

Newspaper Clips

March 17-18, 2013

March 17

Pioneer ND 17/03/2013

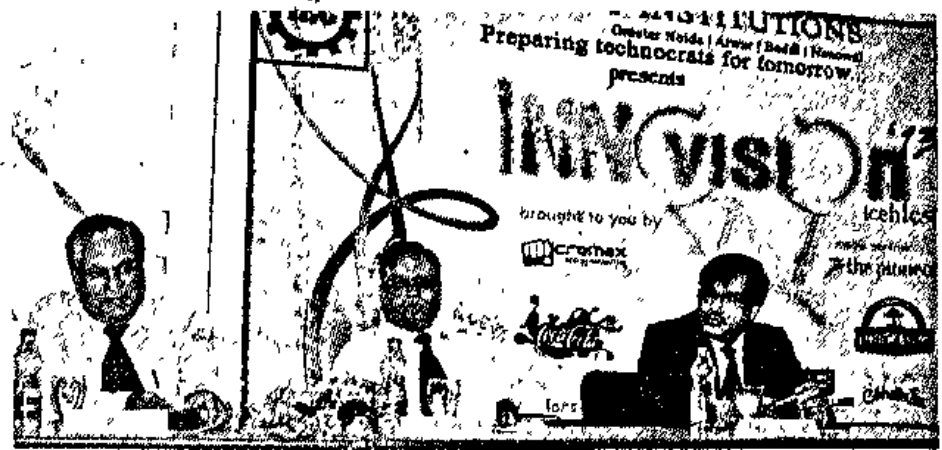
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IIT prof stresses on quality control in private engineering colleges

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Retired IIT professor VK Srivastava on Saturday emphasised on encouraging quality education in private engineering colleges that admit the majority of students in the country.

Present at the inauguration of a two-day fest 'Innovation' at IEC - College of Engineering and Technology on Saturday, Srivastava said that a recent study by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) revealed that 97 per cent of engineering students were utilised by private institutes and only 3 per cent took their degrees from Government institutes, making it crucial for these institutes to upgrade their quality of education with



From left: Professors BN Roy, VK Srivastava and OB Singh

Ranjan Dimri

new innovations and provide more resources to the students so that they get more serious about their field.

"According to CSIR, every year around 20 lakh students gets enrolled in engineering colleges. It gives probability of having at least 10 lakh pass outs every year. This raises the issue

of employability. Companies can consume only the best of the lot which will come only after the students get proper training not just academically but skill-based and personal development. This responsibility is on the institutes. They have to do everything to compete in the market," said Srivastava.

Times of India ND 17/03/2013

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IITians to protest SL's 'persecution' of Tamils

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: A day after the state government ordered all arts and science colleges in Tamil Nadu to shut down, students of IIT-M on Saturday decided to hold a protest against the treatment of Tamils in Sri Lanka, marking a new chapter in the otherwise politics-free tech campuses.

The one-day hunger strike will begin at 8am on Sunday. The students, who claimed to have obtained permission from the administration for the protest, have also arranged a panel discussion involving activists on the issue in the afternoon. The protest will end with a rally.

"We have taken permission from our management for the protest. Many students from other states have no knowledge of the Sri Lankan Tamil issue. It is also an attempt to make them aware of the plight of Tamils in Sri Lanka," said S Rathnavel, a chemical engineering student, and one of the organizers.

"We are holding this protest to highlight the humanitarian crisis. Our panel discus-

Lankan monk beaten up by pro-Tamil groups in temple

With anti-Lanka sentiments running high in Tamil Nadu, a Buddhist monk from Colombo was heckled and roughed up by members of pro-Tamil groups at the Brihadeeswarar temple in Thanjavur in central Tamil Nadu on Saturday. Police arrested 12 persons, including a functionary of Vaiko-led MDMK, in connection with the incident. **TNN**

sion will focus on the political history of Sri Lanka, current ground reality and other related issues. It will also discuss what will be the best solution for Tamils in the Island nation," Rathnavel said. He said the campaign will be taken to other IIT campuses too.

IIT director Bhaskar Ramamurthi said, "If the students want to show their solidarity with the cause, they have the freedom to do so." When asked whether the campus will be shut down if the protest escalates, he said he doesn't anticipate any such trouble.

PC: Govt should back anti-Lanka resolution

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: With the DMK escalating pressure on the UPA government, India is likely to vote against Sri Lanka over alleged human rights violations of ethnic Tamils at the UNHRC in Geneva.

