business needs," she said.

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Statesman ND 24.02.12 P-10

Overseas education and a better future

Education abroad is no more the domain of the rich in India, with even middle class students expanding the breadth of their abilities by acquiring enhanced academic knowledge, says naresh gulati

IN this era of globalisation, the limitations of countries are diminishing and organisations are hiring professionals beyond geographical boundaries. In such a dynamic environment, it is very important for students to get the right combination of education, innovation and entrepreneurship. This, in fact, is imperative for every child given that it is the ideal path to a nation's future.

India, however, still lacks quality education that is of a high standard. According to one survey, the country does not have one university that is in the global top 50, despite having the third-largest higher education system in the world. The demand for higher education in India is far more than the number of institutions imparting this facility, hence students have no choice but to look for other avenues — and studying overseas happens to be the top choice. Students tend to go through a transformation whilst studying overseas, they become self-dependent, confident and ready to face the world. Studies overseas also helps students to build links internationally and become global citizens.

From time immemorial, the thirst for global exposure has resulted in an outflow of Indian students to foreign lands. Luminaries such as Rajaramohan Roy, Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi studied in foreign universities. Most Indian

business honchos listed in *Forbes* year on year have also studied abroad. Global education has helped widen their horizons and equipped them to tackle problems of globalised business. Ratan Tata pursued his Advanced Management Programme at the Harvard Business School in 1975. Mukesh Ambani did his MBA from The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. Anand Mahindra graduated from Harvard College, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and completed his MBA from Harvard Business School, Boston. Adi Godrej did his bachelor's and master's degrees in management from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology before joining the family business. And the list goes on.

Over the past two decades, Indian students' mobility to universities abroad has become an integral part of the country's higher education landscape. In spite of the global economic recession, the number of students going abroad for studies is increasing worldwide. Education apart, a majority of younger employees in India are keen on seeking jobs abroad, which has been discovered in a recent survey conducted by a global recruitment firm, Ma Foi Randstad Workmonitor Survey 2011 — Wave 4.

Overseas education is no more the domain of the rich in India. Even middle class students have been expanding the breadth of their abilities by acquiring enhanced academic knowledge overseas. Indian parents also do not measure education in terms of costs, which explains why students from this country form the largest contingent of international students in foreign universities.

With numerous choices available today, newer trends are emerging in this field which has totally altered the traditional perceptions about overseas education in India. There is a paradigm shift in the choice of courses that were limited to MBA, medical or engineering. Students are keen to explore more, specialised courses that are not available or are of a high standard in India, such as in science, banking and finance, fashion design, architecture, films,

health, nursing, hospitality, etc.

The awareness level has increased and Indian students are progressively venturing into a new world of opportunities. Until 2010, the USA, UK and Australia were the most preferred destinations for study abroad. But now Canada and New Zealand have also entered the arena. Since these countries reflect vast career options, provide low cost

education, progressive immigration policies, a multi-culture environment, a better lifestyle and healthy employment opportunities, they are likely to become popular in the coming few years.

Although the trend of studying abroad has become highly popular and holds

innumerable benefits, there are a lot of complexities involved in the whole process. Of late, there have been instances of closure of various private institutions in various countries such as Australia and the UK, jeopardizing the future of thousands of students. Thousands of applications from India also got rejected by the UK and Australia because of document fraud. Some students have even fallen prey to illegal human trafficking. The Malta Boat tragedy was a similar unfortunate case — 300 youths, including 170 from Punjab, lost their lives in the

Malta Sicily Channel, near Italian international waters, after their boat collided with a ship during an illegal mid-sea

transfer.

Therefore, before enrolling in a foreign institution, it is essential for students to find out as much as they can about the accreditor and the institutions it accredits, as well as the recognition process of the foreign education ministry. They should strictly prevent usage of fraudulent documents as it gravely hampers their dream of studying abroad. They should also be wary of fly-by-night consultants who suggest admissions in non-credible colleges, thereby jeopardising the future of students.

International education is a valuable industry forwarding a noble cause and should not be hijacked by the illegal and unethical behavior of desperate visa-seekers.

The writer is founder and CEO, Oceanic Consultants



UGC decides to start fourth stream

Plans To Give Degree Tag To Vocational Edu

Hemali Chhapla | TNN

Mumbai: From the forthcoming academic season, colleges across the country will offer a bachelor's degree in vocational education, thus underpinning a stream that has always languished for the want of a formal degree.

