Newspaper Clips
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Radio tag to track fraud univ students

By **Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury** and **Maneesh Pandey** in New Delhi

AMERICAN authorities have put radio collars on students duped by a California-based fraud university to track their movements and India is upset over it.

The country has asked the US administration to go soft on the students duped by the Tri Valley University in Pleasanton.

It has been learnt that a number of students were interrogated by authorities and forced to wear radio collars fitted with GPS technology.
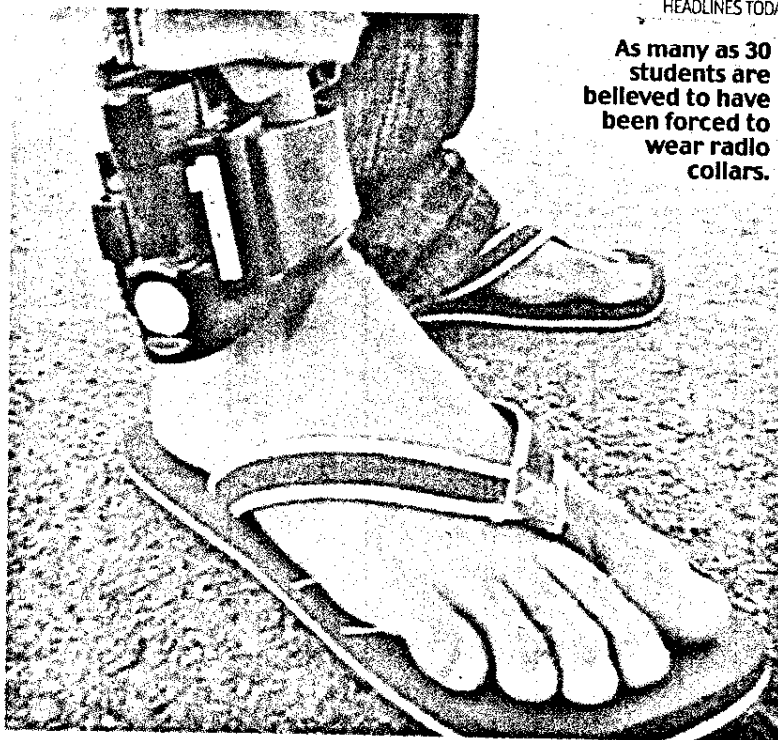
Minister for overseas Indian affairs Vayalar Ravi on Saturday said the Indian government has requested the US state department to take a lenient view because the students are innocent. "The fraud was done by the US university," Ravi said adding, "The university had no registration and it was not the fault of the Indian students."

Ravi said the Indian consul general in San Francisco was in touch with the local authorities on the issue and they are waiting for a report following which the status of assistance to the students would be finalised.

Duped by the authorities of the university which has been shut down, nearly 1,400 Indian students — mostly from Andhra Pradesh — faced deportation after losing their student visa status. The students have paid lakhs of rupees for obtaining a visa for their category and also for students' work permit.

"We are all here on valid visas... our careers will be ruined. And now they have tagged us. I don't know what purpose it will serve," an affected student from Andhra Pradesh, who refused to be identified, said. He alleged that as many as 30 of them have been made to wear radio collars.

"India is seriously concerned about the impact of the US federal action against Tri Valley University in California on the Indian students, enrolled at the now closed university, an external affairs ministry statement said in Delhi on Saturday evening.

While a majority of the Indian students at the university had transferred from other US universities, "approximately 100 students had obtained visas from the US mission in India; and, a number of students in the US as dependents of their spouses, had enrolled in the university after taking the required authorisation", the statement added.

The Indian consul general in San Francisco and the external affairs ministry are in touch with the Indian students and US authorities including the US embassy in Delhi.

HEADLINES TODAY

As many as 30 students are believed to have been forced to wear radio collars.

"We have also asked the US government to provide us full information on the affected students and keep us informed as the investigation unfolds, as well as, on the action being taken against the promoters of the university and others involved in perpetrating the fraud."