Indicating the thinking in the government, finance minister P Chidambaram said in Karaikudi in Tamil Nadu on Saturday that India should support the US resolution if it proposed a free and independent investigation of the allegations.

► **'DMK may go to any extent', P 16**

"That's the feeling of people here. Let's wait till March 22 and the good news is likely. Till then stay positive," he said, adding, "I'm not the PM or the external affairs minister to comment on the situation further."

The move to express solidarity with Lankan Tamils follows pressure mounted on the government by the DMK and by the bipartisan support for the cause in Tamil Nadu, where the AIADMK has also adopted a strident stance.

IIT students join stir

A day after the state government ordered all arts and science colleges in TN to shut down, students of IIT-M decided to hold a protest against the treatment of Tamils in Sri Lanka, marking a new chapter on the otherwise politics-free campus. The one-day hunger strike will begin at 8am on Sunday. The students, who claimed to have obtained permission for the protest, have also arranged a panel discussion on the issue followed by a rally. **P 13**

Protests may hit IPL

Anti-Lanka protests in Tamil Nadu are a worrying BCCI — Will the 13 Lankan players recruited by seven of the nine IPL teams be able to play their matches in Chennai? The teams most worried by the developments would be hosts Chennai, Pune, Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bangalore. The Board is in talks with authorities to find a way out. **P 23**

Deccan Herald ND 17.03.2013 P-8

Centre draws flak over faculty crunch

Committee said the problem is becoming more serious day by day

Prakash Kumar

NEW DELHI: A parliamentary standing committee has pulled up the government over faculty shortage in universities and colleges, noting that the problem was becoming "more serious day by day" and adversely affecting the country's higher education system.

"Right from well-established central varsities to those set up recently, state and private uni-

versities, premier institutions like the IITs, NITs and IIMs, this problem has emerged as the biggest handicap with no visible solution in the near future," the committee said in a report, which was tabled in Parliament recently.

Suggesting that the government should "accelerate" efforts to address the faculty crunch, the committee, headed by Congress Rajya Sabha MP Oscar Fernandes, noted that all steps taken to attract students

to the teaching profession have failed.

According to a report submitted in 2011 by a government-appointed task force, faculty shortage in state, central and deemed universities and affiliated colleges was around 40 per cent, 35 per cent, 25 per cent and 40 per cent respectively.

Nearly 33 per cent of the sanctioned faculty positions is lying vacant in the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and about 35 per cent in the National Institutes of Technology. In AICTE approved engineering colleges, the faculty shortage

stands at 19.25 per cent, according to the Human Resource Development Ministry.

The committee, in its report on the Universities for Research and Innovation Bill, shared the apprehension of various stakeholders that problems may aggravate if the proposal to set up 14 new universities dedicated to innovation and research gets clearance from Parliament.

"With the proposed universities coming up, having better service conditions and higher pay scales for their teachers, migration of qualified and experienced teachers from traditional

universities would definitely occur," the committee noted. The department of higher education has to make concerted efforts so that the existing universities do not suffer because of the proposed universities, it added.

The committee was also convinced with the contention of various stakeholders that once the proposal to allow entry of foreign universities gets clearance from Parliament, it will add to the woes of Indian universities already reeling under faculty shortage.

"The committee has serious apprehensions about the problem of shortage of faculty being

aggravated once the foreign universities set up their campuses in the country. With better opportunities, especially with respect to high remuneration for the faculty, there is high probability that the faculty in existing universities would be diverted to the foreign universities," the committee said. The idea to allow foreign universities through a proposed legislation, which is pending before Parliament, should be deliberated before taking a final call. "The pros and cons of the proposed Bill needed to be considered beforehand," the committee suggested.

DH News Service

March 18

Economic Times ND 18/03/2013 P1

A Management Lesson? 13 IIMs Unlucky for Placements

Surge in number of students, sluggish economy leave up to 15% graduates without employment

SREERADHA D BASU &
DEVINA SENGUPTA
MUMBAI | BANGALORE

Placements at the Indian Institutes of Management (IIM), which got off to a brisk start, are now feeling the impact of the downturn gripping the Indian economy. The pressure is being felt by both old and new IIMs, which have 5-15% of their batches left to place.

