Newspaper Clips

February 5, 2013

Pioneer ND 5/02/2013 P2

IIT-Delhi roped in for study to curb road mishaps

SHASHI BHUSHAN ■ NEW DELHI

In an attempt to bring down fatal accidents in a scientific way, Delhi Traffic Police is all set to analyse all fatal and non-fatal accidents with the help of experts and provide a solution to bring down the rate of accidents based on the findings. Additional Commissioner of Police (Traffic) Anil Shukla said that experts from IIT, Delhi will conduct the study to find out the reason behind the accidents and a study would be conducted in all the traffic circles. Solution to bring down the accidents will be based on the analysis.

Shukla said that solution or changes required to reduce the accidents will be taken on the finding of the study by involving all the stake holders. Solution will be based on evidence based which may include tuning of traffic signal timings to ensure balanced dispersal of vehicles at intersection prone to accident, changing road design, scientifically changing road curvatures as per the requirement and gradients with the help of road owning authorities, based on the findings about reasons for accidents. For example, if accident analysis found that over speeding is the reason, then the traffic police will ensure that motorists do not cross the speed limit. "If the fault is found to be in the road design or engineering then the traffic police will approach the road owning agency to rectify the problem by making necessary changes," he added.

Through the accident analysis involving experts from IIT, Delhi and other traffic experts, traffic police believes that it would help in bringing down the fatal or non-fatal accident rate significantly in the coming years. "Even a marginal decrease in accidents will immensely be beneficial if the implementation of finding in the studies help us save a few lives, limbs or loss of other body parts," Shukla added.

Total number of fatal accidents last year was 1,822, which is about 11 per cent less than 2,047 fatal accidents in 2011. Number of road deaths has come down from 2,066 in 2011 to 1,866 last year. In 2012 a total of 832 pedestrians were killed in road accidents-about 130 less than the previous year.

Earlier in 2011, the traffic police found that Ring Road in the Capital was most vulnerable to road accidents. According to the figures compiled by the Delhi Traffic Police then, Outer Ring Road came second in the list of roads which witnessed the highest number of fatal accidents. GT-Karnal Road (NH-1), Rohtak Road, NH-8, Mehrauli-Badarpur Road, Najafgarh Road and NH-24 were among the other most dangerous stretches in the Capital.

With 181 fatalities in 2011, Ring Road tops the list of the 10 most vulnerable roads in the Capital followed by the Outer Ring Road (116) and the GT Karnal Road (101), which had recorded an unprecedented rise in the number of accidents.

Hindustan Times ND 5/02/2013 p5

Traffic police take steps to reduce road deaths

FOCUS Accidents to be scientifically analysed by experts from IIT, other bodies

Subhendu Ray
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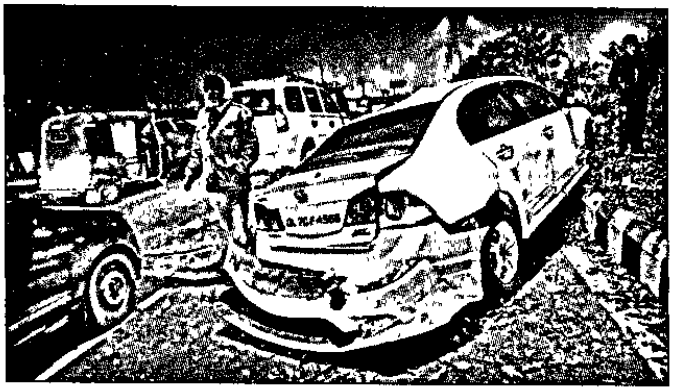
NEW DELHI: After pushing road deaths down to a 10-year low in 2012 through various crackdowns on norm violators, the Delhi traffic police are now in the process of scientifically analyzing all accidents and come up with sustainable solutions.

Evidence-based solutions would include tuning of signal timings to ensure balanced dispersal of vehicles at accident prone intersections, changing road geometry, scientifically improving road curvatures and gradients with the help of road owning authorities based on the findings of reasons for accidents. They will also ensure that all signals are properly visible and functional, said sources.



■ Road deaths registered a 10-year low in 2012 after crackdowns by traffic police on norm violators. HT PHOTO

"Our prime focus would be to reduce fatal and non-fatal road accidents on city roads by providing evidence-based solutions. This would be a step forward in our endeavour to reduce road accidents," said Anil Shukla, additional commissioner of police (traffic).

The traffic department has asked officers concerned to send details of all accidents in all traffic ranges. Experts from IIT Delhi and other organisations would be involved in the process of accident analysis and make suggestions.

"Increasing deployment of traffic police personnel and intensifying violation checks are not enough to reduce accidents. We would try and figure out the reasons for accidents based on evidence and accordingly provide solutions," Shukla said.