Sensing the gap in the system, the move to offer the BVoc is largely in response to the hungry local manufacturing industry's requirement for top-grade workforce, and partly because several graduates from the existing tradi-



OPENING NEW AVENUES

tional streams are jobless and deemed unemployable.

"Our standing committee has cleared the proposal to offer the bachelor's in vocational education and once the commission clears it, any college in India which is affiliated to a university can offer this programme," Ved Prakash, UGC's chairman in charge, said. "We need to pre-

Times View

Adding a vocational stream in existing colleges is an excellent idea. We have always held that one of the problems with our education system is that it is out of tune with the needs of a fast changing economic environment and hence often appears meaningless. Stressing vocationalization is an obvious way of dealing with this problem. However, there are cultural issues too. Historically, Indians have tended to look down upon vocational training as somehow being below a general degree in the arts or sciences. Adding a vocational stream within general colleges rather than just setting up more vocational institutes should somewhat help in dispelling such notions.

pare a large workforce and it is time we build capacity at the graduate-level."

So far, vocational education has often been derided for attracting mostly students with poor marks. But now, industry has thrown its weight behind the UGC to change that perception and lend this course the much-needed academic might and respect.

The move was initiated by the All India Council for Technical Education, which has identified 10 sectors like entertainment, telecom, etc, that need specialized graduates. "These courses will provide vocational skills and general education, thus providing vocational graduates with multiple pathways," said AICTE chairman S S Mantha.

Business Line, ND 24/02/2012 p-15

ISRO sets ball rolling for Indian 'GPS'/navigation system

Our Bureau

Bangalore, Feb. 23

The first of India's own little regional positioning satellites to better the US military-owned GPS may be put up in sky this year.

The seven-satellite constellation, called the Indian Regional Navigational Satellite System, when fully in place over the coming years, will be far more accurate than the GPS that the world depends on. It would be available to users in the sub-continent all the time come rain or shine, according to ISRO.

The space agency along with its other government partners on Wednesday briefed 250 current and potential users, planners, industry and scientists on the uses of navigational systems. The Airports Authority of India co-sponsored the first Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) meet. ISRO's Director, Publicity and

PR, Mr S.Satish, said GPS signals and position data received in the country are often wide of the mark. "When we have our own IRNSS, it will be equal to, if not better than, the GPS."

An ISRO release said, "The regional navigational satellite system over the Indian region will provide position accuracy that is better than 20 metres on a 24/7 all-weather basis."

250 USERS AT MEET

It said, "The user meet aims to link industry, users and service providers enabling them to share information to promote navigation and positioning satellite systems for transportation, disaster management, environment and agriculture.

"The meet provides industry an exposure to the infinite possibilities of using navigation signals and its spin-offs."

Dr T.K.Alex, Member, Space Commission, and Director, ISRO Satellite Centre, in-

augurated a technical meet on sat-nav opportunities and an exhibition of related products by Indian industry. Mr E.K.Bharat Bhushan, Director-General of Civil Aviation, and Mr S.K.Shiva Kumar, Associate Director, ISAC, were present.

Mr A.S.Ganeshan, Project Director, Navigation Systems, ISAC, presented the ISRO-AAI GAGAN project and the IRNSS. The users were told about the use of navigational signals for accurate positioning - as in civil aviation, transportation and other services.

GAGAN is a joint project of ISRO and AAI to augment or fine-tune the not-too-accurate GPS data obtained from the US. It will mainly benefit airlines over the country's airspace. GSAT-8, the first satellite carrying GAGAN payload or antenna, has been beaming signals since December 15, 2011.

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Mint ND 24.02.12 P-11

Bad cable may be to blame in flawed faster-than-light experiment

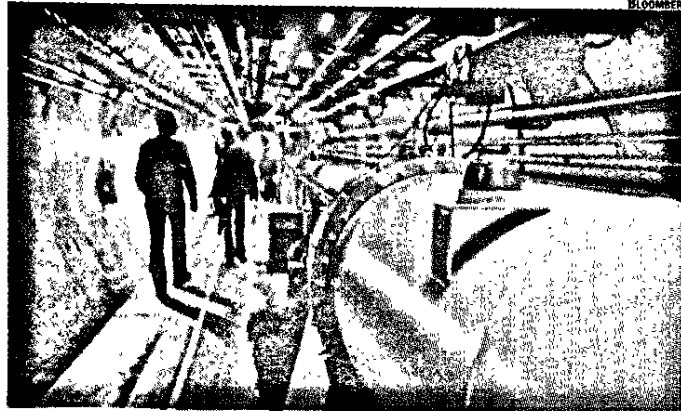
BY GAUTAM NAIK

A malfunctioning cable may have been responsible for the claim that some particles may be able to travel faster than light speed, a potentially embarrassing outcome for physicists who had publicized the findings with great fanfare just a few months ago.

