

Newspaper Clips

January 20, 2012

Virat Vaibhav ND 20/01/2012 P-3

शैक्षणिक संस्थानों को 'आकाश बैंक'

मंत्रालय ने आईआईटी, एनआईटी, देश के सभी विश्वविद्यालयों एवं विभिन्न शैक्षणिक संस्थाओं को पत्र लिखा



नई दिल्ली। समाज के कमजोर वर्ग के छात्रों को सस्ता टैबलेट लैपटॉप आकाश सुलभ बनाने की कवायद के तहत सरकार ने देश के विभिन्न शैक्षणिक संस्थानों में बुक बैंक की तर्ज पर 'आकाश बैंक' बनाने का सुझाव दिया है। मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय ने इस संबंध में हाल ही में आईआईटी, एनआईटी, देश के सभी विश्वविद्यालयों एवं विभिन्न शैक्षणिक संस्थाओं को पत्र लिखा है। मंत्रालय के एक अधिकारी ने बताया कि प्रत्येक स्कूल, कालेज आदि में पुस्तकालय की व्यवस्था होती है। लेकिन छात्रों को दो सप्ताह या तीन सप्ताह के बाद पुस्तकालय से प्राप्त की गई पुस्तक का नवीनीकरण करना होता

है। हालांकि कुछ संस्थाओं में 'बुक बैंक योजना' भी होती है जिसके तहत छात्रों को छह महीन या एक साल या एक शैक्षणिक सत्र के लिए पुस्तक दी जाती है। उन्होंने कहा कि हमारा मकसद इस सस्ते टैबलेट आकाश को समाज के कमजोर वर्ग के बच्चों को प्रदान करना है। इस उद्देश्य के लिए शैक्षणिक संस्थाओं में बुक बैंक योजना की तर्ज पर 'आकाश बैंक' बनाने का सुझाव दिया गया है। अधिकारी ने कहा कि आकाश की कीमत 2,276 रूपए है, सरकार की ओर से इस पर 50 प्रतिशत

की सब्सिडी प्रदान की जाती है। शैक्षणिक संस्थाओं को यहाँ, 138 रूपए में प्राप्त होगा। इन संस्थाओं में आकाश बैंक के माध्यम से छात्रों को आकाश एक साल या एक शैक्षणिक सत्र के लिए प्रदान किया जाएगा। मंत्रालय ने विभिन्न शैक्षणिक संस्थाओं से उनके यहाँ आकाश की आवश्यकता के बारे में जानकारी मांगी है। मंत्रालय ने संस्थाओं से देश में आकाश के वितरण एवं सब्सिडी के बारे में उनके विचार मांगे हैं। संस्थाओं से यह भी पूछा गया है कि वह किस प्रकार से अपने यहाँ आकाश वितरित करेंगे।

गौरतलब है कि देश में 419 विश्वविद्यालयों को ऑप्टिकल फाइबर के माध्यम से जीबीपीएस की कनेक्टिविटी से जोड़ा गया है और अब इसे राष्ट्रीय ज्ञान नेटवर्क में बदला जा रहा है। विश्वविद्यालयों में इस योजना का 75 प्रतिशत खर्च केंद्र सरकार वहन कर रही है। सस्ता टैबलेट लैपटॉप 'आकाश' के संबंध में इसकी निर्माता कंपनी डेटाविंड के साथ कई समस्याओं

Quality deficit in higher education

► *Red tapism has curbed the supply of institutions, leading to a brain drain.*

Nilanjan Banik
India figured second-last among 73 countries that participated in the Programme for International Student Assessment test conducted annually by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) secretariat. This does come as a nasty surprise to those who believed in the prowess of India's scientific and technological manpower. There are, however, three ways of looking at this. First, Indian students aren't smart, despite having access to quality teachers. Second, Indian students are actually smart, but because of want of access to quality education they aren't able to perform well. There is also a third possibility: There are both quality education institutes, and smart students in India. However, these smart students prefer to explore options outside India — for jobs, or for pursuing higher education — leaving the poorer quality students in India.

DEMAND, SUPPLY FACTORS

From the demand side, quality education translates into graduates who are employable and have adequate skills to deliver to the needs of corporate India. Be it doctors, engineers, or even MBA graduates, there is a dearth of quality professionals in India. This is precisely why every year corporates like Infosys (service), ITC (manufactured consumer items), Apollo (medical), and L&T (engineering), to name a few, are left with vacant seats, or prefer to recruit people with foreign degrees, rather than employ graduates from India. Yes, there are quality education institutes such as IITs, IIMs, AIIMS, etc. in India. However, the number of pass-outs from these institutes are either too few in number, or decide to go abroad for higher studies, or even take up work there.



