Newspaper Clips
June 23, 2015

Economic Times ND
23/06/2015   P-2

IIT-Kharagpur to Offer MBBS Courses by '17

NEW DELHI: IIT-Kharagpur would be the first engineering institute in India to venture into medical education, an official said. The hospital-cum-medical college is likely to become operational by 2017, the official said. The hospital will have 400 beds in the first phase, while another 750 beds will be added gradually. "The government has already sanctioned ₹230 crore. Construction will start soon and is likely to be completed within 26 months." – IANS

Dainik Jagran ND 23/06/2015   P-9

अब डॉक्टर भी तैयार करेगा आइआइटी खड़गपुर

राज्य ब्यूरो, कोलकाता : इंजीनियरिंग की पढ़ाई के लिए दुनिया भर में विख्यात भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान (आइआइटी) खड़गपुर अब डॉक्टर्स भी तैयार करेगा। संस्थान जल्द ही एमबीबीएस पाठ्यक्रमों की पढ़ाई शुरू करने वाला है।

आइआइटी परिसर के किनारे तीन एकड़ भूखंड में 400 शय्याओं (बेड) वाला सुपर स्पेशलियटी डा. बीसी राय चिकित्सा विज्ञान एवं अनुसंधान संस्थान 2017 के अंत तक बन कर तैयार हो जाएगा। खड़गपुर ऐसा करने वाला आइआइटी प्रणाली का पहला संस्थान बनेगा।

आइआइटी खड़गपुर के निदेशक पार्थ प्रतीम चक्रवर्ती ने सोमवार को बताया कि केंद्र सरकार से इस बाबत 230 करोड़ के अनुदान को मंजूरी मिल चुकी है। मेडिकल काउंसिल ऑफ इंडिया भी एमबीबीएस जैसे अंडर ग्रेजुएट पाठ्यक्रमों के लिए अनुमति दे चुका है। जल्द ही चिकित्सा विज्ञान एवं अनुसंधान संस्थान का निर्माण शुरू हो जाएगा और 26 महीनों में काम पूरा हो जाएगा। उन्होंने कहा, हमारा संस्थान शिक्षा-अनुसंधान के क्षेत्र में इंजीनियरिंग एवं चिकित्सा को साथ लेकर आएगा। चक्रवर्ती ने कहा, उपग्रह केंद्रों (सेटेलाइट सेंटर्स) और अन्य अस्पतालों के माध्यम से ज्यादा से ज्यादा मरीजों का इलाज किया जाएगा। हम रिमोट डायग्नॉस्टिक्स, टेलीमेडिसिन, टेलीरेडियोलॉजी सरीखी तकनीक के इस्तेमाल की योजना बना रहे हैं। बायोमेडिकल, क्लिनिकल, ट्रांसलेशनल रिसर्च पर भी काम किया जाएगा। दवाओं की डिजाइन और उनकी डिलीवरी पर भी शोध होगा। साथ ही पैरामेडिक, नर्सिंग ट्रेनिंग फेसिलिटी व बायोमेडिकल इनोवेशन इकाई लगाने

नई शुरुआत

- संस्थान में जल्द शुरू होंगे एमबीबीएस के पाठ्यक्रम
- 2017 तक बन जाएगा चिकित्सा विज्ञान एवं अनुसंधान संस्थान
- 400 बेड वाले संस्थान के लिए केंद्र ने दिया है 230 करोड़ का अनुदान

2001 से चिकित्सा क्षेत्र में सक्रिय है संस्थान

आइआइटी खड़गपुर 2001 से ही स्कूल ऑफ मेडिकल साइंस एंड टेक्नालॉजी चला रहा है, जो मेडिकल साइंस एंड टेक्नालॉजी में तीन साल का पोस्ट ग्रेजुएट कोर्स करवाता है। इसकी फैकल्टी, कर्मचारियों और छात्रों के लिए कैंपस में 32 बेड का बीसी रॉय टेक्नोलॉजी अस्पताल मौजूद है, जिसमें आइसीयू और आइसोलेशन वार्ड भी है।

का प्रस्ताव भी रखा गया है। अगले चरण में अस्पताल को 750 बेड से लैस किए जाने की योजना है। उन्होंने कहा, चिकित्सा संस्थान को अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर जोड़ने के लिए अमेरिका के बाल्टीमोर स्थित जॉन हॉप्किन्स यूनिवर्सिटी और लंदन के इंपीरियल कॉलेज आदि से सहयोग ले रहे हैं।

Economic Times ND 23/06/2015   p-10

Now, IITs Become Fertile Ground for Faculty Startups

New JVs emerge as teachers team up with students to start companies while some go it alone; investors warm up to faculty-led startups

**Rica Bhattacharyya &
Anumeha Chaturvedi**

Mumbai | New Delhi: A new wave of startups are springing up across the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) with faculty members turning entrepreneurs. Dozens of faculty members from IITs in Bombay, Delhi, Madras, Kharagpur and Hyderabad are now working on startups either by themselves or collaboratively with students.

Ravikrishnan Elangovan (33), joined IIT Delhi's department of biochemical engineering and biotechnology as assistant professor in 2010. He met Vivekanandan Perumal and Shalini Gupta, both of whom had also just joined the institute as faculty members after their post-doctoral degrees from the US. The trio wanted to develop a solution for typhoid diagnosis, put up a proposal with the department of biotechnology in 2013 and got funded.

Faculty floating new companies is an integral part of the academia-entrepreneurship intersection in the US, especially in places like Stanford and MIT. But the trend is slowly gaining momentum here.

Nineteen startups with faculty as shareholders were founded in 2014-15 in IIT Madras, as compared to 11 such companies in 2013-14. "We are witnessing an increasing trend of joint collaboration between faculty members and their current and graduated students, with research being translated into commercial ventures/companies," says Tamaswati Ghosh, CEO, IITM Incubation Cell.

IIT Madras has so far spawned 16 startups that have been founded or co-founded by faculty. Thirty of the 89 tech start-ups birthed at the institute have faculty members as founders or minority shareholders. Planys Tech, Air OK Tech, Daksha Imaging, Yrs Intuitions are some examples.

IIT-M has spawned 16 startups founded or co-founded by faculty; 40% startups incubated at IIT-B's SINE are faculty-student projects

iKen Solutions by RM Sonar from School of Management, Zeus Numerix by GR Shevere from Department of Aerospace Engineering and Vegayan Systems by Girish Saraf are some examples of faculty-promoted start-ups that graduated out of SINE. Sensibol, NanoSniff Technologies and kWatt Solutions are among such companies currently being incubated at SINE.

"There has been an increase in faculty interest in entrepreneurship ventures,"

About 40% of startups incubated at IIT Bombay's Society for Innovation & Entrepreneurship are faculty-student projects, says Milind Atrey, professor-in-charge, SINE.

says PVM Rao, professor, mechanical engineering department of IIT Delhi.

Investors find it easier to trust faculty-led start-ups. They also play a key role in creating a culture of entrepreneurship, encouraging more students to take the same route. "The collaborative entrepreneurial venture provides a space for students and faculty to combine their perspectives, lean on each other, and build something larger than what would otherwise be possible by either party," says Anil Prabhakar, professor, IIT Madras, department of electrical engineering. He is also the founder of Unilumen Photonics and co-founder of Enability Foundation For Rehabilitation.