Officials in charge of place-

ments say a combination of factors, most notably the feeble state of the economy but also a bulge in the number of students, has made the current placement season the most challenging in years despite IIMs reaching out to more companies. In all, 13 IIMs have to match 2,800-odd students with potential recruiters.

"All IIMs have had trouble with placements this time," says Krishanu Rakshit, placements chairperson at IIM-Calcutta. The

oldest among the public business schools, it was set up in 1961. IIM-C kicked off final placements on March 3, but has over 5% of its 462-strong batch left to place.

Last year, it had placed all of its 350 students from the class of 2012 in just four days.

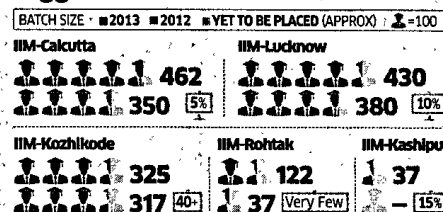
"Had we had the same batch size as last year, all our students would have been placed by the third or fourth day. It's the final 100-odd with whom we are facing difficulty," says a person associ-

ated with the placement process at IIM-C. According to Rakshit, banks are hiring, but investment banks are cutting back sharply.

At IIM-Lucknow, the batch size is 430, compared with 380 last year. "We have always managed to finish our final placements in a week, but this year they are still going on. About 10% of the batch is yet to be placed," says a member of the placement committee.

Student Numbers have Gone Up >> 18

Bigger Number to Blame?



Student Numbers have Gone Up

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For IIM-Lucknow, the final round began in the last week of February.

"Our next batch comprises 460 students and we cannot increase anymore. Infrastructure is not the problem, but placements are," he adds.

IIM-Bangalore has just five students left out of a batch of 381, but officials admit this year has been a struggle. "It is luck that we are left with so few numbers to place," says an IIM-B placement member.

IIM-Ahmedabad maintained its position at the top of the heap, with student placement committee coordinator S Balasubramanian saying all students have been placed. However, sources said the institute faced difficulty as well.

All this is in striking contrast to the go-go years since 2004 (with the exception of 2008-09), when students at the premier business schools would be lapped up by companies. The increase in the number of students is because the Congress-led UPA government, which came to power in 2004, expanded the number of IIMs as part of its programme of inclusive growth. As a result, seven new IIMs have been set up since 2007.

The numbers have also increased after the introduction of a 27% quota for students belonging to other backward classes (OBC) in 2008 in

addition to the traditional quotas for students belonging to the SC/ST category. The IIMs have implemented the quotas while keeping the number of general category students constant.

"The overall numbers are to blame," says Dwarika Prasad Uniyal, chairperson, placement committee, IIM-Kashipur. "Unlike a few years ago, we now have 13 IIMs, all with increasing batch sizes."

This latest addition to the IIM family, for which 2013 is the first placement, started its final round in February. It roped in an advisor to help with the process, but could still take around a month more to place all its 37 students. "This is a normal start-up challenge," says Uniyal, adding that many other new IIMs also face the brunt of locational disadvantages. "This apart, there are recruiters who want to hire, but will prefer to go to a tier-II institute this time since they think they won't be able to match an IIM salary," feels Uniyal.

IIM-Kozhikode, set up in 1996, also has students who are yet to be placed out of a batch of 325. Though the institute did not come up an official figure, sources involved in the placement process peg the number at 40-plus. "Initially, at all IIMs, the placement season started as a boom. But it has slowed down a bit," says a placement team member.

IIM-K has decided to tap markets

aggressively and reach out to companies who had not been contacted earlier. In contrast to the situation this year, last year the recruitments got over by February-end even though the number of students, at 317, is almost the same.

At IIM-Indore, sources claim that more than 10% of the 450-strong batch is yet to be placed though the business school declined to comment. "The number of participating companies has gone up. But the offers per company have come down for the finance sector though it's better in case of some FMCG and pharma companies," says Siddharth Mathur, a placement committee member. He adds that placements, which started in January, should be completed soon.

Among the new IIMs, all of which follow the so-called rolling placement format, IIM-Rohtak has fared better than most. The institute has seen a near-three-fold increase in the number of students, from 37 to 122. Rolling placement means continuous recruitment, rather than companies turning up on pre-fixed days. "We started placements in end-December and now have a handful of students to go," says Gaurav Thakar, a member of the IIM-Rohtak placement committee. The institute made the most of its locational advantage near the NCR, with its chairman, director, faculty members and students meeting and inviting companies.