Pass-outs from quality education institutes leave for greener pastures abroad.

From the supply side, quality of education would be seen in terms of contribution to research and development. This means — education institutes serving as an incubator for developing new technologies that can be of use to the entrepreneurs, to produce goods and services more efficiently. This becomes evident from the number of patents, and research articles, published from universities and colleges. Although there has been an increase in the number of patents applied and research articles published from India, it is far less compared with the more advanced economies.

It is to be noted, per-capita income of any country can be increased either by increase in labour force participation and/or because of technological breakthroughs. The growth performance of the newly industrialised economies in Asia, such as Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, is typically driven by designing curriculum, so that more people can be employed. This model of increasing growth by producing more employable graduates, implies that growth has taken place through increase in labour force participation. On the

other hand, the growth process in the West is attributed to technological innovation.

India faces a dearth of both quality teachers and quality education institutes. At a time when deans of Indian origin at Ivy league business schools in the US are making national headlines, in India, the newly-opened IIMs and IITs are scouting for professors. In fact, these newly-opened institutes survive by hiring visiting professors from other institutes and universities in India.

BRAIN DRAIN

A majority of the quality students regard education as they would any other commodity. Pursuing quality education comes with a cost. For example, many MBA students who take bank loans look at education as a return on their investment, that is, the jobs they are likely to get once they get their degree. In that way, most education institutes, especially the MBA ones, have now been transformed into sophisticated placement agencies. If the institutes cannot secure jobs, they are likely to get fewer students.

The preference for IITs and IIMs derives from the fact that

the perceived returns from education in these institutes are highest here. Corporates come to IIMs and IITs, not by taking into consideration the patents and research articles published, but by being persuaded that the rigorous screening procedure in these institutes are assurance enough that quality students get in.

During a slowdown, the second-tier institutes provide more value for money for students and corporates. No matter what the business school teaches, the corporates have their own induction programme. During a slowdown, a corporate can hire students at a lower cost, compared with what it would have to offer to tier-1 graduates. Hence, in recent times, some of the IIMs faced difficulties, while second-rung business schools were able to achieve 100 per cent placement.

The other smaller group of quality students who are indeed passionate about pursuing, and not consuming education, typically leaves for the US, Australia or Western Europe, to pursue higher education. Recent evidence also suggests that because of want of adequate seats in medical

colleges, students are actually going to the erstwhile Soviet Union, and even learning medicine in their local languages. Net result: India still loses out in terms of brain drain, because of adequate quality education facilities at home.

STIFLING REGULATIONS

Government regulation in higher education hinders supply of quality education. It is all-pervading, whether in terms of determining fees to be charged, or foreign collaboration. When it requires around Rs 6 lakh per year to produce an engineer, and anything between Rs 10-12 lakh per year to produce a doctor, asking a private institute to charge state-determined fees is unreasonable. In this fashion, the privately funded universities cannot survive, leaving aside, hiring quality teachers.

What is however do-able is asking the privately-run institutes to give scholarships to the needy, meritorious students. In fact, most of the successful universities in the US are privately-run. Most of the business schools in China are thriving, and provide a better education because of their collaboration with Universities in the US and Canada — something that isn't possible in India. To open any private institute, no-objection certificates need to be taken from multiple sources, such as the State government, State universities, and government regulatory bodies (for example, UGC, AICTE, etc.), instead of having a single-window clearance mechanism in place.

The government will do better by putting a grievance redressal mechanism in place, where the universities can be tried, or their license cancelled in the event of false promises. In the event of healthy competition, bogus education institutes won't be able to survive. So, let the students decide. Hopefully, this will add to supply of quality education institutes, human capital, and help to sustain India's growth.

(The author is Associate Professor, Institute for Financial Management and Research, Chennai.)

HindustanTimes

Title : `INTERNET FIRMS HAVE TO FOLLOW LAW OF LAND

Author :

Location : NEW DELHI:

Article Date : 01/20/2012

'INTERNET FIRMS HAVE TO FOLLOW LAW OF LAND'

Press Trust of India

■ letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The government on Thursday said it has no plans to censor the Internet even as it sought to send a strong message to social websites like Google and Facebook that any company wishing to operate in the country will have to follow law of the land.

