

Newspaper Clips **January 12, 2016**

Defence research centre to come up at IIT Jodhpur

Hindustan Times (Jaipur)

JODHPUR: The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Jodhpur will play a vital role in defence research. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), involved with the military research and development in the country, has given in principle approval to set up a Center for Advanced Materials and Electromagnetics (CAMEL) at the Jodhpur institute.

The centre will work on key defence research projects. For financial sanction and clearance of other formalities from the Centre, the file is under consideration at high level, said sources, who are not authorised to speak to the media.

The Ministry of Defence on the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence had recently approved the proposal of setting up centres of excellence at four places.

Apart from the IIT Jodhpur, three other centres - Bi-nodal Center of Propulsion Technologies (CoPT), Jagadish Chandra Bose Center for Advanced Technology (JCBCAT) and Joint Advanced Technology Center (JATC) - have been proposed at IIT Bombay, Jadavpur University Kolkata and IIT Delhi respectively.

According to the sources, the parliamentary standing committee in its recommendations stressed on setting up the centres in renowned universities and institutes of the country. The DRDO has already set up such centres at seven places, which have shown encouraging results.

The sources said the Ministry of Defence has initiated Grants-in-Aid Scheme with an aim to utilise the research talent available in universities and institutes of the country to the maximum.

The scheme aims to promote knowledge based growth, strengthening of national resources of knowledge, infrastructure, facilities, idea sharing and encouraging participation of outside experts in defence research.

Under the same scheme, research would be initiated in the field of Advanced Materials and Electromagnetics at the IIT Jodhpur.

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17 candidates achieve a perfect 100 in CAT 2015

Shreya Bhandary

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MUMBAI: The number of candidates scoring a perfect score in the Common Admission Test (CAT) — the entrance test for management colleges — has more than doubled, with 17 candidates correctly answering every question in the 2015 edition of the test, as compared to eight in the 2014 exam.

Of the 1.79 lakh candidates who appeared, 16 boys and one girl have got perfect scores. Once again, the top scores have been bagged by engineering students. Five students also scored zero in the test this year.

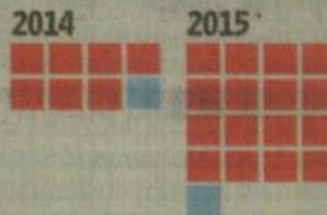
Mumbai's Chirag Jha, one of the toppers, said he spent the last four months preparing for the test. "I gave many mock tests towards the end and I'm really happy with my score," he said. Jha has already bagged a job through campus placement. "I'm still in talks with my seniors before I take the final call on whether I want to continue studying or take up the job instead," the final-year chemical engineering student at IIT-Bombay said.

According to data made available by the Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad (IIM-A), which conducted the test, 2.18 lakh students had registered for CAT 2015. Of those who attempted the test, 1,21,291 were male while 58,270 were female. This year, 41 candidates also registered under

IN NUMBERS



STUDENTS WITH 100 PERCENTILE



* 41 candidates belonged to transgender category

the transgender category, none of whom managed to score above the 90th percentile. The highest number of candidates to appear for the CAT was from Pune, with 10,359 students taking the test.

"This time, the test was easier than the last two years, and the same has been reflected in the scores. Barring the data interpretation (DI) section, all the other sections were easy," said Prashanth Nair, an expert and mentor in this field.

17 of 1.8L candidates ace CAT 2015, highest in 5 yrs

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Mumbai: 17 of the 1.8 lakh candidates who appeared for the Common Admission Test (CAT) 2015 bagged the perfect score, the highest in the last five years. The number rose by one though experts, after a reading of the questions, had feared a drop in hundred percentiles. All 17 are engi-

neers, as has been the case for most years.

From among the 58,270 girls who appeared for the test for admission to the prestigious Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), only one made it to the elite club of 100 percentilers. If absolute numbers are taken into account, registration by women grew by 13.8% compared to 2014.

For the first time this year, 80 transgenders registered for CAT. About 41 eventually appeared for the test in November, but none managed to score above the 90 percentile, said the results data released on Monday by IIM-Ahmedabad, the CAT 2015 organizer.