According to sources, the traffic police would also use GIS mapping system to identify exact locations where maximum accidents took place during the last year.

They also have plans to install many pedestrian signals particularly on stretches where maximum pedestrian accidents took place in 2012.

Deccan Herald Nd 5-02-2013 P-2

Traffic cops, IIT to analyse road accidents, save lives

Plan to use GIS to track mishap-prone spots in city

Vishal Kant

NEW DELHI: Aimed at bringing down the number of fatal accidents on city roads, the traffic police are analysing the nature of all fatal and non-fatal accidents scientifically.

The exercise, being done in association with experts from IIT-Delhi, aims to bring about sustainable solutions for reducing deaths due to road accidents.

The traffic police are analysing the nature of accidents, including assessing all aspects of accidents, which will help the force in evidence-based solutions.

"The analysis is an attempt to ascertain the exact reason behind accidents. There could be several other reasons for a fatal accident, apart from fault on part of the driver," said Anil Shukla, the new additional commissioner of police (traffic).

"It may include the road geometry, curvature and gradient of the stretch where the accident took place, movement of pedestrians, visibility and signal cycle of traffic signals, among others," " said Shukla.

"The result of such an analysis will help in bringing the required change on a particular stretch to minimise chances of accidents," added Shukla.

The traffic police are analysing the nature of accidents, which will help the force in evidence-based solutions.

Once the data is available, corrective measures will be taken, he added.

The traffic police have asked the officers concerned to send details of all accidents in all traffic ranges. According to sources, the traffic police will use geographic information system (GIS) mapping to identify the exact locations where the maximum accidents happened last year.

According to the traffic police, the latest study is a step ahead of the success they met for the past two-three years in bringing down the number of fatal accidents.

With 1,866 road deaths, 2012 saw the lowest accident-related deaths in the past one decade. It is 11 per cent less than 2,066 road deaths in 2011.

"Increasing deployment of traffic policemen and intensifying violation checks are important measures to curb accidents. These have shown result over the past few years. The analysis of accidents is aimed at taking the success to the next level," Shukla said.

He said every fatal accident averted serves several other purposes related to traffic than just saving precious lives. "Every accident prevented also leads to less traffic congestion and pile up of vehicle on that stretch," said Shukla.

DH News Service

Navbharat Times ND 05/02/2013 P-4

आईआईटी की मदद लेगी ट्रैफिक पुलिस

वरिष्ठ संवाददाता ॥ पुलिस मुख्यालय

राजधानी में सड़क हादसों को रोकने के लिए अब ट्रैफिक पुलिस आईआईटी के एक्सपर्ट्स की भी मदद लेगी। ये एक्सपर्ट जिन जगहों पर अक्सर सड़क हादसे होते हैं, उन जगहों पर जाकर न केवल हादसों की वजहों और बारीकियों का पता लगाएंगे, बल्कि हादसों को रोकने के उपाय भी सुझाएंगे। हादसों की जगहों का सटीक पता लगाने और उनके कारणों को तलाशने के लिए जीआईएस मैपिंग का भी सहारा लिया जाएगा।

ट्रैफिक पुलिस की कमान संभालने वाले अडिशनल कमिश्नर अनिल शुक्ला के मुताबिक, उनकी प्राथमिकता उपाय आधारित पुलिसिंग की होगी। ट्रैफिक पुलिस का फोकस इसी बात पर रहेगा कि राजधानी में सड़क हादसों में कमी आने का जो सिलसिला शुरू हुआ है, वह न केवल इसी तरह कायम रहे, बल्कि उसमें आगे चलकर और कमी आए। इसके लिए ट्रैफिक पुलिस आईआईटी समेत बाकी एजेंसियों के एक्सपर्ट्स की मदद लेगी और हादसों की वजहों का हर पहलू से और पूरी बारीकी के साथ अध्ययन करने के बाद हादसों को रोकने के उपाय करेगी।

"अगर किसी चौराहे पर हादसे इस वजह से होते हैं कि एक तरफ का ट्रैफिक चलने के दौरान ही दूसरी तरफ के ट्रैफिक के लिए भी सिग्नल जल्दी ग्रीन हो जाता है, तो वहां पर सिग्नल की टाइमिंग में थोड़ा बदलाव करके हादसों को रोका जा सकता है।

– अनिल शुक्ला, अडिशनल कमिश्नर (ट्रैफिक)

शुक्ला ने उदाहरण देते हुए बताया कि अगर कहीं पर सड़क की कंडीशन खराब है या सड़क की डिजाइन या भौगोलिक स्थिति ऐसी है, जो हादसों की वजह बन रही है, तो वहां भी संबंधित सिविक एजेंसियों की मदद से जरूरी कदम उठाए जाएंगे। अगर कहीं पर इसलिए हादसे हो रहे हैं कि वहां स्पीड पर कंट्रोल नहीं रहता, तो स्पीड कम करने के लिए उपाय किए जाएंगे।

