Newspaper Clips
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Hindustan Times ND 15/07/2015 P-14

IITs, IIMs can have MoUs abroad without cabinet nod

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NEW DELHI: Higher educational institutions, including the IITs, IIMs and central universities, will not need cabinet nod for collaboration with foreign institutions, an order from the cabinet secretariat said.

The latest order communicated to the HRD ministry last week is the reversal of the earlier order from cabinet secretariat which said every memorandum of understanding (MoU) with a foreign institution will need to pass through the cabinet.

"Cabinet approval will be needed only for government to government collaborations and not for higher educational institutions signing MoUs with foreign universities," an official told HT.

The new order will benefit IITs and IIMs which have more than 50 collaborations each with foreign universities.

Sources said the cabinet secretariat reversed its order after the HRD ministry wrote to it saying the move would have a bearing on the autonomy of the IITs, IIMs and central universities granted to them through their respective Acts.

For example, Section 6(1)(I) of the Institute of Technology Act, 1961, under which the IITs were set up says: "Every institute shall exercise the following powers and perform the duties, namely, to cooperate with educational or other institutions in any part of the world having objects wholly or partly similar to those of the institute by exchange of teachers and scholars and generally in such manner as may be conducive to their common objects."

■ The new order will benefit IITs and IIMs which have more than 50 collaborations each with foreign universities. HT FILE PHOTO

> Cabinet approval will be needed only for govt to govt collaborations and not for higher educational institutions signing MoUs with foreign universities.
>
> OFFICIAL, HRD ministry

The ministry also argued that it did not have the wherewithal to scrutinise every MoU signed between different institutions.

The cabinet secretariat's original order was issued to all ministries and departments including the HRD ministry on April 24.

"It is advised that prior approval of the cabinet is required to be obtained by ministries and departments concerned in all cases involving treatises, agreements and other important matters including MoUs to be signed by any agency with any foreign agency/country," the circular said.

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IITs, IIMs use technology to fight faculty crisis

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The Digital India programme, which plans to "transform India into a digitally empowered society", comes at a time when most institutes in the country, including the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) are grappling with an acute shortage of good faculty members. Experts believe that only digital solutions can help them beat the crunch, especially in the newly set up IITs and IIMs. As per the current set-up, the new institutes are mentored by the older ones and assisted with faculty members. "It is physically impossible to fly down good faculty members to new IIMs every time. About 10 months ago, we had sent a proposal to the HRD ministry to create a MOOC platform exclusively for management education, for which faculty members from old IIMs could come together to deliver

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THE TECH-CONNECT

- IIM Bangalore: Will be launching about 10 MOOCs during the next one year with edX.
- IIT Bombay: Offered three core courses on computer programming, thermodynamics and signals and systems that had 10,677, 3,074 and 3,500 enrolments respectively across various colleges
- IIM Calcutta: Offers 15 to 20 certificate courses for working executives in online mode
- IIT Mandi: About 60 courses were taught to 1,700 IIT Mandi students by other IITs
- IIM Rohtak: Conducts lectures through video conferencing to address faculty crunch at the institute
- IIT Indore: Conducts virtual lectures and workshops

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IITs, IIMs use technology fight faculty crisis

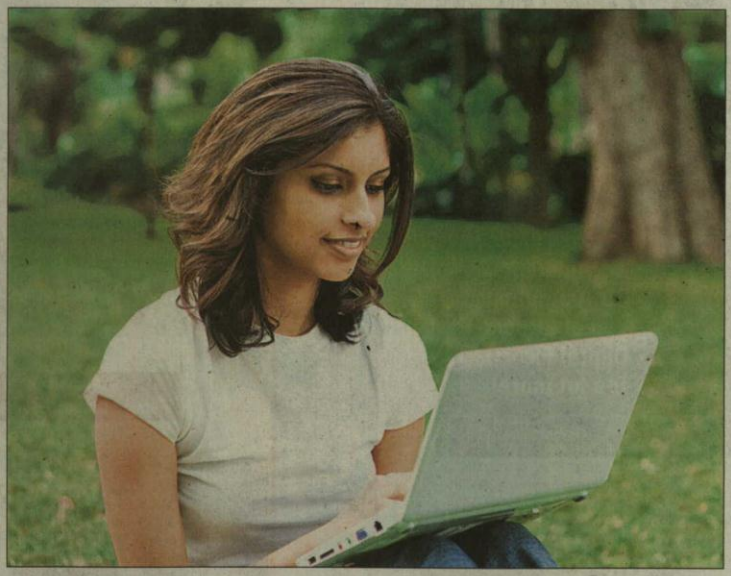
the core courses of at least the first year to other IIMs. The proposal is still under consideration but technological interventions are the only solution to the existing faculty crunch, if we want to standardise delivery across top business schools. The new IIM students have the right to listen to the best faculty," says Ashok Banerjee, professor, finance and control, IIM Calcutta.

However, some institutes have already been harnessing the power of technology.

IIT Mandi has been using the National Knowledge Network (NKN) through which faculty in other IITs, including Roorkee, Delhi, Madras and Bombay, offer courses to its (IIT Mandi) students. "In the last three years, mainly electives have been offered to provide a richer choice of courses to our students. From August 2011 to June 2015, faculty at other IITs taught 60 courses through the NKN to IIT Mandi students. The total enrolment in all these 60 courses was 1,700 students, which includes students of all four years of BTech, and also some MS and PhD students. In the early years, 2011-12, several basic core courses for the first and second year BTech students were taught through NKN, to compensate for the initial shortage of faculty in some areas," informs professor Timothy A Gonsalves, director, IIT Mandi.