In September, scientists at the European Organization for Nuclear Research, or CERN, said that ghostlike particles called neutrinos zapped from a lab in Geneva to one in Italy had seemingly made the trip in about 60 nanoseconds less than light speed—a finding that garnered headlines around the world. It also induced much head-shaking among skeptical scientists who said they were convinced that the result was an error.

It turns out the only ghost may have been in the machine after all. CERN says it had identified two possible effects that could have affected the experiment: one relates to an oscillator used to provide time stamps for estimating particle speeds, and a possible glitch in a fiber-optic cable.

"If this is the case, it could have led to an underestimate of the time of flight of the neutrinos,"



Technical glitch? A 2006 photo shows the tunnel where the Large Hadron Collider particle accelerator was being built at the Center of European Nuclear Research CERN in Geneva, Switzerland.

WSJ ON SCIENCE

nos," CERN said in a one-paragraph "update" posted on its website. It plans new measurements in May.

Neutrinos are particles with almost no mass and no charge, and they can pass through ordinary matter unaffected. At any given moment, billions harmlessly stream through a person's body.

In the experiment known as the Oscillation Project with Emulsion-Tracking Apparatus, neutrinos were measured as

traveling slightly faster than light on a 450-mile trip from CERN near Geneva to the Gran Sasso underground lab in central Italy. That result was based on more than 15,000 neutrino events measured.

Einstein's theory of relativity incorporates his crucial idea that the speed of light—about 186,000 miles a second—is a barrier that realistically can't be breached. In the famous equation $E=mc^2$ that equates mass with the energy contained within it; for example, the "c" represents the speed of light.

If particles go faster than light,

things become weird. For example, it suggests that particles can theoretically travel backward in time. Not only is such an outcome contrary to nature's laws as currently understood, it would require a drastic rewriting of modern particle physics.

The light-speed notion is partly the basis for Einstein's theory of gravity, which, in turn, is the starting point for existing theories about how the universe evolved.

The speed of light calculation has also been incorporated into billions of measurements done at particle accelerators in the quest to understand how the basic constituents of matter behave. If some particles can zoom around faster than light, most of those calculations would have to be redone.

After the September announcement, some scientists were skeptical because of earlier measurements that showed neutrinos reaching the Earth from a supernova explosion and traveling at exactly the speed of light—which contradicted the CERN finding. Others had wondered whether the setup of the experiment or statistical errors could have affected the conclusion.

—wsj@livemint.com

Loose cable snaps 'faster than light' finding

Einstein May Not Be Wrong As CERN Suspects Flaw In GPS System Behind Startling Result

Geneva/Chicago: The world of science was upended last year when an experiment appeared to show one of Einstein's fundamental theories was wrong.

But now the lab behind it says the result could have been caused by a loose cable.

Physicists at the CERN research institute near Geneva appeared to contradict Albert Einstein's 1905 special theory of relativity last year when they reported that sub-atomic particles called neutrinos could travel fractions of a second faster than light.

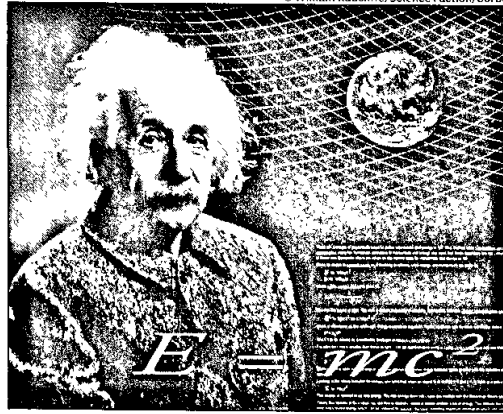
Einstein's theory — which underpins the current view of how the universe works — says nothing can travel faster

than light, and doing so would be like traveling back in time.

James Gillies, a spokesman for the European Organization for Nuclear Research, or CERN, said on Wednesday that the lab's startling result was now in doubt.

On Wednesday, ScienceInsider, a website run by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, had reported that the result was down to a loose fibre optic cable linking a Global Positioning System satellite receiver to a computer.