दिल्ली के विभिन्न इलाकों में सड़क हादसों की जगहों और वजहों का बारीकी से अध्ययन करने और हादसों को रोकने के उपाय तलाशने के लिए दिल्ली के सभी ट्रैफिक सर्कलों से सड़क हादसों पर डीटेल रिपोर्ट भी मांगी गई है। शुक्ला के मुताबिक यह जरूरी नहीं कि नियमों के उल्लंघन पर चालान काटने या ज्यादा से ज्यादा ट्रैफिक पुलिसकर्मियों को सड़कों पर तैनात कर देने से हादसों में कमी आ जाए।

यही वजह है कि अब ट्रैफिक पुलिस साइंटिफिक आधार पर हादसों की वजहों का पता लगाएगी और उसी के आधार पर हादसों को रोकने के लिए जरूरी कदम उठाएगी। शुक्ला ने यह भी साफ कर दिया कि ट्रैफिक पुलिस न केवल जानलेवा सड़क हादसों को, बल्कि साधारण सड़क हादसों को रोकने के लिए भी जरूरी कदम उठाएगी।

Centre of Tharoor's problems

It isn't always easy to satisfy the demands of one's constituency while performing one's duties of a central minister in Delhi. No one but Shashi Tharoor knows the true implications of this conundrum. The minister of state for human resource development is trying to withstand pressure from politicians in Kerala, all of who want an IIT in the state. Here's the problem: the HRD ministry's policy — backed by the Planning Commission — strictly forbids creating new IITs in the 12th Five Year Plan. Only if engineering could be taught in tweets of 140 characters!

Deccan Herald Nd 5-02-2013
P-4

President to host 40 VCs

NEW DELHI, PTI: Top academicians of the country will brainstorm here on Tuesday on the issue of better educational services as President Pranab Mukherjee has convened a conference of vice-chancellors of 40 Central universities.

The one-day conference would also see the participation of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Union human resource development minister M M Pallam Raju and ministers of state for HRD Shashi Tharoor and Jitin Prasada, chairman of the National Innovation Council Sam Pitroda and chairman and members of the University Grants Commission.

"The agenda of the conference includes steps required to improve the quality of education and faculty in Central universities to bring it on par with the top universities of the world and steps needed to extend the reach of education through extension work in contiguous areas," a Rashtrapati Bhavan statement said.

AFI

The conference would also discuss "use of national knowledge network effectively in Central universities and suggestions to improve the visitor-university interface within the existing statutory framework of each central university".

The last such conference was held in 2003 when A P J Abdul Kalam was the President.

Free Press Indore 04-02-2013 P-3

IIT-I establishing surface science & engineering group

To do international collaborations in the field of surface science

ATUL GAUTAM
Indore

Adding yet another feather to its cap, Indian Institute of Technology Indore (IIT-I) has started establishing a state-of-the-art 'Surface Science and Engineering Group' that will work on surface modification by organic coatings, PVD/CVD, laser and thermal spray.

For this ambitious project, the institute has also constituted a 19-member international advisory board comprising eminent professors and scientists from countries like the USA, Germany, the UK and Australia.

"Issues such as corrosion, oxidation, wear, friction, dielectric properties, hydrophobicity/hydrophilicity etc begin from the surface. Conventional techniques such as paint coatings, electroplating, and modern techniques such as PVD/CVD, lasers, thermal spray etc are used to change the surface properties. Our focus will be on to surface modification through modern techniques," a professor of IIT Indore told Free Press.

For this project, the institute is also exploring the scope for international collaborations.

"Surface science and engineering is a vast field and a lot of work has been done in this field so far. To review various aspects of surface science and engineering, a systematic study on the surface conditions, surface structure, methods of surface modification and techniques to analyze surfaces, the institute will organise a two-day international workshop in the first week of March," the IIT professor said.

"The workshop would discuss every aspect of surface science and engineering and chalk-out the research programme and also explore the scope for IIT Indore for international collaborations," he added.

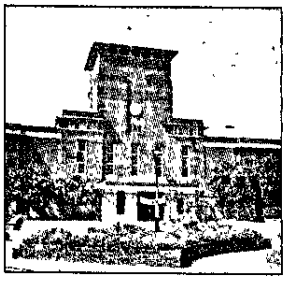
Noted professors including Prof Wolfgang Diehl and Prof Sanjay Mathur from Germany, Prof Pradeep Rohatgi, Prof Vinod Sarin and Dr Frank Gaebler from the USA, Prof Peter Hodgson, Prof VD Vankar from IIT Delhi have given their consent to take part in the workshop.

Deccan Herald ND 5-02-2013 P-4

DU to publish three e-journals

University hopes to showcase research work even by undergraduates

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Delhi University is working towards publishing its own journals, which will be uploaded online and accessible for free.