The principal investigator in the case has provided the Indian consulate in San Francisco with a list of immigration attorneys, who are prepared to guide/advise the students free of charge, on immigration procedures.

With inputs from Headlines Today

IN SEARCH OF LIGHT

Nandagopal Rajan sums up the five technological ideas identified by NASSCOM Foundation that try to make life easier for the visually impaired

ALBERT Einstein once said it had become "appallingly obvious that our technology has exceeded our humanity". But of late, some Indian innovators have been trying their hand at technologies that have humanity as one of its key features. These innovators want to ensure that as technology makes giant strides it also helps the differently-abled among us take small steps towards an easier life and a secure future.

Earlier this month, NASSCOM Foundation, which works towards galvanising corporate social responsibility in the Indian IT industry, and Genpact announced the 21 finalists of its Third Social Innovation Honours. The honours are a bid to recognise innovation in the use of information and communication technology for social development.

Interestingly, in the shortlist are five ideas that try to make life easier for the visually impaired. With the world's largest visually impaired population of over 15 million, this is one field where India has to make serious research and technological advances.

Explore

'EXPLORE' is a software application that serves as a single platform to help the visually impaired, or cognitively impaired users, obtain education, connect socially and team up for better productivity. It uses automation and speech interfaces along with software-simulation of Braille device on the keyboard to communicate with the application. As it is totally software-based and doesn't rely on hardware devices, Explore is a cost-effective option for the average computer user.

Samiran Saha, Siddharth Shah, Ankit Koradia and Ramesh Patel, all computer engineering students at Mumbai's VES Institute of Technology, have also extended Explore's accessibility to a few other frequently-used third-party applications and browser. The group says their primary aim is to enable differently abled children educate themselves and discover the virtual world of the computer. "Project 'Explore' aims at providing accessible education and socialising opportunities for people suffering from disabilities. Users can be home and still take lessons from the best in the field," explains Saha.

"We want the users to be able to lead normal lives and empower them with global opportunities for their individual development and progress," says Saha, adding that they intend to execute a random pilot run for the application, and later extend its scope across the nation. The software has

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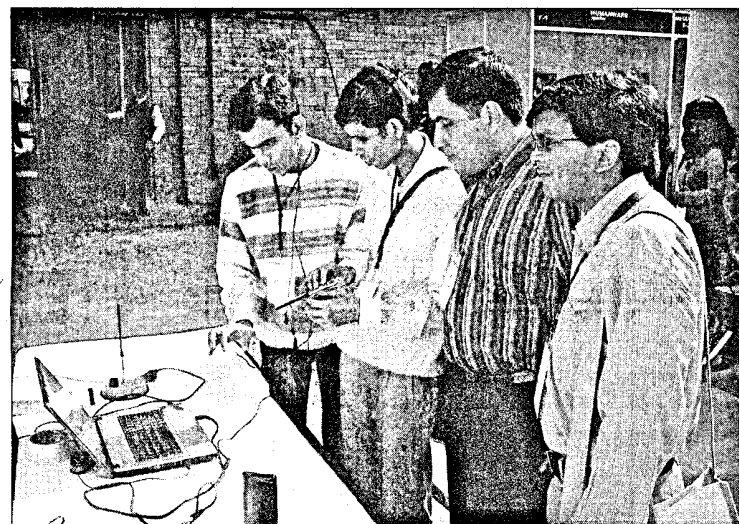
already been tested and reviewed by experts at the National Association for the Blind in Mumbai and the group is working with project partners and organisations to ensure a smooth deployment by July 2011.

Multiline Refreshable Braille Display

A tactile display is a plate with tiny raised dots that you "read" with your fingertips. A refreshable tactile display, on the other hand, can show different information—which is refreshed at a certain frequency, usually under the control of a computer. Bangalore-based Paul Gerard D'Souza's mechanical multi-line Braille display tries to reduce the prohibitive costs of this technology by using cheap equipment and easily available technology.

