

# Newspaper Clips

January 22, 2014

HT Mumbai

## India to get its own ranking system for academic institutes

**Apoorva Puranik**

■ [apoorva.puranik@hindustantimes.com](mailto:apoorva.puranik@hindustantimes.com)

**MUMBAI:** With the Union Ministry for Human Resource Development (MHRD) giving its nod for a proposal to develop India's own ranking system, higher educational institutes in the country will soon be ranked on the basis of parameters relevant to the Indian education system.

The proposal was submitted in a report highlighting the failure of Indian institutes in making the cut for international ranking lists. The report was submitted to the MHRD after a discussion was held at the Indian Institutes of technology (IIT's) directors' meeting.

The proposal has been placed before the IIT Council for furthering the process and its outlines, an MHRD official said.

The proposal asked for the creation of an India-generated ranking system that will ensure that institutions spread across the nation are appropriately ranked and placed in perspective, by considering Indian parameters and demographics. The institutes plan to take inspiration from China's Shanghai Ranking Consultancy, whose ranking effectively comes out with the academic ranking of world universities, on account of various demographic as well as other issues.

▶ THE PROPOSAL IS WITH THE IIT COUNCIL AND AFTER THEIR CONSIDERATION; WE WILL HAVE A CLEAR PICTURE ON THE STRUCTURE OF THE RANKING SYSTEM.

OFFICIAL, IIT Bombay

"The proposal is now with the IIT Council and after their consideration; we will have a clear picture on the structure of the ranking system. However, the system is not just limited to IIT's but universities from across the states," said an official from IIT Bombay.

According to the official at the ministry, the Indian ranking system, in the long run, is aimed at shaping the ranking model into an independent ranking agency that may change the discourse in the world education market, just like the Chinese ranking body has been.

In the directors' meeting held last week, proposals for stepping up inter-disciplinary research collaborations and opening the doors of the institutes to more foreign students at the research level were also discussed.

# Next Aakash tablet won't be tested by IITs

## After IIT Jodhpur-Datawind row, govt gives control to C-DAC

ANUBHUTI VISHNOI

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 21

**H**AVING learnt its lessons after the earlier Aakash tablet project, which led to a row between IIT Jodhpur and Canadian manufacturer Datawind, the Centre is now keeping top notch engineering institutes out of its ambitious tablet plans.

Aakash IV, for which the Directorate General of Supplies & Disposals has issued a tender, would be tested and certified by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) instead of IITs. Seventeen vendors, including Dell, Acer, HP, HCL, Microsoft, Mircomax and

Datawind, are in the fray to manufacture the low-cost tablet with improved technical specifications.

IIT Jodhpur, which was originally slated to test all Aakash devices, had run into a conflict with Datawind over testing parameters and procedures. The project was then transferred to IIT Bombay. For Aakash IV, both testing and certification would be conducted only by C-DAC.

Incidentally, the Kapil Sibal led Telecom Ministry, and not the HRD Ministry, is taking the lead in the project. The Telecom Ministry has taken the DGS&D route to scale up production of Aakash IV. C-DAC also falls under the Depart-

ment of Electronics & Information Technology — also under Sibal.

A CAG report tabled in Parliament last year had slammed the HRD Ministry for its management of the project, questioning its decision to award the project to the new and ill-equipped IIT Rajasthan. C-DAC will conduct a two-stage testing procedure for Aakash IV. First would be a pre-qualification test before the vendor is authorised to use the Aakash logo. The validity of the certification would be for three years, subject to annual acceptance tests. The second stage would involve sample testing where the acceptance test would be conducted on

randomly selected samples.

At a meeting with 17 vendors held on January 2, several issues were raised about the price and technical specifications of the tablet. The Aakash IV is expected to cost under Rs 3,000. The tenders for manufacture of Aakash IV would open after January 28, and rate cards are likely to be announced by mid-February.

The tablet is expected to come with 1 GB RAM, 4 GB internal storage with integrated flash, USB port, micro SD card slot, a 7-inch LCD display, WiFi and Bluetooth support, a 0.3MP camera, an open source operating system and technical specifications developed and outlined by a committee.