At IIT Kharagpur, though the first such registration for a joint venture between a faculty member and a student happened way back in 2007, such instances have gained momentum only recently. "For the past two to three years, we're getting registrations from three to four such companies each year," says PP Das, head of Rajendra Mishra School of Engineering Entrepreneurship at IIT Kharagpur. One more such company — in the Internet security business — is likely to get registered next month.

"Research can't be taken to people unless it's entrepreneurial," says Das. "Most of these ventures are in information and communication technology, education through IT, or making educational materials or software development consulting. The remaining are in healthcare or in biotechnology."

Even the newer IITs are witnessing a similar trend. IIT Hyderabad has two successful startups which are joint ventures between students and faculty — Plianto Technologies and AR solutions. A few more are in pipeline, says Sobhan Babu, professor, department of computer science and engineering at IIT Hyderabad and founder of Plianto Technologies.

The Startup Route

IIT Bombay – About **40%** of the SINE-incubated companies are mostly student-faculty projects

IIT Madras – In 2014-15 so far, **19** companies where faculty is involved were incubated versus **11** in 2013-14

**IIT Kharagpur** – Currently has a total of **10** faculty ventures

IIT Hyderabad – Two startups are joint ventures between students and faculty

> We are witnessing an increasing trend of joint collaboration between faculty members and their current and graduated students, with research being translated into commercial ventures/companies"
> **TAMASWATI GHOSH**
> CEO, IITM INCUBATION CELL

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स्टूडेंट्स के साथ IIT के फैकल्टी मेंबर्स भी बन रहे आंत्रप्रेन्योर

IIT बॉम्बे, दिल्ली, मद्रास और खड़गपुर के दर्जनों फैकल्टी खुद या स्टूडेंट्स के साथ मिलकर स्टार्टअप्स पर काम कर रहे हैं
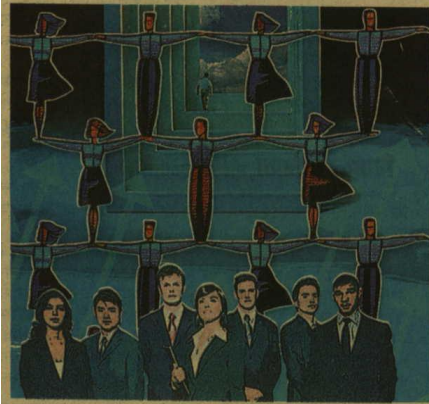
[रीका भट्टाचार्य & अनुमेहा भट्टाचार्य | नई दिल्ली/मुंबई]

आईआईटी के टीचर अब आंत्रप्रेन्योर बन रहे हैं। आईआईटी बॉम्बे, दिल्ली, मद्रास, खड़गपुर और हैदराबाद के दर्जनों फैकल्टी मेंबर्स खुद या फिर स्टूडेंट्स के साथ मिलकर स्टार्टअप्स पर काम कर रहे हैं।

33 साल के रविकृष्णन एलांगोवन ने 2010 में आईआईटी दिल्ली के बायोकेमिकल इंजीनियरिंग और बायोटेक्नोलॉजी डिवीजन में असिस्टेंट प्रोफेसर के तौर पर ज्वाइन किया था। वहां उनकी मुलाकात विवेकानंद पेरूमल और शालिनी गुप्ता से हुई। इन दोनों ने भी हाल ही में फैकल्टी मेंबर के तौर पर इंस्टीट्यूट ज्वाइन किया था। तीनों मिलकर टाइफाइड डायग्नोसिस के लिए सॉल्यूशन डिवेलप करना चाहते थे।

इन लोगों ने 2013 में बायोटेक्नोलॉजी डिपार्टमेंट को इस बाबत प्रस्ताव भेजा और उन्हें इसके लिए फंडिंग भी मिल गई। अमेरिका में (खासतौर पर स्टैनफोर्ड और एमआईटी में) फैकल्टी द्वारा नई कंपनियां बनाने का चलन आम है। हालांकि, भारत में भी यह ट्रेंड धीरे-धीरे रफ्तार पकड़ रहा है। 2014-15 के दौरान आईआईटी मद्रास में 19 ऐसे

स्टार्टअप्स खड़ी हुईं, जिनमें फैकल्टी मेंबर्स शेयरहोल्डर थे। 2013-14 में ऐसी कंपनियों की संख्या 11 रही। आईआईटीएम इनक्यूबेशन सेल की सीईओ डॉ तमस्वति घोष ने बताया, 'फैकल्टी मेंबर्स और उनके मौजूदा स्टूडेंट्स के बीच आंत्रप्रेन्योरशिप के लिए मिलकर काम करने का ट्रेंड लगातार बढ़ता जा रहा है।'

रिसर्च कमर्शियल वेंचर या कंपनियों में बदल रही है। आईआईटी मद्रास में 89 में से 30 टेक स्टार्टअप्स ऐसी थीं, जिनमें इंस्टीट्यूट के फैकल्टी मेंबर्स फाउंडर या माइनॉरिटी शेयरहोल्डर थे। प्लेनीज टेक, एयर ओके टेक, दक्ष इमेजिंग, वाईआरएस इंट्यूशंस ऐसी स्टार्टअप्स में शामिल हैं। आईआईटी बॉम्बे की इकाई एसआईएनई के प्रोफेसर-इन-चार्ज मिलिंद के मुताबिक, आईआईटी बॉम्बे की सोसायटी फॉर इनोवेशन एंड आंत्रप्रेन्योरशिप से जुड़ी 40 फीसदी स्टार्टअप्स में फैकल्टी और स्टूडेंट्स मिलकर काम कर रहे हैं।

सोसायटी फॉर इनोवेशन एंड आंत्रप्रेन्योरशिप जिन प्रोजेक्ट्स को मदद कर रही है, उनमें सेंसिबोल, नैनोस्निफ टेक्नोलॉजीज और केवॉट सॉल्यूशंस जैसी कंपनियां शामिल

हैं। आईआईटी दिल्ली में मेकेनिकल इंजीनियरिंग डिपार्टमेंट के प्रोफेसर पी वी एम राव ने बताया, 'फैकल्टी मेंबर्स में आंत्रप्रेन्योरशिप वेंचर को लेकर दिलचस्पी बढ़ी है।'

दरअसल, इनवेस्टर्स के लिए फैकल्टी की अगुवाई वाले स्टार्टअप्स पर भरोसा करना आसान होता है। वे आंत्रप्रेन्योरशिप की संस्कृति बनाने में भी अहम रोल निभाते हैं और इससे ज्यादा से ज्यादा स्टूडेंट्स को इस रास्ते पर चलने के लिए प्रोत्साहन मिलता है।

आईआईटी मद्रास में इलेक्ट्रिकल इंजीनियरिंग के प्रोफेसर अनिल प्रभाकर कहते हैं, 'स्टूडेंट्स और फैकल्टी के ज्वाइंट आंत्रप्रेन्योरशिप के कारण दोनों के नजरिए के लिए गुंजाइश बनती है और इसमें किसी एक पक्ष के बजाय दोनों पक्षों की राय सामने आने पर ज्यादा बेहतर रिजल्ट की संभावना बनती है।'

वह यूनिल्युमेन फोटोनिक्स प्राइवेट लिमिटेड के फाउंडर और इनएबिलिटी फाउंडेशन फॉर रिहैबिलिटेशन के को-फाउंडर भी हैं। आईआईटी खड़गपुर में इस तरह की शुरुआत 2007 में ही हो गई थी, लेकिन इसके ट्रेंड ने हाल में ही रफ्तार पकड़ी है।

Hindu ND 23/06/2015 P-13

IIT-Roorkee circular declared yoga camp compulsory for students

Mohammed Ali

MEERUT: The Modi government had claimed that participation in the International Day of Yoga celebrations was voluntary but a document which appears to be the circular issued by IIT Roorkee declared its week-long yoga camp to be "compulsory" and forced students to attend it.