Based on sliding beams, this low-cost device, as small as a laptop computer, aims at restoring Braille as a primary means of literacy and information exchange for the visually impaired. It can also help overcome speech synthesiser problems associated with accents, speed, and availability of language interfaces.

"This device is relatively unknown in India and in most developing countries at present due to the prohibitive cost of more than $3,000 per device. I have developed new technology that has broken the single-line barrier

(max two lines) using conventional technology. This breakthrough will permit a Refreshable Braille Display to be made, having multiple lines, hitherto unknown," says D'Souza, who is in the process of getting a grant to complete the advanced prototype.

Blind Helper

THIS wireless PC developed by Mohit Khanna and Anurag Mishra of Meerut

lets the visually impaired operate the computer from any corner of the house. The Blind Helper PC comes with a special seven-keys wireless keyboard, side hub and E-Vision software. Since no Braille keyboard is needed, this PC becomes much cheaper than other computers intended for the visually impaired.

The user sends commands to the PC via the seven-key wireless keyboard, which are received by the PC Side hub and transferred to the E-Vision software. The software then interprets the signals and transmits corresponding information to the user in speech form. The system is wireless, allowing the user to operate the computer from anywhere in the house even as others use the computer for other purposes. Khanna and Mishra say the same system, with some minor

(Above) A finalist of NASSCOM Foundation's Genpact NASSCOM Social Innovation Honours 2011; Blind Helper by Mohit Khanna and Anurag Mishra from Bharat Institute of Technology, Meerut

modifications, can also be used by people suffering from other debilitating diseases.

Camera Mouse

THE Camera Mouse is a CCTV gadget that helps low vision persons read small print and write in small spaces. Using a high-tech CMOS mini movie camera linked to a television, the device gives full colour images with magnifications of up to 20X. At just Rs 2,400, it costs a tenth of similar imported devices, says M S Raju, founder-president of Visakhapatnam-based Vision Aid India, which has developed the device.

The society has already provided the device to 300 senior citizens and low vision students. Raju hopes libraries across India will use the device to open large-print sections for low-vision readers. He says the Camera Mouse is safe for use with low energy consumption, simple to connect with a solitary wire, has a shatter proof body and can be used in lit as well as darkened rooms.

The Access Lab

V SHOBA

THANKS to the wide ramp that curves up to the glass facade of the Yahoo! India office in Bagmane Tech Park, CV Raman Nagar, Bangalore, the small flight of stairs that also leads to the front door is hardly used. "Just as you took the elevator to my office on the fifth floor instead of taking the stairs, you'd naturally take the ramp because it's easier," says Srinivasu Chakravarthula, at Yahoo! India's Accessibility Lab, the company's purple logo in Braille on the wall behind him. Ease of access is an area he is something of an expert in, responsible as he is for making Yahoo! products accessible to everyone, including users with visual and motor disabilities.

