

Making the Grade

Every year, only a few Indian institutions feature among the global top 50 ranking. Gauri Rane finds out why?

This year, only four Indian institutions feature among the global top 50 in the recently released QS World University Rankings. The institutions- IIT-Bombay, IIT-Delhi, IIT-Madras and Indian Institute of Science (IISc)- have been rated by subject area. While there is cause to celebrate this, experts and academicians say that these rankings aren't of much significance. They are of the opinion that it is not that our universities are not up to the mark, or cannot compete with their global counter parts. "It is just that the ranking criteria are more based on western norms and not the nuances of the emerging markets," explains TV Mohandas Pai, chairman, Indian Centre for Assessment and Accreditation. **Professor RK Shevgaonkar, director IIT-Delhi**, agrees. "Parameters used by ranking organisations are more suitable for the western education system and hence though there is certain joy about being ranked we will fall short in some way or the other," he says.

The global rankings are usually based on various parameters like student-faculty ratio, citations by faculty members, international student and faculty exchange and, academic and employer reputation of the institute. Going by this it is hard to believe that only a few Indian universities make it to the list. And when they do, they make a mark only in certain disciplines.

Although India has 42 central universities, 285 state universities, 130 deemed universities and 125 private universities, why is it that only a few make it to the coveted list? Critics attribute this to a lack of international standards in our institutes. They say that more institutions should benchmark themselves against the best in the world and endeavour to get into the top slot. "Our big universities have become too narrowly focused as many institutions have become separate specialised entities," observes Pai. Shevgaonkar adds, "There is no collaboration/ coordination within the university departments, hence the progress of one is not the progress of all."

Danny Byrne, senior education editor, QS gives a lowdown on the QS world rankings by subject. "Launched in 2011 these rankings provide a targeted exercise that is more responsive to the strengths of smaller institutions and those that specialise in a particular field or range of disciplines," he informs. The rankings look at 30 different disciplines, and ranks the top 200 institutions in each based on a combination of academic reputation, employer reputation and research citations. Shevgaonkar disagrees with Byrne. "There needs to be a better understanding of what the institute can contribute. We would like to be recognised for the institution's contribution to the country," he says. Why is it that not even a single Indian institute features in the "all-round top institutes" category? Byrne explains that institutes do not apply to get ranked. "Our data comes from two main sources: our reputational surveys, in which over 90,000 academics and employers worldwide tell us their views on the best institutions within a given subject area, and research citations." Academics, he says, are not allowed to nominate their own institution.

Experts however, sing a different tune. They say that usually the data used for ranking is collected from the websites of the institutes, and not many institutes have comprehensive websites. Pai agrees, "We need to improve the quality of data that goes online, market our institutions better, open up to global faculty and global students." Shevgaonkar says, "While it is not our policy, we need to encourage international students for admissions."

Despite limitations, the four institutes have managed to make a mark. So what is it that other institutes should

do to achieve this feat? Academicians suggest that institutes should focus on being the best in academics. “It is not that we lag far behind from our foreign counterparts, but there is a definite need to improve in more than one area,” advises Shevgaonkar.

Shegaonkar is bang on dot. Obviously we should not yet compare our institutions to a 378 year old Harvard or an 805 year old Cambridge, but surely we may aim to get there soon.