The blending of online learning with classroom teaching, often termed as 'blended model' is popular among most of these institutes of national importance. Lately, some of them have also tied up with the massive open online courses (MOOCs) providers and blended MOOCs with regular classroom teaching.

At IIT Bombay MOOCs are used to supplement face-to-face teaching. "This flipped classroom approach (through which students view and accesses lectures online band then come to the classroom) has been used by many teachers at IIT Bombay in the past few years. Our studies have indicated that the engagement level of students with the course increases significantly," says Dr Deepak B Phatak, professor, department of computer science and engineering, IIT Bombay.



Technological interventions in pedagogy are revolutionising traditional classroom teaching across IITs and IIMs.

"A much greater engagement with students is essential, which is not possible in the current model based primarily on delivery of sermon-like lectures, delivered in successive classes," Phatak adds.

IIT Bombay will be offering three courses in the first semester of the coming academic year in a blended model, in partnership with over 50 autonomous institutes.Each partnering institute will teach the course through usual face-to-face interactions, and the students will also register for the corresponding MOOCs. If syllabi at the institutes and IIT Bombay overlap, the teacher in the partner institute will choose the topics to use the flipped classroom.

"The most important part is that the final grade of a student in each subject will depend on both: the marks obtained in local exams and the scores in the online assessment of MOOCs. Each partnering institute has the freedom to decide the weightage percentage of the online evaluation, which should be factored in the final grade. We believe that this is a unique effort where regular students of so many institutes will simultaneously use a common MOOC to supplement their usual face-to-face learning," says Phatak.

MOOCs are offered by IIT Bombay, on IITBombayX platform which has been built at the institute using the open source open-edX as the code base.

Discussions on joining the MOOCs bandwagon are underway at IIT Indore too. The institute is a part of NKN and uses available resources for its students, informs Dr Nirmala Menon, assistant professor.

"MOOCs and other online tools help supplement faculty teaching and student learning. For a new IIT, it is helpful to have access to lectures and classes from renowned faculty though online tools and we do make use of them in our classrooms. While it does not make up for a faculty crunch, it will enable institutes to ensure that students will not be at a loss if a particular subject expert is not available in any individual IIT," says professor Pradeep Mathur, director, IIT Indore.

IIMs too have been keen on offering MOOCs. For instance, IIM Bangalore was the first management school from India to partner and create free MOOCs as a part of xConsortium at edX. The faculty shortage cannot be ignored across IIMs as well. "Not only do new IIMs face a faculty crunch during the first few years of their operation, even in old IIMs have the problem as there are specialisations for which it is extremely difficult to get good quality faculty. Only use of technology can solve the problem," says professor Banerjee.

IIM Rohtak, one of the newer IIMs, for instance, has been using technology in the classroom to address faculty crunch. "We conduct video conferencing sessions from faculty members of global management institutes. It is easier to convince them to spend two or three hours on video conferencing instead of flying them down to Rohtak, and making them lose a lot of time in travelling," says professor P Rameshan, director, IIM Rohtak.

Online learning has, however, replaced classroom teaching for many executive programmes at IIMs. IIM Calcutta offers certificate programmes enabling working executives to attend classes from their respective locations. Every year, the institute offers 15 to 20 such programmes in general management, finance and software project management. IIM Rohtak too offers an online postgraduate certification programme for working executives.

"We can record a lecture and take it to other places. What we cannot take is the classroom discussion. That's where one institute differs from the other. However, basic concept remains the same for the theoretical part and students should spend more time on discussions in the classroom," says Banerjee.

On similar lines, Professor MJ Xavier, former director, IIM Ranchi says, "While there are more than 500 faculty members in the IIM system, there is a shortage of faculty across IIMs. The fault lies in the way we are expanding. We still operate with the industrial age mindset where we are trying to replicate IIMs. Instead we could use technology to reach out to a larger number of needy people with the least resources. By this I am not saying that we can eliminate face-to-face learning. All formats of learning (face-to-face, blended, online and self-study) should be made available."

Times of India ND 15/07/2015 P-28

Fix Schools Instead

IITs should have good laboratories, not become laboratories for social engineering

Affirmative action may be laudable in limited amounts but it cannot be allowed to override the basic aim of IITs – which is to provide world class education. IITs have announced that they will now admit students with scores as low as 6.1%. This is because the nearly 50% seats reserved in the 18 IITs for SCs, STs, OBCs and so on are often not filled. To bring them up to par, these students will attend a preparatory course for a year before joining the full-fledged BTech course.

The question, however, is whether or not you can ensure effective affirmative action by artificially lowering cut-offs for IITs. Studying at an IIT is not a walk in the park. Mere admission is no guarantee that a student will be able to keep up with the rigours of the course. The recent expulsion of 73 students from IIT Roorkee, because they failed to keep up, is a case in point.

The only feasible way out of this impasse is to fix the school system. The standard of teaching is so poor in large swathes of the country that most students who lack the wherewithal to go to coaching centres cannot dream of cracking a competitive entrance exam like that of the IITs. Government must focus on making teachers teach at schools while tackling abominations such as teachers with fake degrees or a Vyapam scam where teaching jobs are up for sale. Pushing qualifying marks down to abysmal levels, or indeed, letting IITs sprout everywhere – five more are in the offing – solves nothing. Cramming a huge number of students into the system without due regard for merit kills the idea of IITs as institutes of excellence. Don't just treat the symptom; treat the root cause of poor educational standards across the country.

Times of India ND 15/07/2015 P-14

IIT to reverse a student's expulsion

'He Wasn't Graded In 1 Subject'

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Dehradun: IIT Roorkee officials confirmed on Tuesday that the institute would be taking back one of the 73 students that had been expelled last week on the grounds of poor performance.