After the controversy over the purported circular broke on Monday, the institution, denied issuing any circular making attendance in the yoga camp mandatory.

A copy of the circular which is on the official letter head and has the signature of the Dean of the Students Welfare is with *The Hindu*.

"All the students of IIT Roorkee summer hostels are hereby directed to compulsorily attend one week Yoga camp from June 18, 2015 to June 24, 2015. Attendance in

Attendance will be recorded every day, said order

the yoga camp is mandatory and will be recorded on the spot every day," says the circular. *The Hindu* has not verified the letter which was made available to it by a student.

But DSW Dinesh Kumar Nauriyal told the media that no such decision was taken by the institute nor was there any circular from the Ministry of Human Resource.

"However, my office did ask 2000-2,500 students staying in the summer hostels to participate in the camp," Mr. Nauriyal said.

Virat Vaibhav ND 23/06/2015 P-8

योग शिविर में भाग लेना अनिवार्य नहीं : आईआईटी डीन

देहरादून। आईआईटी रूड़की द्वारा एक अधिसूचना जारी कर छात्रों के लिए एक सप्ताह के योग शिविर में भाग लेना अनिवार्य करने संबंधी खबरों के बीच, संस्थान के प्रबंधन ने सोमवार को कहा कि इस तरह का कोई सर्कुलर जारी नहीं हुआ है। आईआईटी रूड़की डीन (छात्र कल्याण) दिनेश कुमार नौरियाल ने फोन पर कहा, न तो संस्थान प्रशासन ने ऐसा कोई फैसला किया और ना ही इस संबंध में मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय ने कोई सर्कुलर जारी किया। हालांकि मेरे कार्यालय की तरफ से संस्थान के समर हॉस्टलों में रह रहे करीब दो से ढाई हजार छात्रों से इस अनूठी पहल को सफल बनाने के लिए शिविर में भाग लेने के लिए कहा गया। उन्होंने कहा कि छात्रों के शारीरिक एवं मानसिक स्वास्थ्य तथा कार्यक्रम की सफलता को ध्यान में रखते हुए सभी छात्रों से शिविर में भाग लेने के लिए कहा गया लेकिन यह उनपर बाध्यकारी नहीं था। जिन छात्रों को किसी कारण शिविर में शामिल होने में समस्याएं थीं, उन्हें छूट दी गई। एक उदाहरण का हवाला देते हुए उन्होंने कहा कि कई मुस्लिम छात्रों ने जब यह कहा कि रमजान का महीना होने के कारण वह रोजे से होंगे, ऐसे में योग करने से उन्हें पसीना आएगा और प्यास बढ़ेगी, जो उनके लिए ठीक नहीं होगा, तो उन्हें शिविर में शामिल होने से छूट दी गई। उन्होंने कहा कि इसी तरह से, गर्मियों की छुट्टियों में अपने घर गए छात्रों को शिविर से छूट मिल गई। यह पूछे जाने पर कि क्या उन्हें योग शिविर को लेकर छात्रों के किसी विरोध का पता चला है उन्होंने कहा कि उन्हें इस संबंध में कोई शिकायत नहीं मिली है।

एक ही गांव के 18 ने की आईआईटी परीक्षा पास

गया (नेदु)। बिहार के एक गांव के 18 बच्चों ने आईआईटी की प्रवेश परीक्षा में जगह बनाई है। इस गांव के करीब दस बच्चे पिछले कई सालों से आईआईटी की परीक्षा पास करके इस गांव का नाम रोशन कर रहे हैं।

दक्षिण बिहार के गया स्थित बुनकरों के एक गांव से 18 बच्चे आईआईटी में प्रवेश पाने में सफल हुए हैं। पहली बार इस गांव से एक लड़की भी आईआईटी परीक्षा में सफल हुई है। 10,000 लोगों के इस गांव में ज्यादातर सभी घरों में हथकरघा का काम होता है।

इनमें से एक छात्र राहुल कुमार ने बताया कि गांव में पढ़ाई के लिए बहुत अच्छा माहौल है। कोई परेशानी होने पर सभी एक-दूसरे की मदद करते हैं। जिन बच्चों ने पहले आईआईटी की

बिहार का गांव

- इस गांव से हर साल परीक्षा पास करते हैं बच्चे
- इस बार एक लड़की भी हुई है परीक्षा में सफल

परीक्षा पास की, वे भी गांव आते हैं और बच्चों को सिखाते हैं। इसके लिए एक एनजीओ भी काम कर रहा है। ऐसा लगता है कि आईआईटी की परीक्षा में प्रवेश पाना इस गांव के बच्चों की परंपरा बन गया है।

NELSON MANDELA

Pratapgarh Brothers

They beat great odds to get into IIT,
India needs many more such success stories

Amidst news reports of impropriety and cronyism, the story of two impoverished Dalit siblings from an Uttar Pradesh village beating great odds to get into IIT is inspirational. Brijesh and Raju Saroj braved years of discrimination to become role models. Their success raises a question: Why aren't there many more such stories? Access to quality education is surely the most effective instrument of social and economic mobility. If India is an underachiever here, the blame lies in the casual manner with which governments treat education. A change can come about only when education is treated with seriousness.

Education ministries have over time become a zone of ideological battles. Consequently, it has become a highly politicised area where appointments and transfers seem to matter more than learning outcomes. The situation is compounded when the portfolio is sometimes handed to political lightweights, signalling the low priority it has for governments. The change has to start at the top.

At present, we have more children in schools than ever before. The debate, however, misses the wood for the trees. Debates about public versus private schools are irrelevant. The sheer diversity of India and the different ways in which states have evolved defies a standard answer. The focus instead should be on the poor learning outcomes. Cross-country tests of learning proficiency such as PISA suggest the typical Indian student is poorly placed. The focus in India, therefore, should be on improving education systems. Merely throwing money at it will not do. Education ministries need to make the entire system accountable. It is cruel to put children through school, but not equip them with adequate skills. It can only lead to frustration and social problems.