A DU officer said the journals will be uploaded by October. But there will be no print edition of the journals.

"Reputed universities have their journals. With a huge number of colleges and departments under the varsity, the research that goes unnoticed can be published in the journal," said the officer.

"Currently, we are thinking of publishing three journals in areas like humanities and social sciences, natural sciences and creative writing."

DU is also mulling over opening the chance of getting one's research work published in the undergraduate level. "The four-year graduation to be implemented focuses on research work for undergraduate students too. So we will not restrict it to research papers by postgraduate students," added the officer. For the first issue, several prose and poetry written by students in college magazines will be picked up for the creative writing journal. "It will be called DU-Vidha, a biannual creative writing journal, and will be in English and Hindi. The idea is to give a common platform to students to express through writing."

Journals on humanities and social sciences and natural sciences will be research-based, and the articles will be selected by a committee. "Selection will be made on the basis of a peer review process. Experts on a specific topic will review the research papers," said the officer.

"The papers will be reviewed by more than one member of the committee. The selected articles will be published once a year." Cost-cutting is a crucial point in the move to have only an online version of the journals.

"The online version is easily accessible and brings down cost tremendously. We will not have any subscription fee. We have asked for research papers from other universities in India and abroad," the officer added.

Amar Ujala ND 05/02/2013 P-7

आईआईटी ऑनलाइन क्लास

देखिए-सुनिए और सीखिए

● संतोष सिंह

कानपुर। इंजीनियरिंग की पढ़ाई कर रहे स्टूडेंट्स और टीचर्स के लिए आईआईटी ने 'लाइव एजूकेशन' के खास इंतजाम किए हैं। आप वेबसाइट खोलिए और एक क्लिक पर घर बैठे आईआईटी के क्लास रूम जैसी एजूकेशन लीजिए। टीचर्स का लेक्चर सुनिए और सीखिए। देश-विदेश के 667 इंस्टीट्यूट इसका लाभ ले रहे हैं। यह आंकड़ा फरवरी 2013 तक का है।

मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय की पहल पर देश की सभी आईआईटी ने क्वालिटी आफ इंजीनियरिंग एजूकेशन का दायरा बढ़ाने का संकल्प लिया है।

ये है वेबसाइट

लाइव कोर्स, आडियो-वीडियो लेक्चर के लिए नेशनल प्रोग्राम आन टेक्नोलॉजी इनहैंस्ड लर्निंग (एनपीटीएल-www.nptl.iitm.ac.in) की वेबसाइट खोलें। इसके होम पेज पर बने सभी आईआईटी की लिंक देखें। क्लिक करके किसी भी कोर्स, सब्जेक्ट की पढ़ाई करें।

इसी के तहत फिजिक्स, केमिस्ट्री, मैथमेटिक्स सहित इंजीनियरिंग के 24-सब्जेक्ट के आडियो-वीडियो लेक्चर आनलाइन उपलब्ध करा दिए गए हैं। इसमें पांच कोर्स ऐसे हैं, जो 31 जनवरी 2012, एक फरवरी, चार फरवरी 2013 को डाले गए हैं। इनका लाभ देश, विदेश में इंजीनियरिंग की पढ़ाई करने वाले स्टूडेंट, पढ़ाने वाले फैकल्टी, प्रोफेशनल उठा रहे हैं। वेब, वीडियो का आनलाइन कोर्स भी उपलब्ध कराया गया है। आईआईटी कानपुर के प्रो. मणींद्र अग्रवाल ने बताया कि लाइव कोर्स के लिए स्टूडेंट या फैकल्टी को अपने नाम सहित अन्य जानकारी देनी होगी। एनपीटीएल की वेबसाइट पर जो कोर्स उपलब्ध हैं, उन्हें निःशुल्क देखकर या सुनकर पढ़ा जा सकता है। इसका पूरा खर्च मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय उठाता है। आईआईटी और मंत्रालय का यह प्रयोग सफल रहा है।

MINT ND 05/02/2013 P-4

COORDINATION MECHANISM

Central universities, unlike IIMs, favour overarching council

BY PRASHANT K. NANDA
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NEW DELHI

India's central government-funded universities are favouring the creation of an overarching body to improve coordination and share resources, although the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) have resisted a similar concept out of concern that it may undermine the autonomy of the elite business schools.

The ministry of human resource development and the 42 central varsities may take a final call on the plan after a series of meetings in New Delhi starting on Tuesday.

"I think there is a communication problem among central universities. We will seek to put in place a better coordination mechanism like a council," said Somnath Dasgupta, vice-chancellor of Assam University.

Proponents of such a mechanism say that an overarching body can coordinate the activities of all central institutions, deal with matters of common interest, review learning outcomes and help forge stronger ties among the 42 institutions, perceived to be the best in the country's university system. India has 612 universities in the country under the control of the central government, states and private organizations.