Vasu, as he is known, also spreads awareness about the concept of accessibility at conferences and employee induction programmes at Yahoo, besides the blogosphere. It usually starts with explaining why, contrary to popular belief, accessibility is not just for the disabled, but for everyone. Making a website accessible, for example, means making sure it runs on all versions of all browsers—how often have we visited websites that say they are best viewed on IE 6 or above?—and even on phones and portable devices, be-
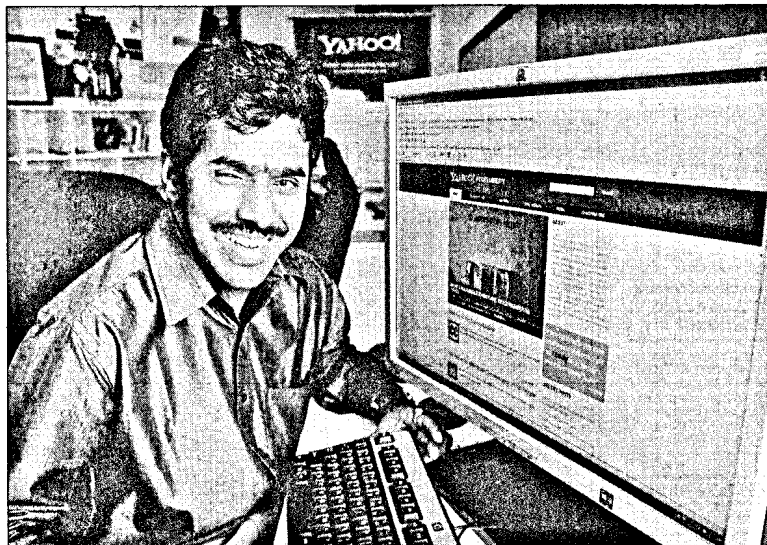
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sides including features like keyboard support, multiple text sizes, alternate text for images and an optional high-contrast colour scheme. While making the website accessible to visually-impaired users, these features also make browsing easy for everyone. "Within six months of launching an accessible site, eBay reported a 40 per cent increase in sale," Vasu says. Yet, few companies in India—IBM and Microsoft among them—recognise the need for accessibility and a majority of websites, including official government sites, do not have accessibility features.

"In countries like the UK and Australia, accessibility is mandated by the governments because they realise that in a few years, they will have a sizeable population of elderly peo-

ple," Vasu says. The idea is now catching up in India, four years after it ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Early last year, the website of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (http://www.socialjustice.nic.in/) became the first government ministry website to become accessible—besides the usual accessibility features, it has links to free screen readers which can read out website content for visually-impaired users. While most government websites are still not accessible—including the RTI website, which directs you to use Internet Explorer with a specified screen resolution to access the map—few such as that of the Ministry of Communications and IT (http://www.mit.gov.in/) and the national portal (http://india.gov.in/) now follow the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). Yahoo!, a leader in accessibility research and a member of W3C, is looking at working with the government on improving accessibility.

It doesn't take special effort to make a website accessible. "If Web developers use the best coding practices, such as using proper headers and labels, and accessibility tags to enable screen reading and keyboard control, the site will be accessible to

Srinivasu Chakravarthula, at Yahoo! India's Accessibility Lab in Bangalore

anyone from any device—no need to maintain separate text-only versions," Vasu says, adding, "In a Word file, for example, when we insert a picture, how many of us add a text description to it? It only takes a minute and it will come in handy when the picture fails to load, besides enabling blind users to appreciate the content of the picture by having a screen reader spell it out." Just like

Microsoft Word, Android and iPhone have accessibility features, but most application developers aren't aware of them. Several popular email and chat clients for mobile phones do not support screen readers.

Accessibility doesn't just pertain to websites, it extends to all walks of life—making public spaces wheelchair-friendly' enabling the visually-impaired to read, write and even

drive' and ensuring entertainment is enjoyable by the hearing-impaired. While some movie channels on cable TV play subtitles, Vasu says there is no reason why news channels and saas-bahu shows should not have synchronised captioning. "We underestimate what the disabled can and will do. The EnAble India website was designed by a girl who can move only one of her 10 fingers," he says.

We are closely tracking 'sham' US varsity case: Vayalar Ravi

ISHANI DUTTAGUPTA
NEW DELHI

THE Indian government is closely tracking the immigration fraud involving Tri-Valley University in Silicon Valley and is trying to help the hundreds of Indian students who have been duped by the university and now face prosecution by the US authorities.

"The case was first brought to the attention of the Indian Embassy in Washington DC by the South Asian Bar Association (SABA) in the US. The embassy and the consulate general in San Francisco are now in talks with the US State department to find out the details about the case. We have already conveyed our concern to the US authorities over the fate of hundreds of students from India who were duped by TVU and could lose their F1 student visa status," minister of overseas Indian affairs Vayalar Ravi told media persons on Saturday.

While the Indian government is trying to persuade the US immigration authorities to show leniency towards the students who went to the US with genuine student visas, the minister did not rule out extending support to those who may now be facing deportation as well.