For a developing country, India's higher education system was once a standout feature. Today, higher education leaves a lot to be desired. Micromanagement by governments has allowed a culture of mediocrity to flourish. Even IITs do not come close to matching any of the world's top institutions. An early gain has been frittered away. HRD minister Smriti Irani should begin improving the situation by adopting a hands-off policy. The ministry can be most useful only when it sets overarching goals. Nurturing human capital is a prerequisite for durable prosperity. If that indeed is the aim of political parties, they will give education the importance it deserves.

Economic Times Hindi ND 23.06.15 P-1

करोड़ रुपये पर भी नहीं टिक रहे IIT कोचिंग देने वाले

कोटा में करोड़ों की सैलरी के बावजूद IIT टीचर्स को बनाए रखना मुश्किल

[वरुणी खोसला | नई दिल्ली]

आईआईटी के लिए कोचिंग क्लास लेने वाले कई टीचरों की सैलरी अब करोड़ से ज्यादा हो गई है। इंजीनियरिंग के इन प्रीमियर संस्थानों के एंट्रेंस टेस्ट से जुड़े कोचिंग संस्थानों में 'करोड़पति' टीचरों की संख्या तेजी से बढ़ रही है।

कोटा के ऐसे ही एक कोचिंग संस्थान बंसल क्लासेज के मैनेजर एम वी हरिकिशन ने बताया, 'हमारे पास 6 करोड़पति फैकल्टी मेंबर्स हैं। हालांकि, हमारे यहां हर स्टाफ तभी तक है, जब तक उसे अगला बेस्ट ऑफर नहीं मिल जाता। टीचरों की 'सेंधमारी' का ट्रेंड काफी हावी है।' उनके मुताबिक, कोटा और दिल्ली में ऐसे बेहतर शिक्षकों की मांग काफी ज्यादा है। उन्होंने बताया, 'हमारे पास 10 साल से ज्यादा के अनुभव वाले फैकल्टी मेंबर्स हैं, जिनकी सैलरी 1.5-2 करोड़ रुपये है।' बंसल क्लासेज साल में तीन बार टीचरों की भर्ती करता है। टीचरों के ज्वाइन करने के 8-10 महीने के
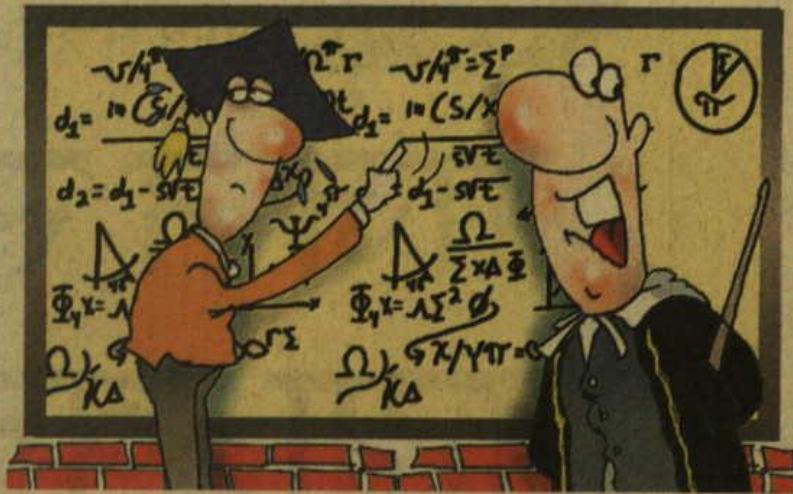
भीतर उनकी सैलरी तीन से चार गुना बढ़ जाती है। यहां तक कि दो साल पहले कुछ शिक्षक ही एक करोड़ प्लस सैलरी के ब्रैकेट में थे। एलेन करियर इंस्टीट्यूट में फैकल्टी मेंबर सोनल रजोरा के मुताबिक, 'अभी सिर्फ कोटा में ऐसे 15-20 फैकल्टी मेंबर हैं, जिन्हें एक करोड़ से ज्यादा सैलरी मिलती है। इसके बाद मुंबई, दिल्ली, कानपुर और पटना जैसे अहम सेंटर हैं, जहां फैकल्टी को इससे भी ज्यादा सैलरी मिलती है।' कोचिंग इंडस्ट्री से जुड़े एक और सूत्र ने बताया, 'कुछ ऐसे भी शिक्षक हैं, जो 2 करोड़ कमा रहे हैं।' इसके उलट, आईआईटी प्रोफेसरों की सैलरी 4 लाख के आसपास से शुरू होती है और यह 10 लाख रुपये तक जा सकती है। हालांकि, इसमें बाकी भत्ते शामिल नहीं होते। कोचिंग के

एक और जाने-माने संस्थान फिट जी दिल्ली के डायरेक्टर आर एल त्रिखा ने बताया, 'कोचिंग संस्थानों में सैलरी में औसतन बढ़ोतरी 10 से 50 फीसदी होती है, जबकि उम्दा परफॉर्म करने वालों की सैलरी में 100 फीसदी तक का इजाफा होता है।' ऐसे ही एक कोचिंग इंस्टीट्यूट करियर प्वाइंट के फाउंडर डायरेक्टर प्रमोद माहेश्वरी ने बताया, 'कोटा आईआईटी कोचिंग का मक्का है। कोटा के कुछ संस्थान 1 करोड़ सैलरी दे रहे हैं। प्रतिभाशाली टीचरों की हमेशा कमी रहती है। पिछले एक दशक में शिक्षकों की सैलरी में 5-7 गुना बढ़ोतरी हुई है।' करियर प्वाइंट स्टॉक मार्केट में भी लिस्टेड है और मार्च 2015 को खत्म तिमाही में उसका नेट प्रॉफिट 5.82 करोड़ रुपये रहा।

IISc gets first of three distinguished chairs

Bengaluru, June 23, 2015, DHNS:

http://www.deccanherald.com/content/485163/iisc-gets-first-three-distinguished.html

The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) is all set to get three distinguished chair positions all thanks to the generosity of Infosys co-founder Kris Gopalakrishnan and his wife Sudha Gopalakrishnan.

A corpus of Rs 10 crore will be entrusted to set up each Chair through the couple's charitable trust, the Pratiksha Trust. The first of these three chairs was launched on Monday and will be called the 'K Vaidyanathan Distinguished Chair', after Sudha Gopalakrishnan's father.

Prof Shihab Shamma from the Institute of Systems Research, the University of Maryland, College Park, USA, will be the first recipient of the chaired professorship.

A release from the IISc described Shamma as a "distinguished electrical engineer with stellar contributions and expertise in neuromorphic computing, neural signal processing, representation of speech signals in the brain, and neuromorphic engineering".

The release further stated that the purpose of these three chair professorships was to bring distinguished researchers in the areas of Computational Neuroscience, Machine Learning, Data Science, and Neuromorphic Engineering and Computing to the IISc campus for collaborative research interactions, besides fostering intense research collaboration between world-renowned researchers and the IISc.

Kris Gopalakrishnan said, "I hope the launching of these distinguished chair positions will help push the frontiers in these areas. It would be excellent if the collaborations lead to highly creative new computing architectures and algorithms inspired by the functioning of the brain."

Pratiksha Trust has also endowed three similar chairs at IIT Madras.