In spite of their national reputation, the central universities are confronting challenges on several fronts, including lack of sufficient infrastructure, a shortage of teachers, deficient curriculums and inadequate interaction with corporate houses.

According to government data, these universities are facing a shortage of at least 33% in teaching staffs; none of the 16 new central universities established four years ago has a permanent campus as yet. And none of these institutes are in the top 200 of global rankings, reflecting poorly on their standards.

The top-ranked Indian institutions, as per the UK-based Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) rankings, were Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Delhi (212), IIT-Bombay (227) and IIT-Kanpur (278).

Surabhi Banerjee, vice-chancellor of the Central University of Orissa, said she backs the creation of an overarching council for central varsities.

"A new university like ours is in favour of sharing resources and teaching staff. A council can help us learn best practices in other universities," said Banerjee. Constant interaction will help central universities that are operating away from the cities to attain a national and even global perspective, said Banerjee.

> The HRD ministry and the 42 central varsities may take a final call on the plan after a series of meetings starting on Tuesday

Dasgupta of Assam University said that although the subject is not on the agenda of Tuesday's meetings with the President and the Prime Minister, "we will take up this issue."

He said universities in the north-eastern states face a particularly tough situation—professors aren't willing to stay long at the institutions given the region's geographical remoteness from the rest of the country; that in turn affects their educational standards. "A coordination committee we believe can solve some of the problems. For sure, we would like exchange of faculties for a semester at a time," he explained.

Abdul Wahid, vice-chancellor of the Central University of Kashmir, said he wants to incorporate innovative courses of universities elsewhere to provide his students "learning to become market-ready" for employment.

"I will also like to have skill education and incorporation of grade system for students," Wahid said.

Last month, some of the IIMs opposed a move by the HRD ministry to put in place a council akin to the IIT Council through a legislation and allow the institutes to impart degrees instead of diplomas. The elite B-Schools say such a move will hamper their autonomy.

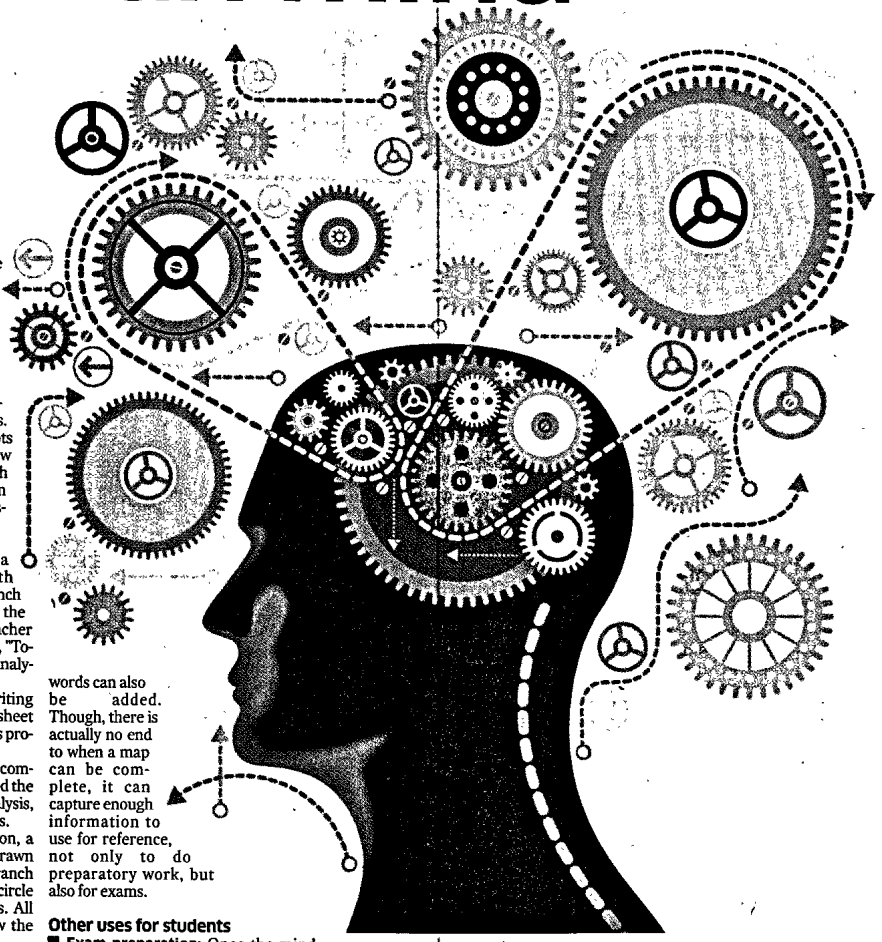
An HRD ministry official, who requested anonymity, said that, on principle, the ministry wanted better coordination among universities, IIMs or institutes of national importance. Central universities favouring the concept is a "healthy sign and can improve quality of learning," he said.