While registrations are real ways on the higher side from cities such as Delhi, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Mumbai, Pune ruled the roost this year with the highest number of candidates—10,359.

The data did not officially reveal the names of the toppers. Of the 17, at least three are students pursuing their final-year engineering degrees from the IITs.

Of the 1,814 students who scored above 99 percentile, 136

are girls. Eight women managed to get 99.9 percentile.

Several students who managed to score 98 or 99 percentiles have not made the cut with IIMs giving weightage to criteria other than CAT scores. "IIMs are giving decent weightage to academics, work experience, so many with even 97 percentile are getting interview calls," said

coaching institute mentor Vinayak Kudva.

"This year, the data interpretation and logical reasoning section was tough leading to poor scores in that section, though students have performed well in other sections and managed a good score," said another trainer.

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SMRITI FOR MORE WOMEN IN RESEARCH

Hindustan Times (Chandigarh)

SMRITI FOR MORE WOMEN IN RESEARCH



■ Union HRD minister Smriti Irani at the convocation of the Central University of Haryana in Mahendergarh on Monday. She stressed the need to create opportunities for involving woman scholars in research work.

HT PHOTO

Union HRD minister Smriti Irani at the convocation of the Central University of Haryana in Mahendergarh on Monday. She stressed the need to create opportunities for involving woman scholars in research work.



Bigger picture: The success of higher education in India depends more on efforts on the ground than on learned discussions in television studios.

Idealistic, innovative entrepreneurship can change Indian higher education

How do you achieve holistic higher education? Sant Singaji Institute of Science and Management in rural Madhya Pradesh shows the way

It's difficult to avoid a sense of déjà vu each time one witnesses a debate on higher education on television. Highly articulate vice-chancellors and NRI professors pontificate about access and excellence, about research and relevance. But the ground reality is so stark that the discussants and our actual students could be on different planets. This feeling peaked recently when, the morning after watching such a debate, I made a field trip just 120km outside Indore.

Sandalpur is a village in Khategaon taluk of Dewas district in Madhya Pradesh. Khategaon is a bustling town and has dozens of schools. More than 8,000 students complete Class XII in this region every year. But, college enrolment rates have been historically low. Only the best students, and that too boys, attend colleges in nearby educational hubs in Indore or Bhopal. Farmers and traders question the value of college education, and local social and cultural mores are a barrier against sending girls in their late teens far from home. The local colleges have been more like degree shops.

Pranjal Dubey belongs to a family that has traditionally provided the head priest for the Sant Singaji Temple at Sandalpur. In 1996, he was thrust into that role after his father's death. But with the blessings of village elders, he continued his career as a software engineer in Bengaluru, returning every year for the annual temple festival. On each visit, he found growing frustration among the village youth as they struggled to find jobs. Parents often asked Dubey how their kids could become like him, and he stressed the importance of education and getting a degree.

On one such visit, a parent along with his son came to Dubey and told him, "Here is my son with his degree, now get him a job like yours." On closer examination, Dubey found the degree to have been bought from a local education "shop". Getting a job for such a student was out of the question. But this set Dubey thinking about the local students and the quality of education offered in the region.

The outcome of such a concern is the Sant Singaji Institute of Science and Management (SSISM). Located at Sandalpur, SSISM is a co-educational college with more than 1,000 students on its rolls. In a short span of six years, it has achieved stellar results—14 students (incidentally, all girls) have obtained university ranks, putting Sandalpur on the education map of Madhya Pradesh. Some of its graduates work in software hubs of Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Pune, in companies like Cognizant Technology Solutions Corp., Infosys Ltd and SAP. More than 100 of its graduates are now teachers.

SSISM has many innovations to its credit to sustain motivation and momentum. Singaji Software Solutions is a small IT unit that provides opportunities to do software development for foreign clients. Singaji Business Solutions encourages students to become entrepreneurs. The Singaji Premier League is a college-wide contest that pits four teams against each other in an array of activities, supported by internal marketing and publicity. An annual college trip to big cities provides exposure to the wider world.