IISc alumni meet

The IISc will organise an Alumni Global Conference between June 25 and June 28 at its campus. Previous editions of the conference have been held at Santa Clara, California, in 2007, and in Chicago in 2013.

The theme of the event is 'Science for Society' with primary focus on the contribution of IISc to the development of the nation. A number of well-known personalities such as Bharat Ratna Prof C N R Rao, former CEO of Infosys Technologies, Kris Gopalakrishnan, and chairperson of the Infosys Foundation in India, Sudha Murty, have confirmed their participation in the event.

Over the three days, the event will host sessions on a broad range of topics, including 'Contribution of IISc to Strategic Sectors', 'Nanoscience and Engineering', and 'Brain Research'.

IISc Alumni Global Conference from June 25

http://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/bengaluru/IISc-Alumni-Global-Conference-from-June-25/2015/06/23/article2881912.ece

BENGALURU: The IISc Alumni Global Conference will be held from Thursday to Sunday at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) here.

With the theme 'Science for Society', the event will focus on the contributions of India's premier research institution in the development of the nation.

The conference is being organised by the IISc Alumni Association in collaboration with IISc Alumni Association of North America (IISc AANA).

On the first day, participants will arrive on the campus and visit the departments they were associated with. Various departmental and divisional-level meetings will be held.

IISc director Prof Anurag Kumar will inaugurate the conference at 9.50 am on Friday.

Felicitation to CNR Rao

Scientist C N R Rao will be felicitated on the occasion and he is scheduled to speak between 10.15 am and 11 am. This will be followed by a session on 'Contribution of IISc to Strategic Sectors.'

Infosys co-founder Kris Gopalakrishnan and Infosys Foundation chairperson Sudha Murty will also be part of the event.

The event will host sessions on a broad range of topics, including 'Nanoscience and Engineering'.

A session on 'Brain Research,' to be chaired by Prof Vijayalakshmi Ravindranath (IISc), will have speakers from the University of California, University of Pittsburgh, Carnegie Mellon University and IISc.

A session on 'High Performance Computing and Big Data Analytics' will be chaired by Prof Y Narahari and Prof R Govindarajan, and it will have eminent speakers from the industry and academia.

On the last day, a session 'Mind to Market' will see presentation on 'Market Impact of IISc', followed by a panel discussion on 'Accelerating IISc Entrepreneurship'.

There will also be a session on 'IISc as a Global Institution - Reaching the Top', chaired by former IISc director Prof Balaram. Prof Anurag Kumar will also take part in this session.

Look beyond cut-offs

State of education in India is in a deep mess

While the cut-offs to gain admission to prestigious colleges in the country have touched the astronomical high of close to 100 per cent, the international rankings of higher education institutions of the country have seen a steady decline. The two are difficult to reconcile. After all, if brilliant students scoring 99 per cent and more are entering the best higher educational institutes, then surely the levels of those institutes too must go high. But not even the Indian Institutes of Technology or the Indian Institutes of Management or the country's best medical colleges, which are the most-showcased professional institutes to which many of the high-scoring students seek admission after school and college, rank among the best 200 globally. There are many reasons for that, and we need not go into them here. Managements of the IITs, the IIMs, the most reputed medical colleges such as the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, and the Government, will be aware of those reasons, and one should hope that they will collectively find a way out to put our colleges in the global list. It would be a pity if the best academic brains from the student community are given less than what they deserve as they make it to the prestigious institutes after undergoing a rigorous selection process. It can be argued that we needn't be too worried about global rankings, but such rankings do impact the career graph of students, especially when they need to go abroad for higher education or employment. The problem does not, however, end here. There is also a deep difference between the high cut-offs and the quality of education that is being imparted in our primary and secondary schools. The annual state of education reports that the non-governmental organisation, Pratham, releases, has consistently shown a decline in the levels of education imparted to and imbibed by students at the school level. In many villages across the country, neither the teachers nor the students are equipped for the levels they have somehow reached. Seventh-standard students, for instance, have been found to be deficient in tackling fifth-standard level subjects. The same holds true for teachers.

Given these realities, it is possible, though it may not be true for all students, that the high scores which are being registered, are a result of three things: The flagrant copying that many examination centres are disreputed for; the over-generous marking by copy examiners; and, the flourishing of coaching institutes which seek to train students to crack papers that come in a form that is anticipated with near perfection (the reasons for that need not be gone into here). It is possible that, if these issues are effectively tackled, it can lead to realistic percentages and compel institutes of learning to lower their fantastical cut-offs.

There was a time when students who scored 60 per cent or more were considered good; the 70-plus per cent ones were brilliant. A student securing these marks today is treated as just average and has absolutely no chance of entering a 'good' college or university. While our educational standards have to be high, the bar should be kept at a realistic level so that it absorbs not only the best but also potentially the best.

Hindustan Times ND 23/06/2015   P-5

NEW INSTITUTION

Cabinet approves bill to make NSIT a state university

HT Correspondent
■ htreporters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Delhi government has approved a bill to upgrade the Netaji Subhash Institute of Technology, currently affiliated to Delhi University, into a separate state university. The government gave its nod to the bill in a cabinet meeting on Monday and it will be tabled in the assembly session beginning Tuesday.

"Up-gradation to university status will result in considerable increase in the intake of students at UG, PG and PhD levels over a period of time," the Delhi government said in a statement.

The government said that granting the state university status to the NSIT is in consonance with the spirit of recommendation of the National Knowledge Commission (NKC), which has emphasized creation of synergy between education and research in the higher technical education institutions.

"This will benefit the students of Delhi as presently we are only able to admit around 3,000 students in various courses. But after becoming a state university we will be able to expand and admit around 12,000 students in BTech, MTech and PhD courses," said Yogesh Singh, director of NSIT.

At present, the number of students at the undergraduate level is 832, at the postgraduate and PhD level 69 and 30 respectively.

THE GOVERNMENT GAVE ITS NOD TO THE BILL IN A CABINET MEETING ON MONDAY. IT WILL BE TABLED IN THE ASSEMBLY ON TUESDAY

It has a total strength of about 3,500 students.

However, the move has been criticised by the Delhi University Teachers' Association (DUTA) which said that since NSIT is affiliated to DU hence the matter should first go to the University's Executive Council for approval. "We are opposed to any such move to take NSIT out of DU and make it a state university. This is against the DU Act," said Nandita Narain, president DUTA.

But Singh rejected such apprehensions and said that NSIT has a Memorandum of Association and any the move to give it the university status would not go against the DU Act. "NSIT has a MoA with Delhi University and after becoming a separate university we will only be a teaching and research university," Singh said.

Meanwhile, Delhi University officials said that they were not aware of the development. "I am not aware of this development so I cannot comment," said Sudhish Pachauri, DU's pro vice-chancellor.

Statesman ND 23/06/2015 p-2

DUTA opposes hurried implementation of CBCS

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi, 22 June

The Delhi University Teachers Association (DUTA) has submitted a representation to Prof Kuhad and Dr. Jaswinder Singh, members of the University Grants Commission (UGC), in the wake of media reports of a committee meeting to be held in the South Campus of Delhi University (DU) to discuss Choice Based Credit System (CBCS).