First Published: Friday, March 07, 2014, 16:40

http://zeenews.india.com/news/education/making-the-grade_916437.html#

विश्वविद्यालयों की गुणवत्ता पर आखिर कब सजग होंगे

दुनिया के शीर्ष सौ विश्वविद्यालयों की सूची में भारत का एक भी विश्वविद्यालय या संस्थान का शामिल नहीं होना चिंता की बात है। टाइम्स हायर एजुकेशन मैगजीन की यह सूची हमारे नीति-निर्माताओं को एक तरह से आईना भी दिखा रही है। यही नहीं अंतरराष्ट्रीय शैक्षणिक रैंकिंग एजेंसी क्यूएस की रिपोर्ट के अनुसार तो विश्व स्तर पर शीर्ष दस सौ विश्वविद्यालयों में भी भारत का कोई विश्वविद्यालय शामिल नहीं है। इससे देश के षडे-बड़े शिक्षण संस्थानों और विश्वविद्यालयों पर एक सवालिया निशान जरूर लगता है। प्रधानमंत्री डॉ. मनमोहन सिंह से लेकर राष्ट्रपति प्रणब मुखर्जी तक देश में शिक्षा और शिक्षण संस्थानों की बदहाली पर चिंता जाहिर कर चुके हैं, लेकिन प्रमुख सवाल बना हुआ है कि भारतीय शिक्षण संस्थान प्रतियोगिता में क्यों पिछड़ रहे? एक तरफ हम 2020 तक महाशक्ति बनने की बात करते हैं। यह दावा करते हैं भारत दुनिया की पांचवीं बड़ी अर्थव्यवस्था है, परंतु जमीनी स्तर पर वास्तविक तस्वीर एकदम उलटी है। ऐसा लगता है कि हम अपनी बुनियादी समस्याओं को दूर करने की बजाय ऐसे ही विकसित होने का सपना देख रहे हैं। आजादी के 65 साल बाद भी न तो सभी को शिक्षा मुहैया कराई जा सकी है, न ही रोजगार के अवसर ही प्रदान किए जा सके हैं। सबको शिक्षा का अधिकार देने वाला देश में कानून बन चुका है, लेकिन उसे अभी तक पूरी तरह लागू नहीं किया जा सका है। कम बजट और अनदेखी के कारण आज हमारे शिक्षण संस्थानों का स्तर लगातार गिर रहा है। साथ ही गुणवत्ता के मानकों पर भी वे खरा नहीं उतर पा रहे हैं। जाहिर है ऐसे शिक्षण संस्थानों से निकलने के बाद छात्रों को रोजगार मिलने की गारंटी नहीं होती है। छात्र अधिकचरी शिक्षा लेकर बाहर निकलते हैं, जिनका बाजार में कोई मोल नहीं होती है। एसोचैम के अनुसार तकनीकी और प्रबंधन संस्थानों से निकलने वाले मात्र 30 फीसदी छात्र ही नौकरी पाने के काबिल होते हैं। ज्ञान के क्षेत्र में हम ऐसे शिक्षण संस्थानों के बल पर दुनिया से मुकाबला नहीं कर सकते हैं। पैसे वाले अपने बच्चों को विदेशों में भेज अच्छी शिक्षा दिला देते हैं। कुछ संस्थान खुले भी हैं, मगर उनमें शिक्षा काफ़ी महंगी है और ये शिक्षण संस्थान गुणवत्ता के लिहाज से विश्वस्तरीय भी नहीं हैं। तो सवाल उठता है कि हम किस तरह के कौशल का विकास कर रहे हैं। अभी देश में 700 विश्वविद्यालय व 35539 कॉलेज हैं, लेकिन फिर भी उच्च स्तर के शिक्षण संस्थानों की कमी है। प्राचीन काल में तक्षशिला, नालंदा व विक्रमशिला विश्वविद्यालयों का उच्च शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में वैश्विक स्तर पर दबदबा था। दुनिया भर से छात्र शिक्षा ग्रहण करने यहां आते थे। मगर अब अच्छी शिक्षा के लिए भारतीय छात्र अमेरिका और ब्रिटेन के विश्वविद्यालयों का रुख कर रहे हैं। यदि शिक्षा और शिक्षण संस्थानों को विश्वस्तरीय बनाना है तो सरकार को शिक्षा सेक्टर पर जीडीपी का छह फीसदी से अधिक खर्च करना होगा, जैसा कि कोठरी आयोग ने सुझाव दिया था पर भारत सरकार ने कभी भी शिक्षा पर इतना खर्च नहीं किया है। साथ ही यह भी देखना होगा कि शिक्षा की गुणवत्ता को ऊपर उठाने को लेकर हमारी नीति और नीयत कैसी है।

NUMBER OF GIRLS IN IITs CONTINUES TO BE LOW

Vanita Srivastava

vanita.shrivastava@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The gender swing on IIT campuses continues to be tilted heavily in favour of boys, with only 8% to 15% of the undergraduate students consisting of girls.