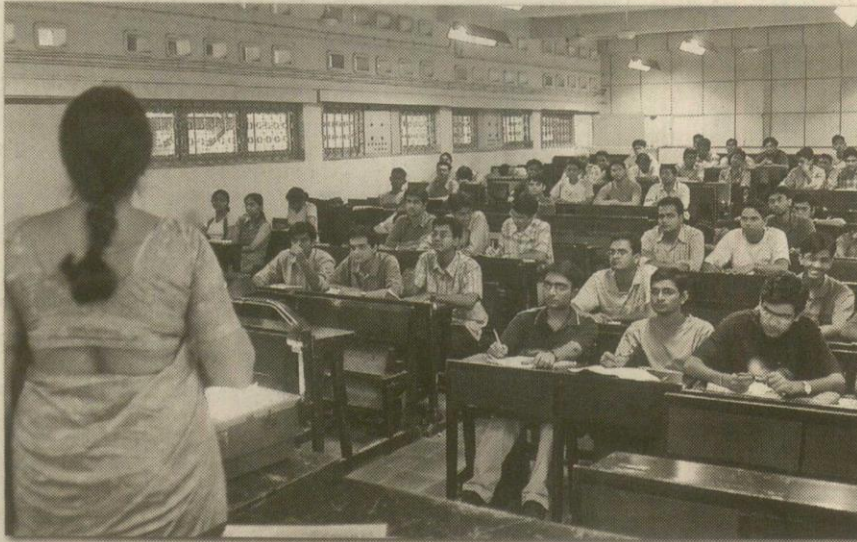
# Higher education in India needs reforms

**A**S part of the 12th and 13th five-year plans, the planning commission has thought of funding colleges and universities for enhancing their education system on three parameters — access, equity and quality. Such planning would include creating new academic institutions, expanding and upgrading the existing ones, developing institutions that are self-reliant in terms of quality education, technology driven delivery system, professional management, and characterised by greater inclination towards research and provide education that is relevant to students and the nation as a whole.

The planning commission entered the higher education domain after the reasonable success of *sarva shiksha abhiyan* (SSA) and *rashtriya madhyamik shiksha abhiyan* (RMSA) in past decade or so, which have laid a strong foundation for primary and secondary education. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has predicted that by 2020, India will have 116 million workers in the age bracket of 20-24 years, as compared with China's 94 million. It is estimated that the average age in India by the year 2020 will be 29 years as against 40 years in the US, 46 years in Japan and 47 years in Europe.

Today, the higher education system in India suffers from many shortcomings. India's gross enrolment ratio (GER) is only 19.4 per cent, indicating that only a fraction of the population in the age group of 18-23 years is enrolled in higher education institutions. In addition, there are wide disparities between various social groups. The GERs for SCs, STs and OBCs are far below the average GER and those of other social groups. There is also a wide

Arun Nigavekar



**BEING PROACTIVE:** RUSA will have a new approach towards funding higher education in state universities, as it will be based on performance-based funding and decision-making through clearly defined norms

gender disparity; GER for males is 20.9 per cent while that for females is only 16.5 per cent. There are also variations in the quality of institutions and enrolments between rural and urban areas, and between developed and not so developed states. We have four broad categories of higher education: centrally funded, state funded, deemed and private institutions. Soon, foreign universities would also be added to these categories. While the centrally funded institutions (central universities, IITs, NITs, IISERs, and institutes of national importance among others) receive generous funding from the centre, they still have limited coverage in terms of enrolment. About 94 per cent of the students enrolled in government funded (48 per cent of total enrolments) or government controlled private institutions come under the

state higher education system. Most private education institutions (52 per cent of total enrolments) are affiliated to state universities and come under their academic and administrative control.

An optimum solution would be to create an alternate way (a centrally sponsored scheme) of providing funds to a larger number of institutions and channel these funds through a body that ensures cohesive and integrated planning at the state level. Such a solution makes imminent management sense since it is almost impossible for any central agency to deal with 35,000 odd institutions on a one-on-one basis. Given the poor resource condition, the planning commission has come out with the scheme called *rashtriya uchchar shiksha abhiyan* (RUSA). There are 306 state universities and about 8,500 colleges that

can be covered under RUSA. The funding will be provided in the (centre: state) ratio of 90:10 for special category states, that is, north-eastern states, Sikkim, J&K, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, and in the 65:35 ratio for other states and union territories. Funding will be available to private government-aided institutions also, subject to their meeting certain pre-conditions for permitted activities based on pre-determined norms and parameters. RUSA will have a completely new approach towards funding higher education in state universities, as it will be based on key principles of performance-based funding, incentivising well performing institutions and decision-making through clearly defined norms.