The CBCS will be implemented in DU from this academic session 2015-16 onwards and there have been many protests and demonstrations by teachers and students associations from across the city against its implementation.

The first cut off list of DU will be announced on 25 June and students will start enrolling into the colleges. However, there is no clarity on the course structure and syllabi of the Varsity's colleges yet. Many of the DU aspirants are still in dilemma about CBCS.

Describing it as a hurried implementation, Nandita Narain, President, DUTA said, "The FYUP adversely affected the careers of thousands of students of Delhi University. It is unfortunate to see that the implementation of CBCS is even more hurried than FYUP and the University is even less prepared to implement it. Even as admissions will commence on 25 June 2015, there is no clarity on course structure, syllabi and examination scheme."

She added, "With less than one month left for the new academic session to start, colleges at DU are completely at a loss; preparation of libraries, labs, workload calculation, faculty hiring and time table preparation have come to a standstill and these tasks will be rushed at the last minute straining the units further."

Echoing similar sentiments, DUTA secretary Harish Khanna opined, "A study of the draft syllabi on the UGC website shows that this is "cut and paste" of the FYUP syllabi.

The UGC cannot show pan-India consultation in drafting the CBCS structure or syllabi. The UGC site has uploaded the CBCS structure and syllabi without giving details of committees responsible for the same.

The CBCS syllabi come without any authorship." He added, "These half-baked syllabi will damage the fundamental concepts of lakhs of students. The hurried implementation of the CBCS, which is directed at all colleges and universities in the country, lacks quality and would adversely affect the careers of students."

Besides, CBCS is being adopted against dissents submitted by 15 out of 26 elected teacher-representatives in the Academic Council (AC) and five out of 18 in the Executive Council (EC).

The DUTA has taken up the matter with the Minister for HRD as well as the UGC. Meanwhile, a joint delegation of the Federation of Central Universities' Teachers' Association (FEDCUTA) and All India Federation of University and College Teachers' Organisation (AIFUCTO) had also represented on the same to UGC.

"The silence maintained by the MHRD is unfortunate. We appeal to them to defer the implementation of CBCS and to open the issue for wider consultation," read the DUTA representation.

Economic Times ND 23/06/2015 P-3

BACK TO THE ROOTS No clarity over whether yoga will be a compulsory subject at all centre-run schools; practicals will carry 80% weightage & 20% will be for theory in exam

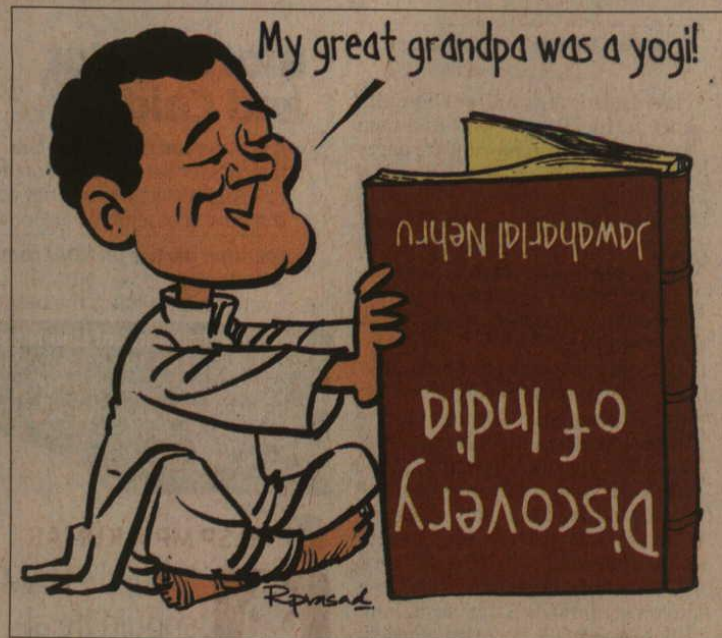# HRD Min Launches Yoga Syllabus for Central Schools

Our Political Bureau

New Delhi: The HRD Ministry launched the national syllabus and course material for teaching yoga to students of classes VI to X in all centre-run schools during a conference for yoga teachers on Monday.

While it's not clear at this moment if yoga will be a compulsory subject in Kendriya Vidyalayas and Navodaya Vidyalayas, HRD Smriti Irani announced that its learning will be assessed through 80% weightage to practical tests and 20% to theory examination.

The govt hasn't decided whether CBSE-affiliated private schools will also have to adopt yoga as a compulsory subject

"I want an assurance from students that they will perform the practicals with full devotion," Irani said at a function held a day after the International Yoga Day celebration which saw participation of hundreds of school students and teachers.

The government also hasn't decided whether the private schools affiliated to CBSE will also have to adopt yoga as a compulsory subject. Sources said CBSE is yet to devise a policy with that regard.

As for the government schools run by the state governments, Irani said this decision is the states' prerogative. The HRD Ministry also announced that it will organise a national-level yoga competition from next year and that yoga is not a compulsory component of the training module for aspiring teachers.

My great grandpa was a yogi!

Jawaharlal Nehru

Discovery of India

Participation of Students at Yoga Camp Not a Must: IIT Dean

Dehradun: IIT Roorkee's management on Monday denied issuing any notification making it mandatory for students to participate in a week-long yoga camp.

"No such decision was taken by the institute's administration. However, my office did ask about 2,000 students staying at hostels at this time in the summer to participate in the camp to make the unique initiative a success," Dean (students welfare) IIT, Roorkee Dinesh Kumar Nauriyal said. – PTI

I sacrificed my health and teenage years to study at the IITs – but was it worth it?

Are we okay with so many of our students studying stuff they don't care about?

http://scroll.in/article/735239/i-sacrificed-my-health-and-teenage-years-to-study-at-the-iits-but-was-it-worth-it

Alankar Jain, qz.com · Yesterday · 03:30 pm

Photo Credit: Manan Vatsyayana/AFP

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In eighth standard, I volunteered to revise one of the Anglo-Indian battles for the class. Using the blackboard, I described the various players and events of the battle in great detail, making up for my faltering English with infectious enthusiasm.

Impressed, my class teacher asked me, "So what have you finally decided? Who do you want to be: a cardiologist, a historian or a scientist?" Those days I used to proudly proclaim that I wished to be a cardiologist, primarily because my doctor parents used to tell me that it was the hottest specialisation in medicine. Excited by my teacher's praise, I went to my father and told him about it. It brought a proud smile on his face and he said, "Tell her you want to become an IITian."

The cram schools

Most of the initial 13 years of my life had been spent in Rajasthan's Kota, the epicentre of the coaching tsunami that engulfed the rotten senior secondary science education system in India. That is not to say that our schools teach commerce or arts any better, but the most significant impact of coaching classes, at least initially, was felt by the science

stream. Kota pioneered the trend of training class 10 pass-outs for JEE, the Joint Entrance Examination, for admission to the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology. A number of cities followed suit.