D K Nauriyal, dean of students' welfare, IIT Roorkee, told **TOI** that during the process of recalibration, it was found that the concerned student was not graded in one of the subjects. "When the lapse was identified, his CGPA (Cumulative Grade Points Average) went up to the required level, and a decision was taken to nullify his expulsion."

The student who is enrolled in the computer science stream told **TOI** that he was 'extremely happy and apprehensive at the same time'

The student, who is enrolled in the Computer Science stream told **TOI** that he was "extremely happy and apprehensive at the same time." "I am still to get it in writing that I have been taken back. I am just hoping that this is true. I have been told that I will get all the details by tomorrow morning."

Meanwhile, members of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) protested for over two hours in front of the institute's gates after getting this news. " When one student can be taken back because of such a lapse, why not others? May be a few more students can be taken back on the same grounds. IIT should reconsider all the cases," said Sachin Gujjar, an ABVP leader.

46 expelled move Uttarakhand HC

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Nainital: At least 46 of the 73 expelled students of IIT-Roorkee filed a writ petition in the Uttarakhand high court on Tuesday, maintaining that no other IIT in the country has 'provisions for striking off the admission/registration on students' failure to attain the minimum CGPA (cumulative grade point average) of 5.

"The petitioner is being treated differently from the students of other IITs, thus he has been subjected to hostile discrimination," one of the students alleged.

In another significant point raised in their petition, the students said that the clause of Academic Programmes Ordinance and Regulation, 2014, which was used to expel them, is itself in conflict with other clauses in the regulation.

Clause 33 (1) (a) of the regulation says: "The enrolment of a student in a programme shall stand terminated if he/she fails to earn minimum number of credits specified at different yearly levels in the programme as given in Appendix-'J' and fails to secure minimum CGPA of 5.00, notwithstanding the fact that the student has or has not been put under academic probation." The students said they achieved the minimum number of credits (22) and that conditions described in the clause remain unfulfilled and the expulsion stands "illegal".

Times of India ND 15/07/2015 P-2

Engineer held for stealing IIT laptops

Times News Network

New Delhi: An engineering graduate, allegedly working as a manager at IBM Gurgaon, was found involved in laptop thefts at IIT Delhi. Police said the youth used to sell the laptops in Nehru Place market showing his company ID. Police have recovered four laptops and arrested the buyer.

The accused, identified as Twinkle Arora (27), is a resident of Faridabad. He got a BTech degree from Maharishi Markandeshwar University in 2010. He had receed the college and its hostels during a fest and used to steal in the early hours when everyone would be sleeping. "The accused would target those hostel rooms where students would be sleeping with their

Rashtriya Sahara ND 15/07/2015 P-7

आईआईटी से निकाले छात्र पहुंचे हाईकोर्ट

- प्रथम सेमेस्टर में मानक से कम प्रदर्शन पर संस्थान से 73 छात्रों का हुआ था निष्कासन
- बुधवार को होगी मामले की सुनवाई

नैनीताल। आईआईटी रुड़की से निकाले गए 73 छात्रों का मामला हाईकोर्ट पहुंच गया है। हाईकोर्ट में मामले की सुनवाई 15 जुलाई को होने की संभावना है। आईआईटी रुड़की के छात्र शुभम व अन्य इस मामले को लेकर हाईकोर्ट में याचिका दायर की है। इसमें उन्होंने कहा है कि बीती 15 जून को आईआईटी ने उन समेत 73 छात्रों को द्वितीय वर्ष में प्रवेश देने से इनकार कर दिया है। इसमें सेमेस्टर परीक्षा में पांच सीजीपीए से कम अंक प्राप्त होने को कारण बताते हुए यह कार्रवाई की गई है, जो न्याय संगत नहीं। उन्हें सुनवाई का मौका भी नहीं दिया गया। इधर आईआईटी के रजिस्ट्रार प्रशांत गर्ग ने मंगलवार दोपहर को हाईकोर्ट का नोटिस मिलने की पुष्टि की। साथ ही कहा कि इस मामले में जवाब दिया जाएगा। हाईकोर्ट जो निर्णय देगा वह मान्य होगा।संस्थान का कहना है कि वह अपने फैसले पर कायम रहेगा। रजिस्ट्रार प्रशांत गर्ग कहते हैं कि फैसले में कोई परिवर्तन न किया गया है और न ही किया जाएगा। बीटेक के इन छात्रों का पहले वर्ष के दोनों ही सेमेस्टर की परीक्षा में मानकों से कम प्रदर्शन रहा था।

'टेक देम बैक'

बाहर निकाले गए छात्रों ने सोशल मीडिया पर 'टेक दैम बैक' नाम से अभियान भी चलाया है। फेल होने पर आईआईटी रुड़की से 73 छात्रों को निकाले जाने के बाद से छात्र और उनके परिजन आंदोलन पर उतर आए हैं। निकाले गए छात्रों में से 90 फीसदी से ज्यादा आरक्षित श्रेणी से हैं।

दोबारा मेहनत का मौका मिले

संस्थान से बाहर निकाले गये छात्रों में से एक, अनुराग कहते हैं कि मैंने परीक्षा की पूरी तैयारी तो की थी लेकिन रिजल्ट बहुत अच्छा नहीं हो पाया। संस्थान को ऐसा नहीं करना चाहिए था। आगे और मेहनत कर सकते हैं। अभिभावक भी गुस्से में है।

Deccan Herald ND 15/07/2015 P-4

Parties back expelled IIT students

ROORKEE, PTI: Students expelled from IIT Roorkee recently for underperformance in exams have got support from political parties with the student wings of both Congress and BJP demanding their reinduction at the premier institute.