Gillies confirmed that a flaw in the GPS system was now suspected as a possible cause for the reading. Further testing was needed be-



THEORY STILL STANDS?

fore any definite conclusions could be reached, he added.

The faster-than-light finding was recorded when 15,000 neutrino beams were pumped over three years from CERN to an underground Italian laboratory at Gran Sasso near Rome. "A possible explanation has been found. But we won't know until we have tested it out with a new beam to Gran Sasso," Gillies told Reuters.

Physicists on the experiment, called OPERA, said that when they reported it last September that they had checked and rechecked over many months anything that could have produced a misreading before announcing what they had found.

A second test whose results were announced in November appeared to provide further evidence that neutrinos were travelling faster than light. But many experts remained sceptical of a result that would have overturned one of the fundamental principles of modern physics.

Edward Blucher, chairman of the department of physics at the University of Chicago, said the original finding would have been breathtaking if it had been true. "Maybe they should have waited a few more months," he added.

Gillies said CERN would be issuing a full statement early on Thursday. REUTERS

IT companies look beyond engineering graduates

■ Only 20% of 900,000 engineering graduates joining the sector every year; automotive & manufacturing big draw

Diksha Dutta & Kirtika Suneja

New Delhi, Feb 23: An engineering degree is considered by many as the ticket to employment in the \$69-billion information technology-enabled services (IT-ITeS) industry. But the reality is a bit different. With the IT-ITES industry looking for niche talent in testing and infrastructure management, which do not necessarily require engineering graduates, only 20% of the 900,000-odd engineering graduates every year are being recruited by the industry.

The fresh graduates are also being attracted by the manufacturing and automotive sectors.

"It is a misconception that the IT industry employs most of the engineers that graduate each year. A significant number goes to sectors like manufacturing and automotive as well. It would be safe to say that close to 20% of the engineering graduates are absorbed by the industry. And 75-90% of the talent in the IT industry would have an engineering degree," said Nasscom president Som Mittal.

While 30% of the talent in the country comprises engineering graduates, 46% are non-engineering graduates and the rest are specialists like chartered accountants, CPAs, doctors, lawyers, PhDs and actuaries, who are in high demand from the IT industry. The trend, according to both Nasscom and technology schools, is moving towards such niche talent as the industry is now offering complex and end-to-end services.

IIT Madras was approached by 175 IT companies in 2011, whereas this year the number reduced to 138. Commenting on the number of engineers joining IT companies, an official from IIT



THE TREND, ACCORDING TO BOTH NASSCOM AND TECHNOLOGY SCHOOLS, IS MOVING TOWARDS NICHE TALENT AS THE INDUSTRY IS NOW OFFERING COMPLEX AND END-TO-END SERVICES

Kharagpur said: "This year five students from our computer science branch were placed in IT companies, against 26 in other/non IT sectors. Around 15-20% of engineering students are being placed in the IT sector in the last few years."

Analysts feel that the recent profiles that are novel in the IT industry necessarily do not need engineers and thus the matrix is changing. Today, the industry directly employs 2.77 million professionals of whom safely 60% are hardcore engineering graduates.

"Earlier IT companies hired close to 100% of their staff as engineers, now it has reached 90%

and soon it will be 70% in the next two to five years. The BPO sector is emerging and there are new processes like testing and infrastructure management which necessarily do not need engineers," said Zensar Technologies CEO Ganesh Natarajan. He added that most of these engineers, roughly around 4-4.5 lakh of the 9 lakh, are not employable by the IT industry as well. Moreover, 20% of the engineering graduates also go for higher education every year. Thus, the IT-ITes sector has to choose from the residual.

"Many graduates from other disciplines (eg mathematics and computing) also opted for IT profile offered by various organisations," said a student from IIT Guwahati where 37% of the placed students joined the IT sector, including organisations like Facebook, Google, Microsoft, Adobe and InMobi.

"Though the employability rate in the IT industry was 25% as per our study in 2005, we believe that the situation is better now because of initiatives by tech companies who have started their own certification programmes," said Nasscom senior vice-president Sangeeta Gupta.

An official from IIT Kharagpur said: "Chunk of the students prefer consultancy and core jobs over IT jobs. IT sector is mostly confined to students from the IT department and few others from other departments." The demand for consultancy jobs is very high. From the past few years, the trends show that students tend to drift away from IT jobs. Those who are interested in further studies, work in core sector for a few years and those interested in pursuing an MBA, go for the consultancy jobs, the official said.