Mint ND 18/03/2013

p-1

Even IIMs struggling to place students

BY PRASHANT K. NANDA & MAULIK PATHAK

NEW DELHI/AHMEDABAD

The Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) are finding it difficult to find jobs for their graduates in a slowing economy where business earnings are under pressure, and at a time when the number of students has increased.

As this year's placement season at the premier institutions draws to a close, many IIMs, including the one in Kolkata, are yet to find employment for all students because many firms have shrunk their hiring plans and key recruiters such as banks and other financial institutions have not shown much enthusiasm.

"It's not as bright as it was few years back. I feel, along with the economic slowdown, a huge jump in the batch size was a key concern area this year," said Anjanjot Singh, a member of the career development and placement cell at IIM-Calcutta. "As of today (Sunday), 30 students are yet to be placed."

This year, 460 students will complete the two-year flagship MBA programme at IIM-Calcutta, compared with 360 in 2012. Similarly, IIM-Indore has seen

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Even IIMs struggling to place students

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the student number rise to 450 in 2013 from 238 in 2011, and IIM-Kozhikode 325 from 309 in 2012.

All these three IIMs and seven others, out of the total 13, face the unusual predicament of not yet being able to find jobs for all their graduates.

Providing quality education to more students is a primary responsibility and placement is secondary, according to Bhavya Kapoor, placement officer at IIM-Indore. "Harvard does not provide placement to its students," Kapoor said, however admitting that the slowing economy is a niggle.

Interest from the financial sector has been subdued, although some drug and packaged consumer products firms have made good offers, Kapoor said.

"Companies have played safe and some of them have frozen hiring," Kapoor said, a view echoed by IIM-Kozhikode, another of the older IIMs.

"I think the scenario across the older IIMs is almost similar. Some companies are overstaffed, and we hope after this year's stagnation, it will be much better next year," said Sagar Tule, a member of the placement committee at IIM-Kozhikode.

"Banks and financial institutions go to top B-schools to hire for commercial banking activities, but in the last one year, the economy is not growing and the commercial side is getting impacted," said Amit Khurana, a former executive vice-president, human capital, at Yes Bank Ltd. "Corporate, commercial, investment and trade-related banking is in bad shape."

Khurana, who is currently chief executive officer of human resource consulting firm Corporate Access, said retail banking has seen some expansion for which banks do not need highly paid managers.

India's gross domestic product growth has been languishing around 5% and has affected the

recruitment at top B-schools, he said.

To tide over the crisis, both the new and the older IIMs reached out to more companies, tapped the emerging e-commerce segment this year for placing their students, as the number of offers made was relatively lower.

For example, IIM-Bangalore, which had completed its placement process, received 415 offers from 150 companies. In 2012, 126 companies had offered 423 jobs to its students.

IIM-Bangalore director Pankaj Chandra declined to talk on a Sunday.

The number of offers made this year was slightly lower than last year in their campus, Sankarshan Basu, chairperson of career development services at IIM-Bangalore, was quoted as saying in the *Hindu* newspaper on 14 March.

Even at the new IIMs, where the number of students is smaller, the situation is no better. IIM-Rohtak, which said it had completed placement, had to contact 64 companies this year compared with 27 in 2012, placement officer Argha Chatterjee said. He singled out the finance and auto sectors as poor recruiters this year.

IIM-Ahmedabad did not have any difficulty in placing its students despite a poor economic hangover, though the offers were made by 130 companies this year against 120 last year.

"The demand for IIM-A graduates continues to be high and has overridden concerns of a general slowdown in hiring activities in 2012-13," said Kirti Sharda, placement committee chairperson at the institute. "Students have been placed in their chosen roles in diverse cohorts comprising a remarkable array of recruiters."

Boston Consulting Group was the top recruiter at IIM-Ahmedabad, recruiting 15 students. Last year, too, the consulting firm was the top recruiter, with 17 offers.

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How tech can succeed in education

Educational technology providers have to change their mindsets while developing products for schools, students & teachers. Ego & IQ have to take a backseat. Empathy has to take the lead

NINAD VENGURLEKAR

THIS article is not about the potential of tech-driven education in India. Nor is this article going to talk about how technology can change the face of education in India.