While the NSUI on Tuesday observed a fast outside the gates of IIT demanding reinduction of the 73 expelled students, ABVP staged a demonstration at the same venue on Monday in support of the demand.

"Playing with the future of students will not be allowed under any circumstances," Haridwar district NSUI president Sachin Chaudhry said.

During its demonstration outside IIT gate, the ABVP shouted slogans against the senate which took the decision demanding its dissolution and reinduction of the expelled students.

Terming the IIT administration's decision as "unjust", ABVP's Garhwal division president Gaurav Sharma said the parishad will take the demands of the students to the Centre.

Readmission

Teh NSUI will also meet BJP's Haridwar MP Ramesh Pokhariyal Nishank in Delhi on July 16 and hand him a memorandum demanding readmission of the expelled students.

The BJP teachers' wing has also thrown its weight behind the expelled students with its district president Pradip Tyagi sending a memorandum to the Union Ministry of Human Resource demanding their reinduction.

"Most of the students are from poor families. The institute also had a role to play in their poor performance as it should have conducted special extra classes for underperforming students to help them score better which it did not," Tyagi said in the memorandum.

IIT Roorkee expelled as many as 73 students last week for scoring less than five CGPA in their second semester exams.

आईआईटी

एडमिशन के लिए इतनी कड़ी प्रतियोगिता, लेकिन सिलबेस का बोझ नहीं उठा पाते छात्र

पिछले सप्ताह आईआईटी-रुड़की के 73 छात्रों को खराब परफॉर्मेंस के चलते संस्थान से बर्खास्त कर दिया गया। इन छात्रों को बीटेक के पहले साल में 5 से कम सीजीपीए मिला था। आईआईटी संस्थानों में खराब रिजल्ट के चलते छात्रों को बाहर करने की यह पहली घटना नहीं है। यूजी ही नहीं, मास्टर लेवल पर भी अंडरपरफॉर्मिंग छात्रों को संस्थान से बर्खास्त करने के पहले भी कई उदाहरण हैं। सवाल यह है कि इतनी कड़ी प्रतियोगिता का सामना कर देश के सर्वश्रेष्ठ इंजीनियरिंग कॉलेजों में एडमिशन लेने वाले ये छात्र कोर्स के सिलेबस का बोझ क्यों नहीं उठा पाते? इसी समस्या और इससे निपटने के लिए आईआईटी के प्रयासों की चर्चा आज एजुकेशन भास्कर में...

दो बार पहले भी संस्थान से निकाले जा चुके हैं छात्र

आईआईटी-रुड़की के बर्खास्त छात्रों का फैसला वापस लेने की संभावना कम है, क्योंकि छात्र और उनके अभिभावकों ने एडमिशन के समय ही इससे संबंधित शपथ पत्र पर हस्ताक्षर कर दिए थे। पुराने आईआईटी संस्थानों में कई बार इस तरह की घटना हो चुकी है, लेकिन अधिकतर मामलों में फैसला वापस ले लिया गया। अब तक केवल दो बार ऐसा हुआ है जब छात्रों को संस्थान छोड़ने के लिए मजबूर होना पड़ा है। वर्ष 2006 में आईआईटी, खड़गपुर के करीब 20 छात्रों को बर्खास्त किया गया और अदालत में याचिका दायर करने के बाद भी छात्रों को राहत नहीं मिली। इसी तरह, वर्ष 2010 में आईआईटी, कानपुर के 14 यूजी छात्रों को बर्खास्त किया गया था। छात्रों ने राष्ट्रपति से मामले में हस्तक्षेप की अपील की, लेकिन उन्हें राहत नहीं मिली।

छात्रों का खराब परफॉर्मेंसः कोचिंग संस्थानों का टीचिंग पैटर्न, परिवार का दबाव हैं बड़े कारण

वर्ष 2014 में आईआईटी संस्थानों में एडमिशन पाने वाले करीब 45% छात्र कोचिंग संस्थानों के थे। लेकिन एक्सपर्ट्स की मानें तो कोचिंग संस्थान ही छात्रों के खराब परफॉर्मेंस के लिए सबसे ज्यादा जिम्मेदार हैं।

- कोचिंग संस्थानों का टीचिंग पैटर्न ऐसा है कि सारा ध्यान केवल एग्जाम क्लियर करने पर होता है। छात्र नॉलेज की बजाय स्कोर बढ़ाने के लिए मेहनत करते हैं। उन्हें कॉन्सेप्ट्स समझाने की गंभीर कोशिश नहीं होती और इसका खामियाजा उन्हें इंजीनियरिंग की पढ़ाई के दौरान उठाना पड़ता है।
- ज्यादा कंपीटिशन के चलते छात्र काफी पहले से ही आईआईटी प्रवेश परीक्षा की तैयारी में लग जाते हैं। दो-तीन साल तक स्कूल की पढ़ाई के साथ परीक्षा की तैयारी करने में ही उनकी सारी ऊर्जा खत्म हो जाती है और इंजीनियरिंग की पढ़ाई के दौरान वे अपना सर्वश्रेष्ठ परफॉर्मेंस नहीं दे पाते।
- पारिवारिक दबाव भी छात्रों के खराब परफॉर्मेंस का एक बड़ा कारण है। कई बार छात्र केवल परिवार की इच्छा पूरी करने के लिए आईआईटी की तैयारी करते हैं और प्रवेश लेते हैं। उनकी रुचि इंजीनियरिंग में नहीं होती और इसका असर रिजल्ट पर देखने को मिलता है।