Students from distant parts of the country started flocking to Kota, a city earlier famous for its delectable *kachoris*, cotton sarees and excellent building limestone. Soon, these classes became the lifeline of the city's new economy. Numerous science graduates (including many ex-IITians) became instructors in these coaching classes and earned fat salaries; renting out rooms to students became "a thing" in every other neighbourhood; numerous hostels were built; and *autowallas*, mess-owners, street-food vendors – almost anyone and everyone you can think of – raked in a lot of moolah. With such a huge influx of students, the bigger and more reputed coaching classes started conducting entrance tests for themselves and believe it or not, new coaching classes opened up to prepare students for these considerably difficult tests.

These institutions cracked the code of the extremely competitive and difficult JEE and soon became like wish-granting factories for students willing to work hard; a large majority of whom consistently put in roughly ten to 12 hours a day.

Contrary to the popular belief, they did teach fundamentals of science quite well. They made students solve dozens of problems daily and provided them with a rich inventory of tricks and techniques that made the JEE tractable. At their peak, coaching classes in Kota accounted for a quarter of the JEE selections. Obviously, their model had no space for experimental science or scientific curiosity or individuality.

They merely filled the void created by our low quality education system to the extent that schools were forced to play second fiddle to them. A number of faux schools came up that placed no restrictions on student attendance. Students visited these schools only to take exams and maybe to practice for lab experiments. Many students, miles away from their homes, away from the protective gaze of their parents, away from their much-needed guidance and supervision in the formative years, couldn't handle the newfound independence. Many drifted away towards cyber cafes in the city, gaming and watching movies for hours at length, ultimately failing to achieve the goal that had brought them to the city. Many "repeated" or "dropped" a year, i.e. spent a year after class 12 solely preparing for the JEE, because they didn't take or fare well in previous year's JEE.

Expectedly, the most unfortunate casualty of this system were these students' precious teenage years, that led to a lot of them feeling "burnt out." Later, that became a big reason for their poor performance in the IITs.

The worst years

I've spent four years of my life studying in coaching classes: Classes 9 and 10 for National Talent Search Examination and classes 11 and 12 for the JEE. When I look back today, I feel I didn't lose much during the first two years because there was more to my life than just coaching classes. I went to school and studied English and Hindi, wrote poems, painted and participated in debates and extempores. The last two years were depressing, despite living at home with my parents. Any activity apart from attending the coaching class and self-study used to drown me in a sea of guilt. Thus, no more reading newspapers, no more watching TV for long hours, no more afternoon naps (sports, anyway, were never a part of my life).

Getting up from, and sitting down on, my study chair was the maximum amount of movement my body went through and as a result, the flab on my belly thickened manifold. At my worst, I weighed close to a quintal. Things moved pretty fast in the coaching class, so falling sick was never an option. And if I did, which I did numerous times (especially in class 12), catching up became a task in itself, partly because of my own flawed studying techniques. And yet, things were

easier in class 11 because I managed to stay on top of things and was among the toppers in my class. Things became darker in class 12. Course content suddenly increased and so did competition, and I found it increasingly hard to cope up. With every drop in my rank, my confidence dwindled. My allergies decided to wreak havoc on me during the same period and I went in a downward spiral of low scores, enormous amounts of backlog, a substantially reduced enthusiasm for studies and a lax attitude.

Eventually I did manage to pass the JEE with a rank that was decentish, but nowhere close to what I expected of myself and others expected of me. In fact, after the results, one of my insensitive batch mates who had cracked the exam asked me, "*Repeat karne ki to nahin soch raha na?*" (You aren't planning on repeating a year, are you?), a question for which I still despise him. Having gone through these years, I could very clearly understand why one of our previous IITian tenants had scribbled this on his cupboard before vacating his room: "I spent the worst years of my life in this room. It's your turn now."

There were a few of these toiling, burnt out IITians in my family, too. One of them, my maternal cousin, had cleared the JEE in his first attempt but "dropped" a year and got himself enrolled in a leading coaching class in Kota in order to improve his AIR (All India Rank).

Parents and their myopia

It must have been impossible for my parents to stay insulated from this crazy atmosphere. So, when my father told me that he would want me to "become an IITian," I wasn't surprised. I am sure my brother, too, hadn't been surprised. Both of us went through the same grind and eventually did manage to "become" IITians.

This myopia was characteristic to other parents of my parents' generation. Most of them took these life-defining career decisions without giving much thought to their wards' skills and interests. A lot of them wanted to send their kids to the IITs for bright future prospects that "Brand IIT" had come to symbolise. A father whom I met in IIT certainly falls into that category. He had come for the admission of his son and was already worried about his son's placement: "*Bhaiya iska meta mein hua hai, suna hai ki meta mein package achha nahin milta, galti to nahin kar dee?*" He wasn't sure if he had made the right decision by opting for metallurgy (meta) department because he had heard that "salary packages" are comparatively lower in meta.

Then, there were parents who believed they were sending their children to the best possible colleges in the country. Moreover, it was a pursuit of pride. "Brand IIT" brought with itself an undeniable sense of reputation for students, their parents, their uncles, their aunties, their teachers, their neighbours, their friends: basically everyone they had ever been related to. Students, like me, would eventually pay the price for their parents' decisions.

What does my IITian tag actually mean?

I have an absurd habit of googling my colleagues and contemporaries whom I perceive better than myself. The goal is to analyze their academic and professional trajectory with the hope of finding some flaw or area where they lag in order to discredit them in my mind. This worthless exercise in self-indulgence massages my ego and provides me a momentary sense of relief, except when it backfires.

Last year, I wanted to discredit a colleague roughly as old as me who joined my company a couple of weeks later than I did. Unlike me, he was in the prestigious program for entrants, the only one in my office last year. The program entailed better salary and somewhat better work with more freedom. He specialized in arguably the hottest field in computer

science and seemed to have a far better handle on the future. More than sufficient reasons to get jealous. I googled him and the only "flaw" I could find out was his mediocre undergraduate college as compared to "my" IIT.

On other occasions, this might have been enough to soothe me, but not this time, because this person, after his undergraduate degree, had completed a master's degree by research from one of the IITs, had a number of quality publications and was all set to join the laboratory of his choice next year for PhD. And he was, at most, a year older.

And here I was, without a single publication, not in the prestigious program, with only two things to boast of: my IITian tag and my CPI, both of which didn't mean a lot after I had landed my job. That day, I could only see a past and a present filled with failures and enormous amount of mediocrity. My imaginary future shimmering with uniqueness and success that had always enraptured me ceased to exist that disgruntling moment and I found myself caught in a flurry of existential questions: What did I really achieve so far? What does my IITian tag actually mean? What is it that I want to do with my life? And the most painful of them all — if my life had been so freaking ordinary so far, why should I hope for an extraordinary future? I remember weeping at the loss of the lie that was the edifice of my life.

I wasn't facing these questions for the first time in my life. Many of these are in fact characteristic to 20-somethings of my generation as this article beautifully illustrates. Yet, I had observed that some of these questions were unique to my batchmates in IIT Bombay and hence seem more systemic than mere outliers. The last time I had suffered such a strong bout of existential void was roughly a year ago during campus placements.

A 20-minute job interview

I spent a lot of time in self-introspection during my second last semester at IIT and yet, I was so unclear about what kind of job I wanted immediately out of college that I ended up applying for and preparing (extremely half-heartedly) for every company I was eligible for. I also wasted some days preparing for and taking the Common Admission Test to the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) despite having no particular interest in getting an MBA straight out of college. By that time I had already secured deferred admission to the Indian School of Business through their Young Leaders Programme.