We all agree that technology/new media tools like computers, internet, interactive content, virtual learning, eLearning, mEducation, tablets, apps, etc, have the power to change the way education is imparted in India. But somehow, somewhere, we have not been able to achieve successful traction with technology in our schools/colleges and amongst our students. In this article, I am going to pinpoint some of the reasons behind our failure and the change of approach we need, based on my experience in technology-led education for the past 12 years.

Coexist, not replace

The education ecosystem in India is driven by teachers, textbooks and tests. Unless technology can coexist with these 3 Ts of education, they will have little chance of impacting educational outcomes. Most technology solutions, by design or intent, are created to replace these Ts. Thus, they are doomed from the very beginning. Traditional teaching methods and tools cannot be replaced in an instant. It will take at least a generation for this to happen.

Unfortunately, educational technology providers come with a view that if their solutions are innovative and user-friendly, they can be scaled in a short period of time. They believe that the pull formula that works in social media can be replicated in education. Their funders too believe the same and get restless when the actual scale-up takes time. This impatience does not work in education sector. Technology integration and usage needs extended hand-holding because the educational users (i.e. teachers and administrators) are not savvy like the traditional technology users. Most technology providers disregard this aspect.



ASIT BAGCHI

It is imperative that education technology solutions will have to coexist with traditional methods of teaching and learning and strive to enhance their quality and delivery—at least for a generation more. Over time, some of these methods and tools might be replaced and some might be integrated with technology.

So, coexist, don't replace.

Focus on teacher-led solutions

In a country that is so focused on marks, self-learning is a myth. All solutions that profess they can aid self-learning and replace teachers in the learning process are digging their own grave. I do not see this happening any time soon. My daughter is 13, and she studies only in two scenarios—when there is a class test or when we tell her to study—else she is not keen.

I cannot imagine a situation where she will switch on a PC or a tablet or download an app and study for the love of gaining knowledge. This may happen at post-graduation or PhD levels,

but not in schools and graduate colleges. Whether we like it or not, a traditional teacher is here to stay.

So, let us build solutions around her rather than to replace her with self-learning education platforms.

Education first, tech later

Technology solutions for education have to have clear, demonstrable and measurable educational outcomes. We are not talking of educational outcomes in terms of only improvement in marks, but overall enhancement of performance in teaching and learning. For example, an online assessment provider believes that since their assessment engine can work for half a million simultaneous users, their solution is world-class and should work well in education. Wrong. In education sector, the online assessment engine will not work for the technology features it offers, but the quality of assessment questions created by it, which enhances the evaluation of student knowledge and understanding. The same applies

to hi-tech hardware solutions built for education. It is not the features of the tablets and mobiles, but the quality and impact of the educational content that it streams which will lead to increased demand. When these aspects are neglected, technology fails to deliver.

Not online, but offline

Innovations in educational technology work only at ground level. Not in the Cloud. A good education technology product needs to have an even better servicing model at grassroots level to succeed. Servicing includes product training, usage support, enhancing educational outcomes, and so on. There are also challenges of getting teachers to use your product by working on their psychology and fear. Without these aspects, the product will fail—however sound it may be.

So, a great educational technology product can be created online, but it works through offline efforts.

Summing up

Educational technology providers will have to change their mindsets while developing products for schools, colleges, students and teachers. Ego and IQ has to take a backseat. Empathy has to take the lead in product development. Only when products are developed with empathy and rigorously implemented in schools, will the tipping point for educational technology happen in India. Till then, we will keep discussing its potential and feel disheartened about its acceptance.

One cool tip

The greatest parameter for success of any educational product is to be part of the educational institution's Timetable. This T is more important than all other T's appearing in this article. So, go figure your solution around it, for quicker acceptance and scale up.

The author is a masters in educational technology from Harvard University. He is head of Educational Technology Solutions and Content for Private Schools and Skills in IL&FS Education

Will the internet replace the universities?



Many believe that with higher internet penetration, the demand for online education will grow radically in India in the coming years

SHANU ATHIPARAMBATH
New Delhi, 17 March

Millions of students will enter higher education institutions in India in the next decade. The human resource development ministry wants to double the gross enrolment ratio in higher education by 2020 from 15 per cent in 2011. The brick-and-mortar colleges in the country, however, are not equipped to meet this burgeoning demand, prompting many to look at online education.

Many believe with higher internet penetration, the demand for online education will grow radically in India in the coming years. Some even believe the traditional university system might not survive for long.

Though internet penetration in India is low, the number of users in the country (150 million) is bettered only by the US (275 million) and China (575 million).