While the percentage of girls in post graduate classes and research on IIT campuses has gone up, the proportion of girls in the undergraduate level continues to be very low.

This year nearly 25% of the total candidates who have registered for the JEE(mains) exams are girls. But the registrations do not translate into admissions.

While in IIT Bombay the percentage of girls at the undergraduate level was 8%, the total proportion on the campus was 23%.

In IIT Delhi, of the 3674 students at the undergraduate level only 437 were girls that is a little over 11%. In IIT Madras, around 12% of undergraduate students are girls.

"Although the proportion of girls in undergraduate level is low, that in M.Tech, MSc and Phd is good and is constantly increasing," IIT Madras director Bhaskar Ramamurthi told HT.

"We have also started a secure pickup and drop service in the nights upto 2 am from the labs," he said.

At present the number of girls across the IITs is just around 10-12%.



डॉ वेदप्रताप वैदिक

गुलाम विश्वविद्यालय

हमारे देश में लगभग 250 विश्वविद्यालय हैं और कई नए विश्वविद्यालय खुलते जा रहे हैं। लेकिन उनकी स्थिति क्या है? उनका स्तर क्या है? क्या उनके स्तर को नापने का कोई पैमाना हमारे है? बस एक ही पैमाना है। वह यह है कि कितने छात्र उसकी परीक्षाओं में बैठते हैं और उनमें से कितने पास होते हैं। यह पैमाना इतना लचीला है कि जो विश्वविद्यालय जितना चाहे इसे

झुका लेता है। अन्य विषयों के ही नहीं मेडिकल के छात्र भी थोक में पास कर दिए जाते हैं। विश्वविद्यालय में भर्तियों के भी क्या कहने? अंधेरगदी मची हुई है। कई प्रांतों में जातिवाद और भाई-भतीजावाद का नग्न नृत्य तो होता ही है, आजकल दलालों और अध्यापकों की मिलीभगत से सर्वथा अयोग्य छात्र भी ऐसे विषयों में प्रवेश पा जाते हैं, जिनमें स्नातक बनने के बाद वे अपनी अयोग्यता के कारण लोगों की जान से भी खेलते रहते हैं।

इतना ही हमारे विश्वविद्यालयों के बारे में हम जानते ही हैं। लेकिन टाइम्स पत्रिका हर साल जो सारी

दुनिया के विश्वविद्यालय का मूल्यांकन करती है, उसमें पहले 100 विश्वविद्यालयों में भारत का कोई भी विश्वविद्यालय नहीं है। 100 में से एक भी नहीं। हम भारत को जगत्पुरू कहते नहीं अघाते। भारत के नालंदा, तक्षशिला, विक्रमशिला जैसे विश्वविख्यात विश्वविद्यालयों के गुण गाते हम नहीं थकते लेकिन हमारे आजकल के एक-दो सर्वश्रेष्ठ विश्वविद्यालयों का उक्त सूची में 400वां स्थान मिला है। चीन और रूस के कुछ विश्वविद्यालय 50वें स्थान के आस-पास हैं।

ऐसा क्यों है? इसलिए है कि हम लोग नकलची हैं। कोई

नकलची कितना भी शानदार हो, असली के सामने तो वह दौरेम दर्जे का ही बना रहेगा। विश्वविद्यालय में मौलिकता का अभाव है। वे पश्चिम के शैक्षणिक ढांचों में ढले हुए हुए हैं। हमारे अध्ययन के विषय, उनकी अध्ययन पद्धति, उनका अनुसंधान, उनकी शोध-सामग्री, उनका पाठ्यक्रम और पाठ्य पुस्तकें पश्चिम की नकल भर होती हैं। विदेशी भाषा के माध्यम से पढ़ानेवाला कोई विश्वविद्यालय श्रेष्ठ हो ही नहीं सकता। हमारी शिक्षा-पद्धति से जब तक यह भाषाई गुलामी दूर नहीं होती, भारत के विश्वविद्यालय पिछड़े ही रहेंगे।

THE HINDU BusinessLine

IIT Delhi, Unicef host conference on sanitation coverage

Our Bureau

Mumbai, Mar 7:

The statistics are alarming. In India, more than 620 million people do not use toilets. Although nearly 20 million people are starting to use toilets every year, the rate of adoption does not meet the demand essential to break the inter-generational habit that was taught to them as toddlers.