Offbeat Courses at Top B-Schools

OUT OF THE BOX: Students get an opportunity to stretch their learning muscles, with innovative programmes and live interactions that help them understand the "real" world better and function in challenging times. Among these are programmes teaching leadership through sports, and imparting entrepreneurship skills to rural people

Indian Institute of Management Bangalore

PROGRAMME: Learnings from Sports
DURATION: Two Days **STARTING IN:** March 2012

Genesis
THE programme took shape when two IIM-B alumni, who work for cricketer Anil Kumble-owned sports company TENVIC, suggested using sports to hone leadership skills as one of their executive management programmes. This had been done in the US before but never in India. Participants will be guided on leadership, how to manage multiple layers, deal with being the "captain" of a team or even "just an executive," and coping with new

Growth opportunities
HELPS senior managers deal with different managerial skills and handle groups, which is part of their job.

Class Strength
THE enrollment has started, and IIM-B and TENVIC have approached different companies. They expect at least 25-30 senior managers. If it succeeds, it will be a twice-a-year or three times-a-year feature.

Objective
TO give participants an exposure to innovative concepts altruistic mentoring, performance-based leadership, managing the ups and downs of the game, cross-training, and equipping them with skills beyond their role. There will be classroom discussions, interactive sessions, panel discussions where industry experts and sports personalities from corporate India will be facilitators.

Main content
LEARNING from others, integrating with the environment and improving management



Rajiv Gandhi Indian Institute of Management, Shillong

PROGRAMME: Executive post graduate programme in international business
DURATION: 12 months **STARTED IN:** April 2011

Objective
PRODUCE leaders who can handle the current market turbulence and dynamic corporate environment effectively.

Job Opportunities
STRATEGIC roles and senior positions in companies operating in emerging markets with a focus on India and China.

Content
THE programme focuses on leadership skills essential for senior management positions. The curriculum is adapted from best practices from Asian countries. It is a blend of basic management courses and specialised modules. Another aspect is the training under Mystique Management and Mind Mapping through outdoor learning camps.

Projected Class Strength 45

Targets
PROFESSIONALS with atleast three years' work experience, preferably internationally. IIM-S has entered into an MoU with Ocean University of China to start this programme, which involves a six-month stay and internship in China.

Compensation
ANNUAL salary could range between \$36,000 and \$1,20,000

Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar

PROGRAMME: Three-Continent Master of Global Management
DURATION: 12 months **STARTED IN:** September 2011

Content
THE Euro 40,000 programme, a result of a partnership between XIM, Bhubaneswar, Antwerp Management School, Belgium and Fordham Graduate School of Business, New York, has been structured to draw upon the strengths of each country. For India, it is bottom-of-the-pyramid and social entrepreneurship; for New York, it is finance and innovation and

for Antwerp, it is marketing in a multicultural society.

Objective
CREATE global managers in the true sense of the term.

Targets
HIGH-potential recent university graduates. The current batch consists of 16 students from Europe, two from the US, two from China, one from Indonesia,

Turkey and India respectively.

Job Opportunities
ALL three institutes offer career services, and almost all the roles are in general management.

Compensation
STILL early to say as the first batch is yet to be placed. But in India, it is likely to start at Rs 12 lakh onwards, and will be more in the other countries.

Genesis
THE idea was born when the deans of these institutes met. They felt real global managers are born when students immerse themselves in the local culture and business, and imbibe the experience of three continents.

IIM Ranchi

PROGRAMME: Certificate course on 'Barefoot Manager'
DURATION: 15 days **STARTING IN:** July 2012

Targets
MICRO entrepreneurs and panchayat officials. The video-based programme will impart management concepts to even illiterate people. While higher education takes people away from their villages, this one encourages people to stay back.

Content
EVALUATING business opportunities, consumer-oriented business philosophy, product design, distribution, promotion, pricing, accounting, sustainable consumption and production, ethics and society.

Class Strength
THE target enrolment for 2012-13 is 1,500

Job Opportunities
SELF-employment

Plans
IIM-R is getting voluntary organisations, microfinance companies and the government to help roll out the programme. There are plans to make this certificate mandatory for benefits from the government or micro loans from banks.

Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta

PROGRAMME
PG Programme for Executives on Visionary Leadership for Manufacturing
DURATION: 1 year **STARTED IN:** August 27, 2007

Genesis
THE programme is based on a partnership between IIM-C, IIT-K, IIT-M and CII. The National Manufacturing Competitiveness Council plays a catalytic role, with support from Japan International Cooperation Agency.

Job Opportunities
STUDENTS of the first four batches have been placed in leading Indian companies.

Class Strength 34

Objectives
• Provide skill-based training to transform mid-level managers in the Indian manufacturing industry into visionary leaders.

Content
• 36 weeks' classroom interaction, case studies, tutorials, laboratory sessions, project work at IIM-C, IIT-M and IIT-K
• Eight weeks' Internship in Industry
• Three to four weeks' industry visits in India and abroad

B-school hiring dips as economy holds up

By Anuradha Shukla In New Delhi

WITH the economic slowdown beginning to bite, campus hiring by corporates has gone down considerably, hitting placements and the salary packages at India's business schools.

"We never doubt 100 per cent placement but this year the scene is not too encouraging. We do not have salary offers that make headlines this year," a member of placement at IIM-Ahmedabad said on condition of anonymity as the placement is still on.

"The average pay package has seen no improvement this year and there are fewer global financial companies participating. However, the placement is still on and may be more exciting offers come up," the member added.

"While overall hiring sentiment remains optimistic, the global uncertainty has certainly affected the placement at B-schools. This year the number of offers are fewer and there is no hike seen in the average pay packages," Sandeep Chaudhary, practice leader (compensation consulting) at Aon Hewitt, said.

"Apart from the IIMs, it will be difficult for the business schools to get 100 per cent placement," Chaudhary said. Even at IIMs the number of offers has gone down, he added.

The Boston Consulting Group made the highest number of offers by recruiting 17 freshers.

This year the number of offers from the financial and telecom sectors has gone down. Even

Students of finance & HR face tough times

when offers are there the pay packets offered are either not very encouraging or they are 15-20 per cent lesser than last year.

However, while fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) firms remain most preferred with students, e-commerce companies have emerged as favourites with good packages and exciting job profiles to students.

"The number of offers from the financial sector has seen a drop. But we have other sectors like consultancy, IT and e-commerce, which are coming up with good offers," Surbhi Bhatia, member of the placement committee at IIM-Kozhikode, said.



QUEUED UP: Global uncertainties are hurting the prospects of B-school graduates and the Institutions feel that 100% placements may not be achieved this year.

LEAN DAYS

■ Average pay package has not improved & fewer global financial firms participating

■ B-schools other than IIMs may not see 100% placement

■ Six new IIMs are also at some disadvantage as

companies prefer the older IIMs

■ Number of offers from financial and telecom sectors have gone down

■ E-commerce firms offering good packages and exciting job profiles emerge as favourites

15% to 20% lower pay packages are being offered to B-school students

₹8L to ₹16 lakh packages are being offered by e-commerce firms

Companies like Redbus, Lets-Buy, Via, Valyoo Technologies, Snapdeal, Flipkart Myantra are all first-timers at IIM campus placements and have picked up students at salaries ranging between ₹8 lakh and ₹16 lakh.

"E-commerce is the next emerging field. It offers students

a chance to be creative as it is a growing field. With a good salary package we find the offer more attractive than other sectors," a student from IIM-Lucknow said.

While IIM-Ahmedabad, IIM-Calcutta, IIM-Bangalore and IIM-Lucknow already have many offers in hand, the new

IIMs are facing problems.

This year there are six new IIMs — Ranchi (Jharkhand), Rohtak (Haryana), Raipur (Chhattisgarh), Thiruchirappalli (Tamil Nadu), Kashipur (Uttarakhand) and Udaipur (Rajasthan) — taking the total number of IIMs to 13.

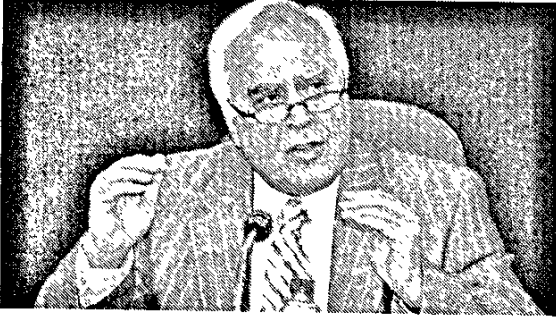
The new IIMs say they have some disadvantage as companies prefer the older IIMs, due to alumni support and only after that they come to the new campuses. Besides, they do not have a database of companies and some of them are hiring outside placement agencies.