Management information system will be established to gather essential information

from institutions. RUSA will aim to provide greater autonomy to universities as well as colleges and have a sharper focus on equity-based development, and improvement in teaching learning quality and research. It will be a new flagship scheme of the government that will pave the way for far reaching reforms at the state level.

It looks that the planning commission was daydreaming when they came out with RUSA. We must realise that today, out of 609 universities and about 30,000 colleges, majority are self-supporting private colleges and universities. These institutes are attracting more students by the day while we are thinking of touching only half the number, that too by concentrating on state universities and affiliated colleges that are exclusively funded by the state.

Today, there is not a single state in India which does not have a combination of state funded colleges (with self-financing teaching activities that are recognised by the university), and private affiliated colleges which raise their own resources. Moreover, routing of funds through state governments has its own never-ending hindrances. UGC could make changes in state colleges and universities, to some magnitude, because it was monitoring both the use of money for the purpose it was given and the standards of the outcome by involving best of researchers and teachers across the country. The RUSA scheme has enormous other deficiencies, but the largest is the highly state driven implementation strategy.

arun.nigavekar@mydigitalfc.com  
(The writer is former chairman of UGC, former vice-chancellor of University of Pune and founder director of NAAC)

# Job satisfaction hits new low: IIM-A study

## '44% Feel They Are Underpaid'

Chitra Unnithan | TNN

**Ahmedabad:** An average private sector employee in India is not a happy man as India Inc. feels the pinch of a global slowdown. Dissatisfaction levels among employees of India have gone up since 2009 when the economic slowdown set in, says a survey by Paycheck India, a research initiative at IIM-A.

Around 44% respondents out 13,205 staffers — 10,996 males and 2,209 females — say they are underpaid all through the four years starting 2009.

The survey authored by Prof Biju Varkkey, faculty of IIM-A and Rupa Korde, faculty of Foundation for Liberal and Management Education, Pune, sought online feedback from employees on salaries, job security, employee welfare and contract terms between 2009 and 2013.

Year	WOEFUL WELFARE	DEVIL IN CONTRACTS	JOB SECURITY DOWN
	Staff happy with employee welfare activities	Staff satisfied with changing contract terms	Staff who feel their jobs are safe
2009	32%	41%	43%
2010	29%	42%	47%
2011	34%	45%	43%
2012	32%	45%	44%
2013	22%	34%	42%

### JUNIORS MORE FRUSTRATED

Older employees more satisfied than young



## 'Take call on blacklisted varsities in two months'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday directed the University Grants Commission (UGC) to decide within two months the fate of those deemed universities which were blacklisted by an Expert Committee constituted by the Centre.

The matter hanged fire in the Supreme Court for over half-a-decade after an apex court bench directed the Centre to constitute an Expert Committee under Professor PN Tandon to study the state of deemed universities in the country.

On an examination of 126 deemed universities, the Committee found 44 institutions to be on the wrong side of law and recommended their deemed tag to be withdrawn. On representation by the erring institutions, a Review Committee also headed by Tandon, reiterated its decision.

The bench of Justices KS Radhakrishnan and Vikramajit Sen on Tuesday referred the two reports of the Tandon Committee to UGC directing it to accord proper hearing to all parties and arrive at an "independent" decision within two months.

In doing so, the Court was aware that the advice of the UGC would not be binding on the Centre. But the Court observed that since UGC was the specialized body formed to set standards of education, it would be proper for the UGC to recommend if any of the deemed universities need to be de-tagged.

To ensure the UGC forms an independent decision, the Court clarified that it gave no stamp of approval to the Tandon reports and suggested that the procedure under UGC law be followed by issuing notice and according proper hearing to the institutions in question.