उपायः सालभर के ब्रेक का विकल्प भी देते हैं संस्थान

आईआईटी-रुड़की में पिछले साल चार छात्रों को बर्खास्त किया गया था, लेकिन इस साल यह आंकड़ा 18 गुना बढ़ गया। इसी तरह, आईआईटी, कानपुर में भी हर साल औसतन 10 छात्रों को बर्खास्त किया जाता है और साल दर साल यह आंकड़ा बढ़ रहा है। आईआईटी संस्थान इसके लिए छात्रों को स्पेशल टीचिंग असिस्टेंस मुहैया कराते हैं, अभिभावकों की मदद लेते हैं और उनकी काउंसलिंग भी कराते हैं। आईआईटी, खड़गपुर में ऐसे छात्रों को एक साल का ब्रेक लेने का भी विकल्प मिलता है। इसके अलावा सेमेस्टर एग्जाम क्लियर करने के लिए शर्तों में भी छूट दी जाती है। आईआईटी संस्थानों का मानना है कि बर्खास्त करने का फैसला अंतिम विकल्प होता है और इससे पहले छात्रों को परफॉर्मेंस में सुधार के लिए सभी मौके दिए जाते हैं।

एग्जाम पैटर्न में बदलाव से सुधरेंगे हालात

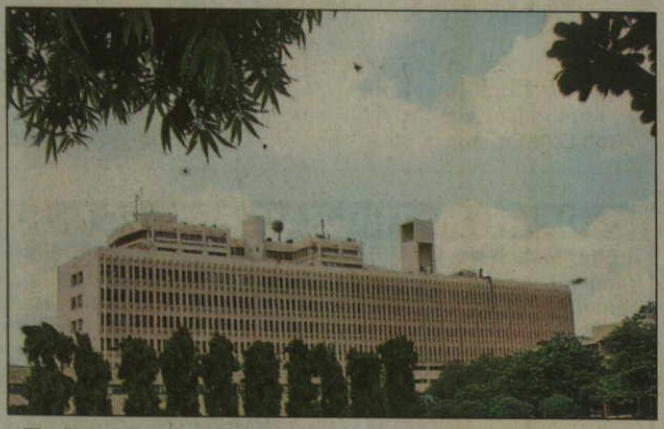
पिछले तीन-चार वर्षों में आईआईटी प्रवेश परीक्षा के पैटर्न में काफी बदलाव हुए हैं। जेईई मेन और एडवांस्ड के जरिये छात्रों को अलग-अलग स्तरों पर परखा जाता है, लेकिन विशेषज्ञों की राय में इसमें और सुधार की जरूरत है। एंट्रेंस एग्जाम में सब्जेक्टिव क्वेश्चन, केस स्टडी, साइकोलॉजिकल टेस्ट जैसे उपायों से छात्रों के टैलेंट का बेहतर आकलन हो सकता है। यह इसलिए भी जरूरी है क्योंकि देश की सबसे ज्यादा प्रतियोगिता वाली परीक्षा का पैटर्न पुराना है। हालांकि, वर्ष 2017 से जेईई-एडवांस्ड में एक सब्जेक्टिव पेपर जोड़ने की चर्चा चल रही है, लेकिन अभी अंतिम फैसला नहीं हुआ।

1 फीसदी छात्र भी नहीं चुने जाते आईआईटी में

आईआईटी में एडमिशन के लिए छात्रों को दो स्तरों पर कड़ी प्रतियोगिता का सामना करना पड़ता है। पहला स्तर जेईई मेन का होता है जिसमें इस साल करीब 14 लाख छात्र शामिल हुए थे। इस साल आईआईटी संस्थानों में 10,006 सीटों के आधार पर पहले चरण में हर सीट के लिए करीब 140 उम्मीदवार थे। इनमें से करीब 1 लाख 17 हजार छात्र जेईई-एडवांस्ड में शामिल हुए थे। इनमें से 26,456 छात्र क्वालिफाई हुए। यानी दूसरे स्तर पर हरेक सीट के लिए करीब पांच आवेदक थे। इस परीक्षा में हर साल करीब 99 फीसदी छात्र असफल होते हैं। एक फीसदी से भी कम छात्रों को आईआईटी में प्रवेश मिलता है।

HT.COM ND 15.07.2015 P-6

First round over, 645 seats vacant



■ The Indian Institute of Technology campus in Delhi FILE

Apoorva Puranik

A total of 34,000 seats across 84 centrally funded technical institutes, including IITs and NITs are up for grabs this year out of which, overall 7,335 remained vacant after round one.

IITs constitute 10,060 seats, of which admission to 9,415 seats was confirmed on Sunday. The remaining 645 seats will be added to the second round of counselling which begins on Monday, admission officials at IIT Bombay said. Last year, 650 out of 9711 IIT seats were vacant after round one.

Even top IITs like IIT Bombay and Delhi have 24 and 17 seats vacant respectively after round one, while IIT Kharagpur, which has the largest number of seats on offer at 1,343, has filled 1,252 of its seats.

"This is just the first round and we can only comment on the status and reasons behind vacancies after all rounds are done," said an admissions official at IIT Bombay.

This is the first time a joint allocation process is taking place for admission to these institutes.

ADMISSION OFFICIALS SAY THE REASON BEHIND THE VACANCIES CAN BE ASCERTAINED AFTER ALL ROUNDS OF ADMISSIONS ARE DONE

The decision to conduct this joint allocation was to arrest the problems of a large number of vacant seats across NITs and some IITs as students blocked seats for both institutions separately and finally chose one of the two on the last day, leaving one of the seats vacant.