"The enormity of the challenges of providing equal opportunities for quality higher education to an ever-growing number of students is also a historic opportunity for correcting sectoral and social imbalances, reinvigorating institutions, crossing international benchmarks of excellence and extending the frontiers of knowledge," said an HRD ministry document.

Deccan Herald Nd

Mapping the potential of the human mind

METHOD DR L VIJAYASHREE & CNB **RAJESH** explain the concept of mind mapping, a technique useful in taking notes, preparing for exams and presentations.



Ajay was sitting in the economics class. Prof Bhushan was delivering a lecture on market structures. His lecture was interesting, informative and interactive.

Ajay was stimulated by the ideas being proposed and discussed and he began actively participating. Four weeks later, when internal exams were over, the results surprised both the Professor and his student. Prof Bhushan called Ajay to his cabin and gently asked "Ajay! I expected you to be in the top ten in the class! What happened? Any problem?"

Ajay responded, "I am surprised too sir! I thought I had understood all you said. I do remember many examples you have given as well. But as you have pointed out in my paper, my answers were not balanced between theory and examples. I had many new ideas in the class. I was confused. I guess there was too much information and too less time to think and answer."

Challenging Task

The daunting task of note taking for a student involves several challenges outlined below:

- There is too much of information to handle from various sources. It's often required to systematically organize information to write an exam or to participate in a discussion.
- There is often the question of focus. Where should the student focus in the class? On writing notes or on listening to the lecture!
- How can one keep track of one's own ideas and questions?
- How can one keep updating the information as and when they find new information, new links and add new ideas throughout the learning period?

These challenges usually make the student to resort to short cuts such as memorising and reading from handbooks. As a result learning becomes routine and boring. These practices in the long-run erode the teacher-student relationship. What is needed, therefore, is a tool that can keep the creative potential of the student alive and at the same time be useful for note taking.

The Concept

Tony Buzan, in 1970s', introduced the concept of mind mapping for taking down notes in a quick manner. The technique was to begin with a central idea written down at the center of a page. Various thoughts about the core idea are then drawn as branches.

Thoughts and ideas about a specific branch are recorded as sub-branches leading out from the main branches. Associations across branches can be made to allow for forming relationships amongst various thoughts.

So, by being skilled in the art of mind mapping, students can capture key information in the class, while being focused on listening and participating. They can follow their own line of thinking and continue expanding on it after the class. They can connect different concepts and help themselves to discover new knowledge. Their discussions with their teachers and co-students can be much more meaningful and satisfactory.

The process of mind mapping

A mind map usually begins with a "Central Idea" or "Theme" with branches flowing out of it. Each branch represents a distinct sub-theme of the central idea. For example, the teacher might have started the class saying, "Today, we are going to talk about job analysis and its utility."

So, the map would begin by writing "Job Analysis" in the center of the sheet and then circling it. Then as the class progresses sub-themes are added.

The teacher might have given the components of the job analysis, discussed the steps required to carry out Job Analysis, and its applications in organizations.

To capture the above information, a branch from the central theme is drawn and labeled "Components". The branch line is thicker when it begins on the circle and gradually thins out as it ends. All branches and sub-branches follow the same pattern.

Different colours for different branches can be used to make the map more meaningful and creative. Coming back to the example, as there are many components, each component can be represented on a sub-branch, flowing out of the main branch.

To capture more information about each component, further sub-branches can be drawn. Similarly the "Steps "and "Applications" can be drawn as main branches and sub-branches can be added to extend more information. More branches can be added to capture new ideas, questions and other information.

Now, you may find that a concept that is presently being discussed is related to some other concept discussed earlier. To capture this, the two linked concepts are identified and are connected with a dotted line. A label is added to that relationship to describe the nature of relationship.

To add more meaning and creativity to the map, different colours can be used. Pictures that are descriptive of the keywords can also be added. Though, there is actually no end to when a map can be complete, it can capture enough information to use for reference, not only to do preparatory work, but also for exams.

Other uses for students

- **Exam preparation:** Once the mind maps of your subjects are ready, its easier to prepare for exams. To master the content, simply re-drawing the mind map and comparing it with the original will clearly show where gaps exist.

A question paper can be taken and the map can be examined to see if it contains information required to answer all the questions.

If not, such information can be added from various sources. There is no need to carry heavy notes and books to the examination centre.

- **Preparing presentations:** Mind maps can be used to bring in originality and creativity to presentations. Apart from the content, branches that outline key notes about the audience, the time to be spent on each topic, the goals of the presenter, and much more information can be captured.

Original ideas and points of discussion can be brought out on separate branches. As the discussion progresses during the presentation, it can be dynamically added to the mind map.