My "diverse" profile got me shortlisted for some nine companies on day-1. These companies were from varied sectors: consulting, finance, FMCG, analytics and "core" electrical engineering. All of these were prestigious companies that paid well. My utter lack of focus made Dec 1, 2013 one of the most nightmarish experiences of my life, but one that taught me something about myself. From 8 in the morning till midnight, I had given 13 job interviews.

In my extreme desperation to get a job, I had pleaded and begged. I felt too ashamed to pick my parents' and brother's calls as the towering expectations they had from me and I had from myself had been shattered. And yet, the one emotion I felt when I returned to my hostel by around 2 in the night was that of relief, for the ordeal was finally over. I was starving as I had eaten only a handful of biscuits the entire day. So, I went to our wonderful underground night canteen and ate a lot of extremely delicious and unhygienic food.

It slowly began to sink in that I had failed to secure a job on the first day. Failed. The one question that troubled me the most that night was: What is it that I want to do? What am I going to do now? This lack of clarity must have been abundantly clear in my embarrassingly manufactured replies to interviewers' most favourite questions: Why our industry? Why our company? Morning did bear better news as I woke up to find I had received an offer from the last interview of the day. There's an interesting story about how I managed to give that 20-minute interview at around last midnight.

I was busy running from one room to another, one floor to another to give interviews for the companies that had shortlisted me and the Taiwanese company that eventually took me had already finished interviewing all its candidates. One of my closest friends who was a constant companion during slot-2 of the day requested the company to wait for me for 15 minutes while I was being grilled by another company. The Taiwanese gentleman pointed towards his watch and told my friend: "15 minutes. Okay?". The interview that I was in meanwhile didn't go well and I rushed for the final interview of the day and reached, sweat-drenched, to find a couple of interviewers sitting idle, waiting for me. Interestingly, I had applied for this company rather casually as I preferred many other firms over it. So, when they say that placements are random, they aren't entirely wrong.

Was it all worth it?

Sometimes I feel I should have heeded the advice of my sweetly rotund class 9 biology teacher: "If you wish to become an IAS officer, why go to an IIT? I think you should do a B.A. as it would be more relevant to your preparation for UPSC exams." In case you didn't notice, within a year, my future goals had shifted from becoming a cardiologist to an IAS officer and yet it had already sunk in that I had to be an IITian first.

I recently looked up the 2009 cut-off scores for the prestigious colleges of Delhi University such as St. Stephen's and SRCC and found out that I would have got into one of those places, had I applied, for my scores in board exams were quite good. Of course, I didn't even know what "applying" to a college really meant back then. Heck, I didn't even know that I was going to a "college" after 12th because my mental picture of college was only shaped by Karan Johar's films and I was sure I wasn't going to any of those places. I only knew that I was giving JEE to go to a place called IIT.

The reason why I feel that, is partly because I really enjoyed the HSS (humanities and social sciences) courses, I took in the institute. They ranged from creative writing to sociology and each one of them engaged me immensely, providing me with that thing called the joy of learning. I looked forward to attending classes, took initiative to find out more on what was being taught, interacted with the professors on a personal level and attended relevant seminars and lectures outside of curriculum (not just for the sandwiches and biscuits in the high tea that followed). Learning seemed fun and almost effortless and surprisingly, exams were fun, too.

I never felt that magic doing the compulsory core courses in my department. They seemed work. Now, that could also have been because of our mental association of compulsory and voluntary with work and play, respectively, and maybe because engineering courses tend to be more technically involved and demanding. But I did experience a toned down version of Csikszentmihalyian flow whenever I took an HSS course.

And then when I look at St. Stephen's alumni, I feel I should be among them some day, in that illustrious ensemble of economists, historians, writers, journalists and politicians. It would be heretical and foolish to claim IIT alumni are in any way inferior, or even compare the two for that matter. I guess it's to do with the fact that I associate myself more with the aforementioned professions.

I feel that deep down, the questions of development, economics, history, society, culture are closer to my heart as compared to questions of technology. That is not to say that I don't enjoy working on problems of research in engineering. In fact, that's what I have been doing for a living ever since I left college and it has been fairly interesting, despite the roller-coaster that life immediately after IIT can be.

But whenever I ask myself the question, "Is this what I would want to continue doing in my life and be known for when I

die?", and I ask myself that question a bit too frequently, I feel disconcerted and a little helpless. If and when I make a career switch, I will be joining the massive club of defector IITians who are unfairly despised for their choice to divorce their majors for a dizzyingly varied career trajectories, not that it is going to prevent me in any way from making my decision. It's "my choice" after all.

The opposing thought in my head about the choice of undergrad is that I'm probably far better off now than I would have been had I gone to any of those places. It's more than just the fact that the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence. Whether we like it or not, quantitative skills have become increasingly valuable in today's world and it's not going to change any time soon. Further, a switch from engineering to other disciplines seems far more plausible. I haven't heard of people going the other way round.

Finally, the unparalleled network that you inherit by virtue of being an IITian could be a reason enough to toil for JEE. Let me take a moment to explain the immense power of this network for my own sake, as it has taken me some time to fully appreciate it. I was an enthusiastic literary arts secretary of my hostel in my second year. Apart from widespread acclaim and an award, I have bagged multiple job offers from seniors who were impressed with my work during that period, and I am sure, that's just the tip of the iceberg. It's a classic example of seemingly insignificant things leading to disproportionately significant things in life.

IITs must do more

But I can't help but feel that won't it be better if we inherited this network by virtue of being in a university offering a wider range of courses (not just technology)? Won't it make more sense for us to spend the crucial four-to-five years of life studying what interests us, something on which we could build further rather than starting afresh after graduation? Won't it be better if the institute played a more active role in shaping our lives over and above its current role as a mere facilitator and as a crucible for smart students with diverse backgrounds?

Last year, I asked the director of IIT Bombay about the institute's opinion on most undergrads taking up careers not even remotely related to their core fields of study. He replied that institute was fine as long as students continued to contribute to the society in a meaningful way. Although, it's an admirably liberal and pragmatic position to take, it's also a bit complacent one as it glosses over the issues we face.

We can't be okay with so many of our students studying stuff they don't care about.

When I say that the institute should do more for us, I basically raise the contentious question what should a college education do for us? There are no easy answers. However, I feel, our education should provide us some direction for our future, and despite everything, that didn't really happen for me.

Today, as I eagerly await that elusive direction, I see myself as an older, more mature and less energetic version of the clueless 18-year old who entered IIT, confidently staring at a horizon full of possibilities – not because being IITian is my achievement, but because despite my qualms with my education, it has put me in an enviable position where I can afford to take big risks without the fear of failure.

I feel much lighter today with the loss of the burden of my lies and my expectations. Sky's the limit as I continue to chart my trajectory and make sense of the life to come, a life that seems to begin now, after IIT.

This article was originally published on [Insight](#), the student media body of IIT Bombay, and then on [Qz.com](#)