The government is trying to boost online education through the National Knowledge Network (NKN). In January, the National Innovation Council launched NKN with a lecture series at Delhi University. This is the largest online education network in the country, with 955 institutions already connected to it to share their content online, using a high bandwidth network. It aims to connect nearly 1,500 institutions in the future.

In the future, whether students will get credits for the online courses they take will depend on the university that offers the particular courses, says Dinesh Singh, vice-chancellor of Delhi University (DU). "In DU, this will be done on a case by case basis. If you come with a structured proposal, DU will definitely give credit, though I cannot predict a time frame."

Open online courses are not new in India. In 2011, the government had launched the National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL), which made the lectures at seven Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institute of Science-Bangalore available online. In the future, the other IITs and National Institutes of

Technology (NITs), too, are expected to be part of NPTEL.

Many private players are also now active in the online education sector. India's online educational market is estimated to be \$20 billion (₹1.08 lakh crore) and is growing very fast. Some expect it to double in the next five years.

Edukart, a private online education portal, has bachelor and master courses with degrees awarded by Mahatma Gandhi University, Meghalaya, and certificate courses with degrees issued by various industry bodies.

"Online education is a better option for many students who prefer to work while studying because it's more flexible and affordable. We have come across students from every strata of society though most students are in the 17-35 age range," said Ishan Gupta, chief executive officer of Edukart.

Several internet libraries are also supporting this online education drive. The Internet Archive, a non-profit internet library founded in 1996, makes a large number of texts, audios and images available to scholars and the general public in digital format. It has 30,00,000 free e-books.

The Khan Academy, a donor-supported not-for-profit venture founded in 2008, for instance, has over 4,000 free videos for students on a wide variety of subjects ranging from computer science to arts history. The Khan Academy is immensely popular. The YouTube channel of the academy has more than 530,000 subscribers. The donors of Khan Academy include Google and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Salman Khan, the founder of Khan Academy, is of Indian and Bangladeshi origins, and has multiple degrees from Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard.

Apart from online universities and private portals, there are internet libraries which make even recent works accessible. Bookfi.org has 1,232,446 books available for free download. The Online Library of Liberty, run by Liberty Fund, a private, educational foundation, has 1,367 classics on different subjects. The Mises Institute, a US think tank, has made more than 600 e-books, videos and thousands of papers and articles accessible to students and scholars.

However, some believe it is difficult to separate out the good from the bad over the internet. Anyone can create a website and put content online. Another criticism is that the internet can never replace face-to-face interaction.

Newcastle varsity woos students with scholarships

Amrita Nair-Ghaswalla

Mumbai, March 17

UK's Newcastle University is keen to attract world class minds from India. It is offering scholarships worth Rs 1.63 lakh (£2,000) for eight Indian students, payable towards the first year of tuition fees.

Newcastle has a long tradition of working with India, and it had introduced a range of post-graduate and research programmes catering to the needs of Indian students last year.

Talking to *Business Line* in Mumbai, Mike Green, Head of the School of Chemistry, Newcastle University, said: "We are eager to see more Indian students in Newcastle and more of our researchers in India. We are keen to attract the best there is."

KEEN ON RESEARCH

Stating that many Indian students were not aware of the opportunities that exist, Green said the University is keen to attract young Indians to study and engage in research.

The Indian Scholarship Postgraduate (NUIS-PG) awards are available for students who wish to enter into a post-graduate degree programme in the Science, Humanities and Social Sciences, Agriculture, Engineering and Medical Sciences faculties.

Studies are to commence in September 2013.

Apart from the eight NUIS-PG awards, the University is also offering 70 Newcastle University International Postgraduate Scholarship for international students.

Last year, the University had announced 19 post-graduate and 6 masters of research programmes across fields as varied as Biomedicine, Biosciences, Business and Management, Architecture, Finance and Accounting, Civil and Mechanical Engineering and Computer Sciences.

After the announcements, 10 scholarships for Indian students studying post-graduate programmes were handed out September 2012.

However, the 2013 scholarships are not automatic and students need to apply in a prescribed format, and must have been offered a place to study at the University. Completed application forms available on the Web site should be sent to india@ncl.ac.uk. The closing date is June 30.

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DANIK BHASKAR ND 18/03/2013

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कौन कहता है कि आप शाहरुख खान नहीं बन सकते?