Who Uses Mind Maps?

Managers use mind maps as a tool to document brain-storming sessions and managing long meetings. Writers capture their plot ideas for their stories.

Lawyers and doctors have extensively used this technique for capturing their analyses and diagnoses. Teachers use it to plan their classes.

Other Uses of Mind Maps

Mind maps can be used for several purposes apart from taking notes. The following are some of the uses that people around the world have found for mind maps:

- Problem solving
- Outline / framework design
- Anonymous collaboration
- Marriage of words and visuals
- Individual expression of creativity
- Condensing material into a concise and memorable format
- Team building or synergy creating activity
- Enhancing work morale

Free Mind Mapping Software

Mind maps can also be drawn using software. Using software makes the map drawing process simple, easy and shareable.

You can export your mind maps to image or pdf format and then carry them wherever you go. If you use a smart phone, you will be free from carrying any kind of books and notes to your examinations or presentations.

The following are some of the popular programs available for free download over the internet: XMind - www.xmind.net, Freemind - freemind.sourceforge.net, Mindomo - www.mindomo.com, EDraw Mind Map - www.edrawsoft.com/Mindmap.php, iMindMap - www.thinkbuzan.com

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When private is necessary

With limited government resources, the concern should not be where the investment comes from but improving the standard of higher education

R. S. GREWAL

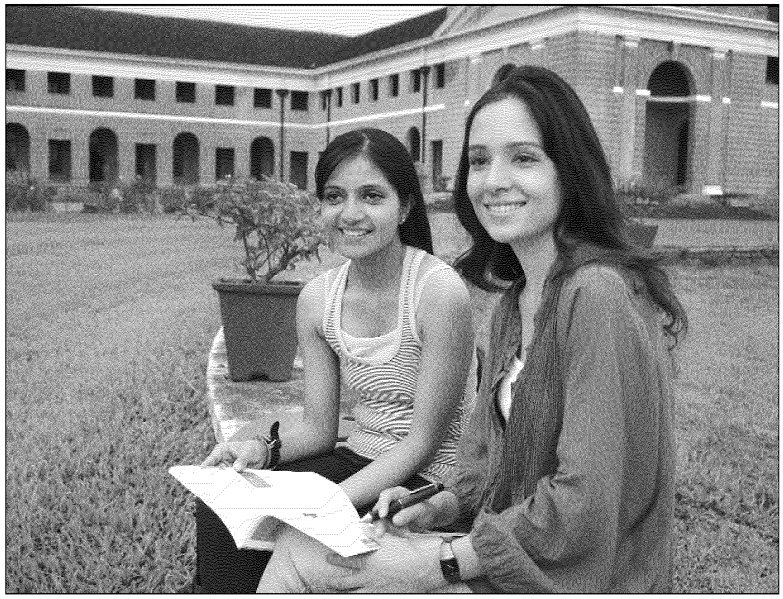
A lot has been written and argued lately regarding the state of affairs in private universities. Rather it has become the 'in thing' to criticise everything that happens in these institutions. If private universities really are that bad, then why is it that the governments at the Central and state levels are acting as a facilitator for the setting up of such institutions?

In 2006 there were about 330 universities, both public and private, in India. By the end of 2012, the number shot up to 660. Thus, almost 330 new universities have been established in the country within a span of six years. The trend is likely to continue for the next decade or so. The National Knowledge Commission has anticipated that in the era of knowledge economy, there is a need for 1,500 universities in the country if India wants to find its rightful place as an emerging power. Since the government does not have resources to meet that requirement, it has to rely on the private sector to meet the demand. However, the question is, "How do we ensure quality of higher education in this environment of sudden expansion?"

Today the standard of education in most universities — public and private — is not up to the mark. Our higher education institutions lack a research culture. The main reason for the state of affairs is that our universities lay too much emphasis on the teacher, text and test, and there is too little stress on problem-solving and group collaboration. The faculty has also failed to keep pace with the times. The pedagogy used in our universities is the same as it was in the 1950s. Rote learning has taken precedence over comprehension, application of knowledge and capability to conceptualise. As a result, students passing out of universities are mostly unemployable. This phenomenon is not confined only to private universities, public universities too have failed to maintain the desired academic standards.

In such an environment, it is unfair to make private universities the 'whipping boys' of the higher education sector and blame these for all the ills afflicting the system. High fees being charged by private universities is often cited as one of the reasons while heaping criticism on these. But the critics fail to take into account the amount of funds the state exchequer is pumping into public higher education institutions. Our IITs, NITs and other national-level institutions are doing well because they get better quality students. A cursory look at the performance of postgraduate- and doctoral-level students passing out from these institutions would highlight the fact that their quality is not much different from the students of the same category passing out of private universities.