How did all of this happen? Dubey returned to Sandalpur, at first on a sabbatical,



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to set up SSISM. He was encouraged by Professor D.V.R. Seshadri of Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Bangalore, with whom he had done an executive development course. Dubey now has a team of dedicated faculty who work closely with him. Considerable emphasis is put on building confidence and communication skills in the students. SSISM has just started working with Head Held High, a Bengaluru-based social enterprise that has developed a specialized methodology to help uneducated rural youth rapidly gain English communication skills.

But, according to Dubey and his team, the greatest barriers to the positive impact of SSISM are social. Dubey told us the story of an outstanding BBA (Bachelor of Business Administration) student who appeared to have all it takes to get into an IIM for her MBA. She started preparation for the Common Admission Test with support from SSISM when, all of a sudden, her family decided it was time to get her married. This is a frequent challenge for SSISM and an issue that its faculty feels helpless about even though it has been successful in persuading several families to let their daughters study further.

SSISM has to offer a seamless end-to-end service to ensure that girls study there. It has a fleet of more than 20 buses that pick and drop students across the region—some students travelling more than an hour-and-a-half in one direction. Dubey's brother takes care of the logistics. His mother is in charge of the welfare of the girl students and assures their families that it's safe to send them to college.

The college's other challenge is financial. The fee-paying capability of the students is low. Being part of the rural economy, incomes are a function of the quality of the harvest—the last two years have not been good for agriculture in this region and the ability to pay is constrained. Attracting CSR (corporate social responsibility) funds is difficult as higher education is not on the radar of most companies, and the region has little by way of large industries. SSISM's building remains incomplete as the college faces a funds crunch.

SSISM's vision is to be the best rural education society in Madhya Pradesh by 2025, imparting holistic education to 15,000 students at a time. Whether that vision is achieved or not, it has already demonstrated the importance of idealism, commitment and innovation if India is to make a mark in higher education. The success of higher education in India depends more on such efforts on the ground than on learned discussions in television studios.

Read an unabridged version on www.foundingfuel.com
Rishikesh T. Krishnan is director and professor of strategic management at the Indian Institute of Management Indore.

‘Not consulted on new education policy’

Panel members are qualified for the task at hand, says T.S.R. Subramanian.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/not-consulted-on-new-education-policy/article8093645.ece>

Some of India’s key academics in the field of education have expressed concern over experts being left out of consultations for the proposed National Education Policy, which will guide education in India for the next few decades.

Weeks ago, a body of India’s elite educationists wrote to T.S.R. Subramanian, the head of a committee set up by the Human Resource Development Ministry to frame the proposed policy, about the absence of academics in the consultations.

The signatories include Delhi University professor Poonam Batra, JNU professor Saumen Chattopadhyay, and Professors Nandini Manjrekar and Disha Nawani of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, among others.

“The absence of serious academic scholars in the current consultations has been glaring. Scholarship on education and the extensive knowledge base of teaching, learning and the socio-economic dimensions of education should necessarily be a part of this process,” the Comparative Education Society of India (CESI) wrote to Mr. Subramanian, who heads the MHRD’s Committee for the Evolution of the New Education Policy.

The letter also points out issues that should be deliberated by the panel, like what it sees as a negative trend towards commercialisation of education and control over and contractualisation of teachers. It lays stress on autonomy of academic institutes, particularly in framing their curriculum. The letter also advises the panel to foreground its policy in the legal provisions provided by the Right to Education Act and demands a greater role of the state in strengthening the public education system.

Mr. Subramanian said the concerns of the academics were misplaced. For, the panel had met a cross-section of teachers to understand from them what ailed education in the country, he said.

“We are still in the process of consulting and it is a work in progress. As per the directions of the Ministry, States and universities and schools have been asked to hold seminars to debate the issue and we are still meeting them,” Mr. Subramanian said.

He said the members of the panel — former Delhi Chief Secretary Shailaja Chandra, former Gujarat Chief Secretary Sudhir Mankad and ex-NCERT director J.S. Rajput — were qualified for the task at hand. The panel hopes to finish its work by the end of February.