"If some of them were violating the terms of their student visas and working illegally in the US, then they will face deportation and in such cases too we will try to extend help to them to return to India," the minister clarified.

The Indian government is also looking into reports of a large number of the students being from Andhra Pradesh. "I'm talking to the chief ministers concerned to find out if there were any agents in India who were working in collusion with the university and duping innocent students. If we find any such cases, we will immediately crack down on them," minister Ravi added.

It is now feared that US consular officials in India will be more careful when dealing with applications from Andhra Pradesh, since a majority of students at TVU were, reportedly, from there. Genuine students applying from the Hyderabad consulate could face delays or could be denied visas, with more strict norms being applied in verifying their credentials.

Many of the TVU students are in touch with immigration lawyers amidst reports that the US department of homeland security has started prosecution action against them.

"We have been contacted by several dozens of these students. Some of them are subject to deportation under US immigration law. The safest approach for those who have been given a notice to appear before an immigration judge would be to request for grant of voluntary departure. This will allow them to travel back to India and return to the US to study at a new school or get an H1B sponsorship with an employer. By fighting the deportation case, they risk losing thousands of dollars in hiring a lawyer and paying legal fees, losing years in the process, and then finally most likely getting a removal order with a five year ban on being able to re-enter the US," says attorney Sheela Murthy of the Maryland-based Murthy Law Firm.

There are reports that many of the students of TVU have been told to leave the US by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Their passports are reportedly being retained till they show an airlines ticket to depart. A few students have also been advised to contact other universities for admission to a new F1 programme after transfer.

आईआईटी से एमटेक छात्र होंगे मालामाल

बीटेक को मिलने वाला मोटा पैकेज बना आईआईटी प्रबंधन के लिए आफत

मदन जैड़ा

नई दिल्ली

फेंका पासा

■ नहीं मिल रहे एमटेक के लिए छात्र, बीटेक के बाद नौकरी को प्राथमिकता

■ एमटेक के छात्रों को 10 लाख रुपये तक का सालाना पैकेज देने की तैयारी

> ❝ देश के सात पुराने आईआईटी में प्रोफेसरों के 30 फीसदी पद रिक्त हैं। आठ नए आईआईटी खुले हैं, उनमें गिने-चुने शिक्षक ही नियुक्त हो पाए हैं। अभी जो हालात हैं उससे तो भविष्य में आईआईटी के लिए फैकल्टी का इंतजाम करना मुश्किल हो जाएगा ❞
>
> मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय

भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थानों (आईआईटी) में बीटेक करने के बाद युवाओं को बाहर नौकरी ढूंढने की जरूरत शायद न पड़े। क्योंकि आईआईटी खुद इन नौजवानों को ऐसे पैकेज दे सकता है। करना सिर्फ यह होगा कि बीटेक के बाद छात्र को एमटेक में एडमिशन लेना होगा। वे आईआईटी का पैकेज (फेलोशिप के रूप में होगा) लेकर एमटेक और उसके बाद पीएचडी कर सकेंगे।

इस पहल का मकसद है देश में तकनीकी शिक्षण संस्थानों खासकर आईआईटी के लिए फैकल्टी तैयार करना। मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय इस बाबत अनिल काकोदकर समिति की सिफारिशों पर विचार कर रहा है।

दरअसल, आईआईटी प्रबंधन के लिए बीटेक करने वाले युवाओं को मिलना वाला मोय पैकेज आफत बन गए हैं। पुराने सातों आईआईटी से हर साल बीटेक करने वाले करीब दस हज़ार युवाओं में 95 फीसदी को मोटा पैकेज मिल जाता है। वे आगे की पढ़ाई छोड़कर नौकरी करने लगते

हैं और एमटेक की सीटें खाली रह जाती है। एनआईटी या दूसरे इंजीनियरिंग कालेजों में भी यही स्थिति है। देश में करीब 4.5 लाख ग्रेजुएट इंजीनियरिंग सीटें हैं, लेकिन एमटेक और पीएचडी करने वाले सिर्फ पांच हजार होते हैं।