On an average the government spends about Rs 100 crore on each NIT in the country. The amount spent on the IITs would be still higher. But none of these has any worthwhile record in the form of patents or innovations resulting in product development to justify the huge amount of public money being spent on them. Moreover, if one were to compute the cost of training a student, it would work out to almost the same in the public and private universities. Rather it may be more in public universities. The only difference is that in public universities, the student does not pay directly to the institution. Since the private universities do not get grants from the government, the fees charged are higher and the critics use that as a weapon to levy unfair criticism.



If the standards of academic delivery and research in our universities go up, the number of students opting to go abroad for higher studies will drastically come down. Thinkstock

If one were to consider the placement records of public higher educational institutions, other than the IITs and NITs, and compare that with the same from private universities, it would emerge that private universities fair much better than public universities. Despite that, the critics say that the government is risking the future of many young students by setting up private universities. It is not to suggest that everything is fine with the private universities; there is plenty of scope to improve. Moreover, there are black sheep who have entered the higher education sector in their quest to make a fast buck. Instead of painting every private institution with the same brush, there is a need for a regulatory mechanism to put the house in order. But the remedy does not lie in creating a stifling regulatory mechanism that makes the operations of private universities unviable. The need of the hour is to arrive at some constructive measures to improve the system.

Lately, universities from developed countries have made a beeline to recruit students from the developing and under developed countries. India is no exception. It is a known fact that US, Canadian and European universities, and to some extent Australian universities, welcome Indian students for the high fees they pay to attend various programmes, especially in the fields of engineering, management, medicine and sciences. Without contributions from international students, many universities in these countries would find it difficult to sustain their operations. They are not here for charity. The collaborations that they enter into with Indian universities result basically in a one-way process, with Indian students going abroad for higher studies and finally settling down there as immigrants. There are hardly any collaborative arrangements offered by foreign universities that help to improve academic standards and research activities in Indian universities.

In fact, if the standards of academic delivery and research in our universities go up, the number of students opting to go abroad for higher studies will drastically come down. Given our demographic dividend, Indian students nurtured in a good academic environment would still be able to get jobs in developed countries because the latter would need them to join their workforce. Thus, it is in the interests of foreign universities that the standards of higher education in India do not improve. It would help them sustain their own operations and also provide skilled manpower their countries need.

In such an environment, instead of indulging in needless controversy of private vs public universities, it is up to us to join ranks to improve the standards of higher education in the country. Both the systems have their strengths and weaknesses. Public universities have better infrastructure, senior faculty, and have access to better resources. However, lack of accountability, poor work culture and unwieldy size are some of the major maladies afflicting the public universities. On the other hand, a short hierarchical chain, manageable size and accountability are some of the features of private universities that could be exploited to improve the standards of higher education. Our policy makers could design measures that could incentivise collaborative arrangements between public and private universities.

Similarly, the regulators and the government departments could help in the process of knowledge sharing by giving a boost to cooperation amongst the universities irrespective of the nature of their origin. We must not forget that for centuries, the invaders came and exploited our penchant for mutual suspicions and divisive culture. We may not be vulnerable to a physical invasion in this era of knowledge economy, but our universities are still vulnerable to mutual divisions that could be exploited by foreign powers to their advantage. We need to learn from history. Are we prepared to do that?

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HT Lucknow

UGC mulls 'discipline-wise' accreditation for universities

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LUCKNOW: The University Grants Commission (UGC) might soon come up with 'discipline-wise' accreditation in universities and colleges. The move comes as part of its larger plan to bring reforms in education.

For this purpose, the commission has recommended that a separate National Accreditation Authority be assigned the task. Till now, accreditation was done for educational institutions as a single entity but now as a new proposal, the accreditation would be undertaken discipline (subject) wise.

"A National Accreditation Authority for specific disciplines should be established in order to clearly identify the top 50 universities and top 50 colleges for special funding by various governmental agencies and the industry," said the document comprising the proposed 12th Five Year Plan strategy of the commission.

Accreditation by the NAAC has been in vogue for the past 17 years but so far only 1,415 out of 31,324 colleges and 75 out of 534 universities have been covered for their accreditation, the document sent to the HRD ministry said.

If materialised, this would be for the fist time that the accreditation has been proposed beyond the collective analysis of universities and colleges and has been targeted to specific disciplines.

The UGC believes, that the total accreditation of a university falsely covers poor performing departments and disciplines of an institution and also the faculty in it. But if the accreditation is done for the university as a whole, there would be the need for a separate quality check for individual disciplines.

In the US and many other advanced countries, accreditation is done discipline-wise. For example, engineering sciences, management sciences, physical and chemical sciences, life sciences, social sciences and humanities, etc in addition to the overall university accreditation.

The schools/disciplines concerned should offer for national accreditation of the disciplines, and this actually gives a true picture to the students for choosing universities and to the employers for choosing the universities for campus placements.