The assertion comes amid growing unease among global website and social media companies over the government asking the social websites to ensure that uploading of derogatory material is stopped.

"We do not believe in censorship of any kind. All over the world, every company has to operate in accordance with the law. Any company wishing to operate in a country has to follow the law of the land," IT and telecom secretary R Chandrasekhar told reporters on the sidelines of an event.

He added that everyone is aware of technology and there is a need to develop some mechanism to abide by the law.

Recently, the Centre had filed a report in a court saying there was sufficient material to proceed against 21 websites, including Facebook, Google, Yahoo and Microsoft, for alleged offences of promoting enmity between classes and causing prejudice to national integration.

Blame it on La Nina: Cold may last till March

Amit Bhattacharya TNN

New Delhi: As several parts of India reel under a cold spell, here's worse news: expect the rest of the winter to be colder than usual. Experts looking at global climate models say there's a good chance that February and March too will see below normal temperatures.

What seems to be loading the dice in favour of a cold winter is La Nina — a phenomenon better known in India for aiding good monsoon rains.

“Some dynamical climate models are showing a link between La Nina and below-normal temperatures in India in the next two months,” said D S Pai, director of the long-range forecasting division of the Indian Meteorological Department in Pune. “This is not a common link but has been known to occur in the past.” Pai said La Nina conditions are expected to continue till March. La Nina, which in Spanish means ‘the girl’, is a condition when surface temperatures in the south Pacific Ocean fall below normal. **‘La-Nina impact on winters not frequent’**

It is the opposite of the notorious El Nino (‘the boy’) usually associated with failure of the monsoon in India. But like its counterpart, La Nina leads to changes in global air circulation patterns which drive weather extremes across the world.

M Rajeevan, senior scientist at the department of space’s National Atmospheric Research Laboratory, said the effect of La Nina in energizing the southwest monsoon during summers was well documented. “But La Nina can affect temperatures in India in winters though this link is seen much less frequently,” he said.

After a mild December, temperatures across India plummeted rapidly in the second week of January. Since then, the western Himalayas have seen heavy and unusually widespread snowfall, the northern plains have been chilly while central and parts of south India have had record-breaking cold spells.

The sudden onset of cold is being partly attributed to an Arctic wind pattern that changed in January, sending spells of snow down into Europe and Asia. “Depending on its intensity, Eurasian snow can lead to snowfall in the Himalayas,” said S K Dash, a climate scientist at IIT Delhi.

Avalanche kills 5

Five people were killed and two others injured when an avalanche hit Jungra in Himachal Pradesh’s Chamba district on Thursday afternoon. All of them belonged to the nomadic Gujjar tribe. Passers-by who saw them getting buried in snow raised an alarm and informed the administration. Heavy snowfall in the hills have set off avalanches in the state. TNN



Temperatures have plummeted since mid-January with unprecedented snowfall



WHITEWASH: A snow-covered Dalhousie in Himachal after a fresh spell of snowfall on Thursday

Apple introduces iBooks2, aims to reinvent textbooks

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Apple on Thursday unveiled iBooks 2 for iPad, featuring iBooks textbooks, which the company claimed would make study in schools more interactive and fun.

“**Education** is deep in Apple’s DNA. With 1.5 million iPads already in use in **education institutions**, including over 1,000 one-to-one deployments, iPad is rapidly being adopted by schools across the US and around the world,” said Philip Schiller, Apple’s senior vice president of marketing, at an event in New York.

“Now with iBooks 2 for iPad, students have a more dynamic, engaging and truly interactive way to read and learn, using the device they already love,” he said. At the company’s event in New York, Schiller said that teachers need help and Apple is trying to figure out how it can do its part. “In general, **education** is in the dark ages,” he said. “**Education** has challenges that are pretty profound.”

The company also launched a tool called iBook Author, which will allow textbook writers to create digital books for iPad and iPhone. Apple said that publishers like Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, McGraw-Hill and Pearson would publish their textbooks in iBooks 2. The books are likely to be available only in the US in near future. Each textbook will cost \$14.99 or less.

Apple also announced a new version of iTunes U app, giving educators and students in colleges ability to plan their lectures and studies better.

“The iTunes U app enables students anywhere to tap into entire courses from the world’s most prestigious **universities**,” said Eddy Cue, Apple’s senior vice president of internet software and services.



Plans to make study in schools more interactive and fun