आईआईटी से शिक्षा प्राप्त रवि कुचिमंची 1990 के दशक की शुरुआत में यूनिवर्सिटी ऑफ मैरीलैंड से फिजिक्स में पीएचडी करने के लिए अमेरिका गए। वहां उन्हें एक अच्छी सी नौकरी, बड़ा घर और खूबसूरत पत्नी मिल गई। जब इतनी सारी चीजें हों तो किसी की भारत वापस लौटने की इच्छा भला कहां होती है। अमेरिका में अलग-अलग कंपनियों में कई पदों पर काम करने के बाद कुचिमंची दंपती ने 'स्वदेश' फिल्म देखी। इस फिल्म में नायक शाहरुख खान नासा में काम करने के बाद अपने गांव लौट आता है। रवि ने अपना मन बना लिया। वह वापस लौटकर आंध्र प्रदेश में अपने गृह नगर के लिए कुछ करना चाहते थे। वे अमेरिका में रहने वाले भारतीयों द्वारा संचालित कई गैर सरकारी संगठनों से जुड़े थे, लेकिन यह अच्छी तरह जानते थे कि इनमें से किसी संगठन का कार्यक्षेत्र भारत के ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में नहीं है।

रवि ने अपनी नौकरी छोड़ दी और आंध्र प्रदेश में अपने गृहनगर राजमुंदरी लौटकर तीन क्षेत्रों में काम करने लगे। उन्होंने भूमिहीन मजदूरों के लिए किचन गार्डन की शुरुआत की। वे निर्धन किसानों को पचास रुपए में सब्जियों की देसी प्रजाति के बीज देते। इससे इतनी सब्जी पैदा हो जाती थी कि मजदूर के परिवार की जरूरतें पूरी हो सकती थीं। रवि ने अपने शहर के आसपास स्थित पचास गांवों के तीन सौ किसानों को ये


मैनेजमेंट फंडा
एन. रघुरामन

बीज दिए। इससे इस इलाके में भूख की समस्या काफी हद तक हल हो गई।

अगले चरण में उन्होंने देखा कि सैकड़ों ऐसे बच्चे हैं जो कुपोषण के शिकार हैं। उन्होंने रागी, ज्वार और बाजरा जैसी फसलों की खेती को प्रोत्साहित करना शुरू किया, जो राशन की दुकानों या सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली की दुकानों में मिलती हैं। उन्होंने किसान-मजदूरों को यह समझाया कि चावल के मुकाबले इन फसलों को उपजाने में लागत कम आती है और ये उनके बच्चों के स्वास्थ्य के लिए ज्यादा फायदेमंद हैं। किसान धीरे-धीरे रवि की बातों से सहमत हो गए और अपने जमीन के एक हिस्से में रागी, बाजरा आदि उपजाने लगे और इनसे बनी चीजें अपने बच्चों को खिलाने लगे। इसका नतीजा यह हुआ कि अगले तीन सालों में कुपोषण के तीसरे और चौथे चरण से पीड़ित बच्चों की संख्या 300 से कम होकर इस साल 70 रह गई। हालांकि, मुश्किलें अभी भी कम नहीं हुई थीं। इन किसानों के पास अनाज था, लेकिन उनके पास खाना पकाने का साधन बिरले ही मौजूद होता था। यहां रवि की आईआईटी शिक्षा काम आई। उन्होंने एक सस्ता ईजी कुकर विकसित किया, जो बांस

की कतरनों और जूट के टाट से बना था। इसमें खाना पकाने से ईंधन का खर्च भी आधा हो जाता है क्योंकि इसमें आधा पका खाद्यान्न डालना होता है। कुकर उष्मा के स्तर को बनाए रखता है और खाना पूरी तरह पक जाता है। आज आंध्र प्रदेश के कई हिस्सों में यह कुकर खूब लोकप्रिय हो रहा है।

रवि और उनकी पत्नी अरविंद खेती के टिकाऊ तरीकों को प्रोत्साहित कर किसानों को कम लागत वाला विकल्प उपलब्ध कराने की भरपूर कोशिश कर रहे हैं। फिजिक्स के अपने ज्ञान का उपयोग करते हुए रवि अब अपना ध्यान पेडल पावर जनरेटर पर केंद्रित कर रहे हैं जो दूरदराज के इलाकों में स्थित गांवों के लिए बिजली का उत्पादन करता है। इसका ऐसा असर हुआ है कि इलाके के स्कूलों में बच्चे खाली समय में पेडल करने लगे हैं जिससे बिजली पैदा होती है।