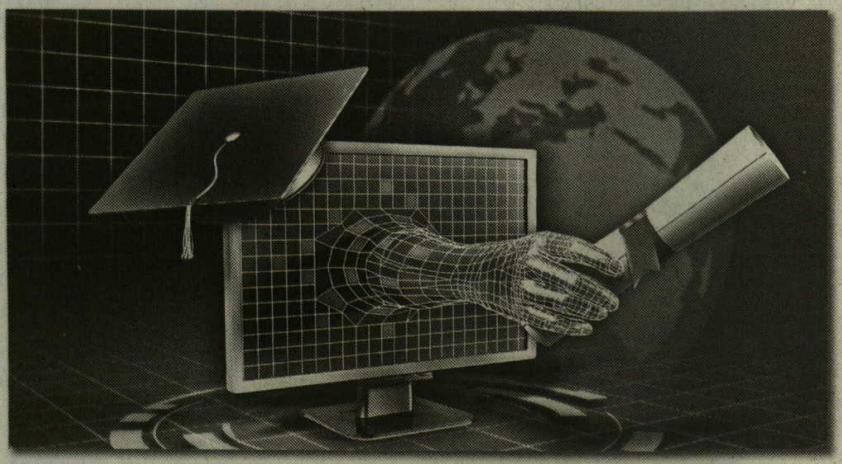
In this new process, students cannot block two seats and have to chose only one once it is allocated. If the student does not get his desired institute of course in round one, he can participate in the second round and then accept a seat of choice without blocking any of them.

Out of the four new IITs proposed, two – one in Tirupathi and one in Palakkad – are a part of the admission process this year and have managed to fill 115 and 96 seats respectively out of 120 seats each.

Financial Chronicle ND 15/07/2015 P-11

Network-enabled education not yet

Arun Nigavekar



IN NEED: India needs to start using blended processes of face-to-face and e-learning as a powerful option

FOR nearly a decade and a half, the ministry of human resources development has been advocating the need for upgrading the spread and quality of higher education. It has done so by first spreading the scope of higher education across the country by setting up the Indira Gandhi National Open University at the centre and similar open universities in every state. The open universities provide free entry, flow of subject-oriented study material (as mostly with printed textbooks earlier) and organised and structured interaction with teachers, finally leading to examination and the award of degrees. Such an approach has significantly raised the number of students pursuing higher education across the country.

Secondly, the ministry has been insisting that the quality of education should not be compromised at a time when network-enabled education has been going through a big transformation across the world over the past 15 years. Besides the development of fast and heavy memory chips in smaller sizes (that's where today's smartphones come into the picture), research & development in the delivery of education software has been defining the creation of effective courseware.

A still larger change has been occurring in the transmission of information through expanding broadband connectivity, resulting in speedier exchange of knowledge in a highly interconnected world. Sadly, against this backdrop, India has been struggling to adopt the gamechanging evolution across the world in the delivery of quality education.

The brilliant development of open courseware (OCW) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has changed the global approach to education. A lot more changes are happening with the creation of several other open courseware and open educational resource initiatives besides MIT's OCW. Rice's Connexions, Carnegie Mellon's open learning initiative, public health materials from Tufts University and Johns Hopkins, Vietnam's "Opencourseware" and the China open resources for education (CORE) stand out. In India, the seven Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) have collaboratively created the national program in technology-enabled learning, which consists of 129 web-based courses and 110 video-based courses, all in English and freely available. Many of these institutions are participating in the open courseware consortium, which is extending the reach and impact of open courseware by encouraging the adoption and adaptation of open educational materials around the world. The Hewlett Foundation has sponsored many of these initiatives.

Yet, MIT's OCW must be credited with the way many things started in higher education with a faculty committee. In the fall of 1999, MIT raised two questions, viz., how is the internet going to impact education, and what should MIT do about it? These two simple but focused questions changed the MIT's strategy, triggering a change in global attitude to education, mainly because the teacher community realised that the longer-term implications of OCW and similar initiatives could be really profound. The meta university concept is now slowly being accepted worldwide. The meta university is where much of higher education worldwide can be constructed or enhanced through resources made freely available to the global community. The boundaries between traditional universities and open universities are disappearing. Network-enabled education has particular significance today because open-education resources mean more than the course content; they include a variety of resources that support learning — interactive content, simulations, and hands-on activities. MIT now has iLabs that provide access to real laboratories over the internet.

The open education that we are talking about here is certainly competent in accessing, evaluating and communicating information. But with that kind of sharing, it can also develop competency among students to work with people in other countries and cultures.

Why then is Indian education in such a mess that it is unable to trigger a change in its delivery model? First, we need to blame the academicians and management of educational institutions for the sorry state of education at home. The academicians are still stuck in the past, resisting the impending change. There is a dichotomy in their behaviour. Being highly educated, they understand the change taking place worldwide and want their own children to participate in technology-driven global knowledge sharing. They also appreciate that a larger number of students in rural, semi-rural and smaller urban centres need network-triggered education to break the ceiling created by brick and mortar institutions. They are also clear that they must demolish the boundaries between face-to-face, open learning and technology-driven delivery processes. Yet, they simply shy away from using blended processes of face-to-face and e-learning as a powerful option.

Local hardware and software developers too have not made an earnest effort to meet the needs and aspirations of youths across the entire nation. True, a few major IT companies did make initial attempts, but they were mostly focussed on their indiviual corporate requirements. A few smaller companies were fully focussed on modern educational requirements, but never got the required funding or full support of academicians, with the result that most such efforts remain scattered and disorganised.

The bottomline is that India is still struggling to deliver quality education to its citizens. This is also reason why both the state and Union governments must put out a comprehensive national policy with a game changing operational structure to deliver quality education to the masses.