काकोदकर समिति ने तीन सुझाव दिए हैं। आईआईटी से बीटेक करने वाले छात्र को एमटेक के लिए वही पैकेज दिया जाए जो उसे नौकरी के लिए मिलता है।

एक कॉल पर मिलेगी जानकारी

टोरंटो विश्वविद्यालय की तर्ज पर डीयू शुरू करेगा छात्रों की समस्याओं के समाधान के लिए कॉल सेंटर, करीब चार लाख छात्रों को होगा लाभ

जय प्रकाश मिश्र

नई दिल्ली

दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय की हर जानकारी एक घंटी बजाने के साथ ही मिल जाएगी। टोरंटो विश्वविद्यालय की तर्ज पर अब आने वाले समय में दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय में भी जानकारी कॉल सेंटर के माध्यम से उपलब्ध कराई जाएंगी। इसके लिए कॉल सेंटर खोले जाएंगे।

डीयू के डीन स्टूडेंट्स वेलफेयर प्रो. एस.के.विज ने बताया दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय के छात्रों की सुविधा के लिए कॉल सेंटर बनाए जाएंगे। जिसके माध्यम से छात्र महज फोन के माध्यम से ही जानकारी प्राप्त कर सकेंगे। उन्होंने बताया कि दाखिले के समय बाहर से आने वाले छात्रों की सुविधा को ध्यान में रखकर एक सूचना केंद्र की स्थापना तो होती ही हैं। मगर विश्वविद्यालय के बढ़ते कदम को देखते हुए पूरे साल कॉल सेंटर शुरू रहेगा। उन्होंने बताया इस

किसके लिए होगा कॉल सेंटर

भाषा
हिंदी और अंग्रेजी में जानकारी उपलब्ध कराई जाएगी। इसमें छात्रों के दाखिले और शैक्षिक समस्याओं का निदान किया जाएगा।

तकनीक
कॉल सेंटर में कंप्यूटर टेलिफोन इंटीग्रेशन तकनीक का उपयोग होता है। जिसमें फोन और कंप्यूटर दोनों जोड़ा जा सकता है।

अवधि
कॉल सेंटर सुबह 8 बजे से शाम 8 बजे तक काम करेगा। इस दौरान छात्रों के लिए हर तरह की जानकारी उपलब्ध कराई जाएगी।

किसके लिए
कॉल सेंटर डीयू के छात्रों के साथ ही बाहर से दाखिले के समय आने वाले छात्रों के लिए भी हर तरह की जानकारी उपलब्ध कराएगा।

क्यों
डीयू को अंतरराष्ट्रीय मानचित्र पर पहचान दिलाने की कड़ी में एक पहल। छात्रों समस्याओं के समाधान कि दिशा में एक प्रयास।

कब तक
वैसे तो दाखिले के दौरान तो सूचना केंद्र की स्थापना तो होती ही है। मगर कॉल सेंटर पूरे साल काम करेगा।

कॉल सेंटर के माध्यम से छात्र अपनी शिकायत, परीक्षाफल, सहायता, कॉलेज की जानकारी, विभाग की जानकारी, नयी योजनाएं आदि की जानकारी ले सकते हैं।

उन्होंने बताया कि इस कॉल सेंटर से देश-विदेश में बसे डीयू के पुराने छात्र भी जुड़ सकेंगे। उन्होंने बताया कि दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय में छात्रों की संख्या करीब चार लाख है। इन सभी की जानकारी कॉल सेंटर के माध्यम से दी जाएगी। इन

सभी की जानकारी कॉल सेंटर के पेशवरों द्वारा उपलब्ध कराई जाएगी। कॉल करने के साथ ही तुरंत समस्या का समाधान हो सकेगा। फिलहाल अभी इस कॉल सेंटर को सुबह आठ बजे से रात आठ बजे तक ट्रायल तौर पर शुरू किया जा सकता है। साथ ही अभी इसमें हिंदी और अंग्रेजी में ही जानकारी उपलब्ध कराई जाएगी। इसमें छात्रों की दाखिले और शैक्षिक समस्याओं का निदान किया जाएगा। गौरतलब है कि कुलपति प्रो. दिनेश सिंह