The scenario at the general B-schools is even more difficult. Even when companies are coming to the campus, they are offering lower packages than last year and students are not happy with their job profiles as well.

"Most of the offers that are coming are of hard core sales job. Those who were in HR management and disciplines, such as finance are finding it very difficult. We are just keeping our fingers crossed," said a student with IIPM.

आखिर सिब्ल का शिक्षा एजेंडा क्या?

शिक्षा: जब एनसीईआरटी है तो इसके काम में सीओबीएसई की घुसपैठ आखिर क्यों?



जेएस राजपूत

कें द्रीय मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्री कपिल सिबल ने सबके फायदे के लिए बहुत ही साफ चीजें कही हैं — उनके सुधार को 'असहयोगी विपक्ष' व्यर्थ कर दे रहा है। वरना सुधार लाने वाले उनके 13 विधेयक क्यों लंबित रहते? इसके अलावा, शिक्षा के अधिकार (आरटीई) कानून के संबंध में केंद्र को जो कुछ करना था वह सब उसने पहले ही कर दिया है। अब यह लागू हो जाए, इसे सुनिश्चित करने का काम राज्य सरकारों का है — यह देखना कि शिक्षकों की समय पर नियुक्ति हो, वे नियमित रूप से समय पर आएँ, अच्छी तरह प्रशिक्षित हों और स्कूलों में सभी आवश्यक साजो-सामान हों आदि।

पाठ्य पुस्तकों का काम पूरी तरह राज्य सरकारों के नियंत्रण में रहना चाहिए। इससे संवैधानिक मूल्यों के साथ कंटेंट का तालमेल रहता है। केंद्रीय मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्री को कुछ राज्य सरकारें पसंद नहीं हैं इसलिए मौजूदा व्यवस्था को ध्वस्त नहीं किया जाना चाहिए।

तकनीकी तौर पर यह सब बिल्कुल ठीक लगता है। यह अलग बात है कि मंत्री जी शिक्षा क्षेत्र में व्यावहारिक तौर पर सब कुछ केंद्रित करना चाहते हैं। इनमें शिक्षा संस्थाओं का नियमन, राज्यों में विश्वविद्यालयों के कुलपतियों की नियुक्ति के साथ और भी बहुत कुछ शामिल है। अब वे एक नेशनल टेक्स्ट बुक कौंसिल (एनटीसी) चाहते हैं। इसमें वे इस बात को पूरी तरह नजरअंदाज कर रहे हैं

कि इससे राज्य सरकारों में विश्वास की कमी की बू आती है और यह उनके अधिकारों में बिलावजह की घुसपैठ है। हर कोई समझता है कि देश की संघीय संरचना की शक्ति राज्य और केंद्र के बीच आपसी विश्वास और पारदर्शिता के स्तर पर निर्भर करती है।

मई 2009 के मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय ने किसी के भी मन में यह शक नहीं छोड़ा है कि तेजी से सुधार अभी होंगे जब मौजूदा संस्थाएं नष्ट कर दी जाएँ और बड़ी संख्या में नई-नई संस्थाएं बनाएँ। ऐसी कई संस्थाओं में एक एनटीसी बनाने का आईडिया स्पष्ट रूप से साबित करता है कि राजनीतिक वर्ग अगर सत्ता में हो तो सिर्फ सत्ता में बने रहने के बारे में सोचता है और भविष्य की अपनी निरंतरता सुनिश्चित करने के लिए ऐसे लोगों की पीढ़ी तैयार करता है जो समान रूप से सोचते हैं। ये लोग कभी कामयाब नहीं होते पर हार भी नहीं मानते। हमारे यहां के राजनीतिज्ञ अपने आदर्शों का पालन सुनिश्चित करने के लिए किसी भी हद तक जाने को तैयार रहते हैं। उनकी प्राथमिकताएं हमेशा चुनाव उन्मुख होती हैं और आरटीई कानून जैसी जरूरी आवश्यकताओं को भी सुस्ती से लागू किया जाता है।

अगर ऐसी नहीं होता तो केंद्र सरकार को पाठ्य पुस्तकों के लिए एक और संरचना तैयार करने के द्वारे में क्यों सोचना चाहिए जबकि ऐसी ही एक संस्था पहले से है और 2011 में इसने अपने 50 साल पूरे किए हैं। इसकी अध्यक्षता मंत्री महोदय ने खुद की थी। क्या उन्हें पता नहीं है कि इस काम के लिए देश ने पहले ही भारी वित्तीय और शैक्षिक निवेश किए हैं और तब जाकर राष्ट्रीय स्तर का