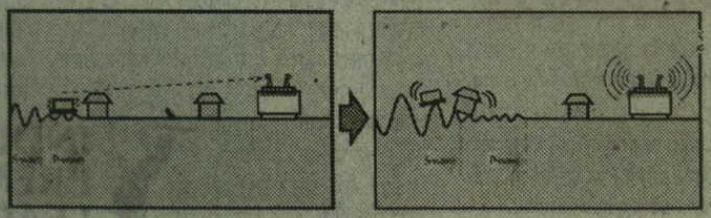
(The writer is a former chairman of UGC and former VC of University of Pune)

Rashtriya Sahara ND 15/07/2015 P-13

40 सेकेंड में मिलेगी भूकम्प की चेतावनी

देहरादून(एसएनबी)। प्रदेश में देश का पहला भूकंप चेतावनी सिस्टम स्थापित हो गया है। राज्य आपदा प्रबंधन एवं न्यूनीकरण केंद्र द्वारा इटली से आयातित यह तकनीक का पायलट प्रोजेक्ट के रूप में राज्य आपातकालीन परिचालन केंद्र में काम कर रही है। इटली की एक कंपनी द्वारा निर्मित सेंसरों पर आधारित यह प्रणाली जल्द ही पिथौरागढ़ में स्थापित करने का भी काम चल रहा है।

इस वक्त प्रदेश में सेंसरों के माध्यम से डाटा एकत्र कर कंपनी के इटली स्थित केंद्रीय सर्वर में भेजा जा रही है जहां से डीएमएमसी को ई-मेल के जरिए जानकारी मिलती है। अगर प्रदेश के अन्य स्थानों में भी सिस्टम स्थापित होता है तो डीएमएमसी अब अपना खुद का सर्वर स्थापित करेगा ताकि उसे इटली के सर्वर पर निर्भर न रहना पड़े। बता दें कि देश में 66 सक्रिय भ्रंश (फॉल्ट)हैं, जिनमें से 2400 किमी हिमालयी बेल्ट में 15 बड़े भ्रंश हैं। वैज्ञानिकों का मानना है कि उत्तराखंड में कभी भी 7 से 8 तीव्रता का भूकंप आ



- पांच व अधिक तीव्रता वाले भूकंपों की चेतावनी के लिए पायलेट प्रोजेक्ट
- देश का पहला भूकंप चेतावनी सिस्टम स्थापित
- पिथौरागढ़ जिले में भी होगा सिस्टम स्थापित

सकता है। अब तक की सभी भूकंप चेतावनी प्रणालियों के साथ यह दिक्कत आ रही है कि ये प्रणालियां भूकंप केकेंद्र से दूर के लोगों को तो सतर्क हो जाने के लिए कुछ समय दे देती हैं लेकिन भूकंप केकेंद्र के पास के लोगों को इन प्रणालियों से कोई खास मदद नहीं मिलती।

इटली की कंपनी स्पेस डायनामिक्स के चेतावनी सिस्टम की खासियत यह है कि यह पांच तीव्रता तक के आने वाले भूकंपों की चेतावनी एक से 40 सेकंड पहले दे सकता है। उत्तराखंड से पहले यह सिस्टम अमेरिका , इटली और जापान में स्थापित हो चुका है। राज्य आपदा प्रबंधन एवं न्यूनीकरण केंद्र के कार्यकारी निदेशक डॉ. पीयूष रौतेला का कहना है कि देश में स्थापित होने वाला यह पहली भूकंप चेतावनी प्रणाली होगी। अभी पायलट प्रोजेक्ट के रूप में इस प्रणाली को राज्य आपात कालीन परिचालन केंद्र व पिथौरागढ़ में स्थापित किया जा रहा है।

अगर इसके नतीजे बेहतर आते हैं तो डीएमएमसी प्रदेश के अन्य भूकंप के प्रति संवेदनशील क्षेत्रों में सिस्टम स्थापित करेगा। स्पेस डायनामिक्स सिस्टम के चेतावनी सिस्टम से आवाज के जरिए चेतावनी दी जाती है जिसे साइरन व सार्वजनिक घोषणा प्रणाली से जोड़ जाता है। इसकी प्रणावी सेल फोन व इंटरनेट के जरिए दृश्य माध्यम की चेतावनी भी भेजती है। इस सिस्टम की खासियत यह है कि यह पर्यावरण की भूकंप का भ्रम देने वाली हलचलों व छोटे यानी कम तीव्रता वाले भूकंपों को नजर अंदाज कर देती है। बता दें कि देश मे भूकंप चेतावनी प्रणाली पर बहुत सी शोध परियोजनाएं चल रही हैं। आईआईटी रुड़की भी वर्ष 2013 से सेंसर पर आधारित भूकंप चेतावनी प्रणाली परियोजना पर काम कर रहा है।

केंद्रीय पृथ्वी विज्ञान मंत्रालय के तहत आईआईटी रुड़की के प्रो. अशोक माथुर के नेतृत्व वैज्ञानिकों की टीम भी उत्तराखंड में भूकंप की पूर्व चेतावनी प्रणाली विकसित करने की परियोजना पर काम कर रही है। यह टीम अब तक प्रदेश में 58 सेंसर लगा चुकी है और 42 और सेंसर लगा रही है।

The Pros and Cons of PM Modi's Silence

http://www.ndtv.com/opinion/the-pros-and-cons-of-pm-modis-silence-781382

One of the most famous statements in all of modern philosophy must surely be: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent." What does silence tell us about the relationship between speech, truth and 'reality'? This foundational question was raised by Ludwig Wittgenstein in the resounding conclusion to the only book, the slim 75-page *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (*TLP*, 1921), that he published in his lifetime.