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फंडा यह है कि... हम में से कोई भी वास्तविक जीवन में हीरो बन सकता है। फिट्चों तो केवल प्रेरणा का माध्यम हैं जो असली, या काल्पनिक कहानियों के जरिये हमें प्रोत्साहित करती हैं और इन कहानियों को अपने जीवन में अपनाने की सीख देती हैं। यदि हम इन फिट्चों को सही नजरिये से अपनाएं तो मैं दावे के साथ कह सकता हूँ कि दुनिया की कोई ताकत हमें वास्तविक जीवन में शाहरुख खान या असली हीरो बनने से रोक नहीं सकती।

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Full funding for Phd

Gauri Rane/TNN

Ten Indian students were recently awarded the Victoria India Doctoral Scholarship by Louise Asher, Member of Parliament, Minister for Innovation, Services and Small Business, Victoria, Australia. This is the second year where selected students from India will be receiving a fully funded programme to pursue a PhD at various institutes in Victoria, Australia.

The scholarship, valued at AUD 90,000 and disbursed over three years, gives Indian students an opportunity to work with and assist Australian researchers using cutting-edge research infrastructure and facilities.

Students are eager to experi-

ence the facilities and infrastructure the universities are offering.

"The textile department of Deakin University has a reputation for being at the forefront of multidisciplinary research. I look forward to work in collaboration with people from other scientific faculties. This would give me not only an additional edge in research, but also offer opportunities to look at the problems from a different perspective," said Amol Janardan Patil, a postgraduate from IIT Delhi who will pursue a PhD in conducting polymers and collaboration with nanotechnology.



HT Lucknow

Mgmt students may soon 'graduate' from diplomas to degrees

HT Correspondent

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LUCKNOW: Getting degrees instead of diplomas may soon be a dream-come-true for IIM students.

Directors of all the Indian institutes of management would meet on Tuesday to discuss the matter threadbare. If the proposed meeting remains conclusive, then IIM grads would carry home degrees after their course.

Here's the simple roadmap: For awarding degrees to its students, IIM will have to acquire degree-granting status or at least deemed university status, a position being enjoyed by the IITs. Only then, the IIMs would be able to confer degrees on its students after completion of two years PG programme in management, the flagship course of IIMs.

HRD minister MM Pallam Raju and IIM-L director Dr Devi Singh confirmed that MHRD was working in this direction.

After the 27th annual convocation, the duo told media that Tuesday's meeting would be crucial. Last year in June, union minister Kapil Sibal had attended one such meeting of

all directors at IIM-L that saw consensus among directors over the degree issue.

"The IITs were formed under the Act of Parliament and hence they award B Tech degrees to engineering students. Similarly, if IIMs are required to award degrees, they would acquire similar degree-granting status," said one of the IIM professors.

There will be change in the quality of the courses as well. The name of the programme would be altered and not the syllabus.

"There was a pending demand from all IIMs to award degrees in place of diplomas. The MHRD has happily agreed to it. Globally, everybody recognises MBA degrees," a said professor.

"There was a long standing request from all IIM directors to confer degrees to students. People abroad at times do not understand PGP diploma. They feel it is slightly below degree or not on par with degree," said an official.

Sources said there would be more flexibility in the course, as now IIMs would be awarding degrees for full-time course, diplomas and certificates for short-term programmes.

SOON, IIMs TO AWARD DEGREES INSTEAD OF DIPLOMAS

LUCKNOW: The dream of IIM students getting degrees instead of diplomas is set to be met. The directors of all the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) would meet on Tuesday to discuss the matter threadbare. If the proposed meeting is conclusive, then IIM grads would carry home degree in their hand.

AMENDMENT TO UGC ACT?

- Experts say a major amendment to the UGC Act may be needed so as to bring the targeted 20,000 government and government-aided colleges as against the present 6,811 colleges under Section 12(B) of the Act and make them eligible for funding by the UGC.
- As the plan goes, like the progress of schools is assessed under various schemes, the same would be done for institutions of higher education. The emphasis, the minister said, was on quality education and how to improve it further.
- Raju said in order to raise the standards of institutions, especially in the technical education sector, efforts were on to integrate industry with academia
- He said there was an acute shortage of about 12.5 lakh teachers in the country and the student-teacher ratio was not being maintained.