डीयू को अंतरराष्ट्रीय पहचान दिलाने के लिए कई तरह की पहल कर रहे हैं। इसके लिए उन्होंने विदेशी विश्वविद्यालयों की तर्ज पर कई प्रयोग करने की योजना बना रहे हैं। देश और विदेश से आने वाले छात्रों के लिए कॉल सेंटर की स्थापना की योजना बनाई गई है। इस कड़ी में उन्होंने 31 जनवरी को छात्रों से संवाद स्थापित करने की लिए हर कॉलेज के छात्रों की बैठक बुलाई है।

आईआईटी से एमटेक, पीएचडी पर मिलेगा मोटा पैकेज

◉ उषा श्रीवास्तव

- ● सिब्बल ने काकोदकर समिति से मांगे सुझाव
- ● आईआईटी काउंसिल की बैठक में हुई चर्चा

नई दिल्ली। भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थानों (आईआईटी) में एमटेक और पीएचडी करने वाले छात्रों की कम संख्या ने मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय की चिंता बढ़ा दी है। केंद्रीय मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्री कपिल सिब्बल ने अनिल काकोदकर की अध्यक्षता में गठित समिति से कहा है कि वह इस गंभीर समस्या का समाधान सुझाते हुए जल्द रिपोर्ट सौंपे।

सूत्रों के अनुसार, हाल में संपन्न आईआईटी काउंसिल की बैठक में इस मुद्दे पर व्यापक चर्चा हुई। यह तथ्य सामने आया कि बीटेक करते ही छात्रों को मोटा वेतन मिलने लगता है लिहाजा वह आगे पढ़ने की जरूरत नहीं समझते। इसकी तोड़ के लिए जरूरी है कि एमटेक और पीएचडी करने वाले छात्रों को आकर्षक पैकेज दिया जाए, जो बाजार भाव को टक्कर दे सके। इस सुझाव पर अधिकांश ने सहमति जताई। इसके बाद सिब्बल ने काकोदकर समिति से यह पता लगाने को कहा कि पैकेज का प्रबंध किस स्रोत से संभव है और यह कितना होना चाहिए। क्या आईआईटी अपने संसाधनों से यह व्यवस्था करने में सक्षम है या फिर सरकार अथवा अन्य किसी स्रोत पर निर्भर होना पड़ेगा। इस समय देश योग्य फैकल्टी की कमी की समस्या से जूझ रहा है। इससे निपटना है तो उच्च शिक्षा और अनुसंधान के प्रति छात्रों में रुझान पैदा करना होगा। ऐसा तभी संभव है जब उनकी आर्थिक जरूरतों का ध्यान रखा जाए। मौजूदा समय में भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थानों में प्रति वर्ष सिर्फ एक हजार पीएचडी हो रही है। इस ओर सरकार का ध्यान खींचने वाले काकोदकर ही हैं। उन्होंने अपनी पहली रिपोर्ट में उच्च शिक्षा क्षेत्र के जबर्दस्त विस्तार के मद्देनजर इस संख्या को बढ़ाकर कम से कम दस हजार करने की सिफारिश की है। इसके लिए जरूरी अतिरिक्त बुनियादी ढांचा, फंड और फैकल्टी की व्यवस्था के चलते फिलहाल आईआईटी ने हाथ खड़े कर दिए हैं, लेकिन सिब्बल ने सहमति जताई। उन्होंने काकोदकर से कहा है कि पैकेज समेत इन सभी बातों को शामिल कर वह नए सिरे से अपनी रिपोर्ट तैयार करें। काउंसिल की मंजूरी लेकर इस पर जल्द अमल के प्रयास होंगे।