When should one speak? Why should one 'be silent'? What are the things about which one 'cannot speak'?

The answer to these profound Wittgensteinian queries remains vexed. Yet, if philosophy has any value at all, it is that it is opens up a space for questioning. Wittgenstein might have agreed. A trained aeronautical engineer, he once asked: Why should philosophy be the same in the age of airplanes as when people travelled by coach?

Quite. So what does silence signify in the age of Twitter?

Let me then try and apply Wittgenstein's insights here to a practical issue that has recently come to the fore in our country - namely, the Prime Minister's silence in the wake of several political controversies that have arisen of late. This perceived inaction has provoked considerable reaction. A vast majority of our citizenry are quietly puzzled by it while others, especially in the opposition and media, have vociferously demand that the PM 'must speak'. Well, must he?

So far, the simple argument has been that it is entirely up to him. The PM, after all, cannot pronounce on 'each and every matter'. He carries the weight of grave responsibilities and, in any case, he has been away, somewhat literally, from the 'scene of the crime.'

The counter-argument is that, unlike his predecessor (hard to imagine a 'Manmohan-ki-Baat), this PM is a great communicator. He tweets often, and his radio broadcasts, where he frankly expresses apprehensions as well as aspirations, go out to the nation every month. Also, he promised his electorate a Bharat that is 'swacch' in moral as well as material terms. Thus, his present silence on 'Lalit-gate', 'Vyapam' and other political challenges is problematic.

Wittgenstein would dismiss both these perspectives as 'non-sense' - or not making logical sense.

Each side, Wittgenstein would likely say, is engaged in looking at the frame rather than the picture. Forget the externals and focus on the facts, he'd say. Interpretations of motive are immaterial. In the 'picture theory of meaning' that Wittgenstein advances in the *TLP*, a speaker is obligated to compare the words he utters with the 'reality' out there. If what he says corresponds accurately to what he sees, if each 'fact' he presents can be 'verified', he should speak. Otherwise, he should remain steadfastly silent.

So: 'When should one speak?' Answer: When one sees the picture clearly and *only* then. And: 'Why should one 'be silent'?' Because, once again, silence is the *only* option when one cannot decipher the real picture.

On the *TLP* view, then, the PM should *not* speak unless he has a clear, verifiable picture of the facts that he can state

without equivocation. His 'freedom of speech' is, so to speak, restricted by what he does not know.

On the other hand, if he does have a clear view, equally, he *must* speak and unambiguously describe the picture *as it is*, deleting nothing and adding nothing. It would amount to a failure of reason itself not to do so.

When one describes the unvarnished truth, reason triumphs and silence loses its point. The only justification, then, for the PM to currently withhold speech, on the *TLP* analysis, is on the grounds that he is confused or does not have access to the true picture. If this is so, he could choose to state this unflinchingly in his 'Mann-ki-Baat', for example - and the electorate would doubtless respect him greatly for it. However, no form of self-interest, including an altruistic regard for the overall public good would, according to the Wittgenstein of the *TLP*, comprise good reasons for the PM's not speaking out if he actually knows the truth.

Now, Wittgenstein's perspective, we note, is quite radically different from, say, the far more sociable warning: *satyam bruyaat, priyam bruyaat, ma bruyaat satyam apriyam* (speak the truth, speak the pleasing truth, but do not utter the unpleasant truth).

As this savvy Sanskrit *sloka*, sometimes attributed to Chanakya, reveals, there appears little place for cultural nuance in Wittgenstein's paradigm in *TLP*, which does not sufficiently take the two-way social interactions of speakers and hearers into account. The fact is, the 'truth' is too complex ever to be captured in its totality and this applies to all statements - whether made by whistle-blowers, media-persons, party-spokespersons, respected judges, Bollywood stars, ordinary citizens like you or me, or by the highest executive authorities in the land.

And at this point, the third and final question I asked at the start comes into view: 'What are the matters about which one cannot speak?' Here, I turn to the *Philosophical Investigations* (*PI*, 1953), published a couple of years after his death, in which Wittgenstein puts in doubt the entire edifice of logic-based truth that he had erected in *TLP*. There, Wittgenstein mystically maintained that some things were impossible to ever put into language. They were 'beyond logic' as it were. However, in the *PI*, Wittgenstein argues that instead of any 'pure' language that conveys absolute 'truth', all humans simply play a myriad 'language games' in social space, such as telling stories, reporting events, making jokes, asking, thanking, praying etc. The whole of language is woven from these countless activities.

Cultural context is crucial in language-games, as are rules and 'winning'. So how would this apply to 'not speaking'? Well, the 'cannot speak' clause would differ according to the specific language-game being played. On Twitter, for example, the rule is that one falls silent after one has used up one's quota of 140 characters. One cannot say more and this rule applies universally. Even if you are one of the most 'followed' people in the world, as is our PM, you are governed by the rules of the game as much as the humblest 'Twitterer'. In a political speech, you fall silent after your allotted hour; in Parliamentary debates, the right to speak is regulated by the Speaker and so forth.

What you 'win' in most such public rhetorical games is approval - and 'followers', maybe even 'bhakts'. Politicians, in particular, are admirable masters of many language games. Our present PM won an unprecedented majority because he was able to convey to millions an inspiring vision of India. But since context is important in language-games, when the context changes, so must one's strategies.

In India, where owing to endemic deprivations, millions remain voiceless, it is especially important that faith in the political process is reaffirmed in times of doubt and public anxiety. The present is perhaps one such moment where we are reminded that, in contrast to the all-too-familiar silence of India's disenfranchised, the silence of the lambs, political silence is, almost by definition, the silence of power. If the PM does not speak, how can the powerless ever hope to do

so?

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