संस्थान तैयार हुआ है जो खासतौर से इसी काम के लिए है। एनसीईआरटी की स्थापना 1961 में तब की गई थी जब केंद्रीय नेता देश के संविधान की भावना का सम्मान करते थे, राज्य सरकारों में पूरा विश्वास था और इस बात के प्रति सतर्क रहते थे कि कभी पक्षपात करते नजर न आएँ और न एनसीईआरटी का गठन केंद्र और राज्य सरकारों को स्कूल शिक्षा और शिक्षक शिक्षा से संबंधित सभी मामलों में सलाह और सहायता देने के लिए किया गया था। इसके पाठ्य पुस्तकों को राष्ट्रीय और अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर सराहा गया है। इससे यह भी अपेक्षा थी कि बदलते समय के साथ यह पाठ्यपुस्तकों और पाठ्यक्रमों को भी संशोधित करेगा, नए तरीकों और शिक्षण विधियों को शामिल करेगा और सुनिश्चित करेगा कि राष्ट्रीय आवश्यकताओं की पूर्ति करने के साथ-साथ अंतरराष्ट्रीय बदलावों का भी विश्लेषण किया जाए और उपयुक्त ढंग से शामिल कर लिया जाए।

यह एक जोरदार जनादेश था और एनसीईआरटी इन अपेक्षाओं पर खरा उतरा है। इसने पाठ्य पुस्तक लिखने वालों, मूल्यांकन करने वालों को प्रशिक्षण दिया और तैयार किया है और मूल्यांकन प्रणाली में सुधार लाने की कोशिशों में भी भारी योगदान किया है। इसकी भूमिका सलाहकार वाली रही है और राज्य सरकार की संस्थाएं अपनी पुस्तकें तैयार करने, पाठ्यक्रम में स्थानीय तत्व लाने, विशेषज्ञों का अपना समूह तैयार करने के लिए स्वतंत्र हैं। यह राज्य सरकार का अधिकार है और किसी भी राज्य सरकार ने एनसीईआरटी पर जबारदस्ती करने का आरोप नहीं

लगाया है।

पर सिबल साहब के फॉर्म में आने के बाद राष्ट्रीय स्तर की पाठ्यपुस्तकें तैयार करने का काम अचानक, एक अनजानी-अनसुनी संस्था सीओबीएसई — कौंसिल ऑफ दि बोर्ड ऑफ स्कूल एजुकेशन को सौंप दिया गया। इसकी अपनी कोई सुविज्ञता नहीं है। सीओबीएसई भारत की खेल संस्थाओं की तरह काम करता है जिसमें एक अकेला व्यक्ति वर्षों संस्थान पर नियंत्रण बनाए रखता है।

इस पर शिक्षा क्षेत्र से जुड़े लोगों ने विरोध किया। सवाल उठा कि भारत सरकार ने जब एनसीईआरटी बना रखा है तो इसकी भूमिका और जिम्मेदारी क्यों छीनी जा रही है। इसका कोई खास असर नहीं हुआ और एनसीईआरटी को अभी भी अपनी अनूठी भूमिका नहीं मिली है जो देश ने उसे पांच दशक से सौंप रखा है। दूसरी ओर सीओबीएसई की इस घुसपैठ के कारण सीबीएसई भी पाठ्य पुस्तकें तैयार करने के काम में कूद पड़ी है जबकि इसके लिए राष्ट्रीय स्तर की सुविज्ञता एनसीईआरटी के पास है और वह सीबीएसई के पड़ोस में ही है। इस तरह का दोहराव क्यों? क्या यह किसी छिपे हुए एजेंडा को लागू करने के लिए है? पाठ्य पुस्तकों का काम पूरी तरह राज्य सरकारों के नियंत्रण में रहना चाहिए। इससे संवैधानिक मूल्यों के साथ कंटेंट का तालमेल रहता है। केंद्रीय मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्री को कुछ राज्य सरकारें पसंद नहीं हैं इसलिए मौजूदा व्यवस्था को ध्वस्त नहीं किया जाना चाहिए। (लेख एनसीईआरटी के पूर्व निदेशक हैं।)

-दि सैंडे स्टैंडर्ड्स से साभार