In order to amplify the discussion about open defecation in India, a conference on sanitation was organised by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi and Unicef, bringing together representatives from Government, multilateral agencies, grassroots organisations, technology institutions and citizens' groups.

Through an innovative campaign, more than 110,000 people, especially the young and digitally connected, have pledged their support to the cause by signing a petition addressed to the President of India.

"Success in achieving the goals in sanitation coverage requires not only continued Government priority, but also the active involvement of all stakeholders," noted IIT Delhi Professor Vijayaraghavan M Chariar.

Students were represented by Varsha Gupta from Pune who highlighted the role of young people in monitoring issues related to water and sanitation and in holding different stakeholders accountable for what they have committed to accomplish.

As part of this campaign, IIT Delhi conducted several outreach activities among students to depict success stories and challenges.

UGC Chairman, Rajmohan Gandhi awarded Honoris Causa degrees

Press Trust of India | Amritsar March 07, 2014 Last Updated at 18:41 IST

UGC Chairman Ved Prakash and social worker Rajmohan Gandhi were today awarded honorary doctorate degrees by Guru Nanak Dev University here.

Prominent playwright and theatre director of Punjabi drama Ajmer Singh Aulakh was also conferred with the honorary degree of Doctor of Literature along with Gandhi, while Ved Prakash Doctor of Science.

While awarding the degrees at the 40th annual convocation, varsity's Chancellor and Punjab Governor Shivraj Patil said education does not mean the means to learn bread and butter alone but it means capacity to understand the truth, bliss and beauty of existence.

University's Vice Chancellor A S Brar also honoured the Governor, UGC Chairman, Gandhi and Aulakh with set of University publications and memento.

Besides, more than 600 degrees and medals in various disciplines were also awarded to students by the Chancellor and Vice Chancellor on the occasion.

HRD ministry strikes at hurried appointment of UGC secretary

[Akshaya Mukul](#), TNN | Mar 7, 2014, 06.24AM IST

NEW DELHI: The human resource development ministry has reacted to the 'illegal' appointment of secretary by the University Grants Commission and asked it to seek the endorsement of the full commission. The meeting of the full commission is slated for next week.

HRD minister MM Pallam Raju held meeting on Thursday with senior ministry officials to discuss the appointment which was made bypassing the rules. Newly-appointed secretary Jaspal Singh Sandhu has been asked to go on leave and hand over the charge to another official.

Sources say HRD ministry's action has created a peculiar situation and it would not be easy for the UGC to merely regularize the appointment of Jaspal Singh Sandhu by taking the matter to the full commission. Since Sandhu has already joined, it would be difficult for the commission to approve his appointment on retrospective basis. One UGC member said, "Commission cannot be given a fait accompli. Its job is to make appointment not merely approve what the chairperson has already done. Many of us are going to demand initiation of a fresh process of appointment. There is already a precedence of UGC expanding the search committee to appoint secretary."

High court notices to 13 IIMs over CAT discrepancies

[Bagish K Jha](#), TNN | Mar 7, 2014, 11.26AM IST

INDORE: Alleging large-scale irregularities in Common Admission Test (CAT) for admission to 13 Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), yet another group of IIM aspirants from Indore has sought a stay on the entire admission process this year.

Accepting their writ petition, a double bench of Madhya Pradesh high court on Thursday issued notices to all 13 IIMs. Notices were also served on coordination of committee for CAT 2013 and Prometric Testing, the partner agency of the test.

The aggrieved students, Yash Garg and Purvi Manot filed the fresh petition challenging the scaling and grading method of students. They also challenged the non-disclosure of raw scores under RTI and an agreement between IIM and Prometric which prevents disclosure of row scores and procedure adopted for allotment of the marks.

Counsellor for the students, Valmik Sakargayen said, "The students have alleged large-scale irregularities in scoring and grading. A student, Gautam Puri did not attempt any of the questions and scored 50 percentile. As such, the petitioners have appealed to set up a high-level committee to probe the irregularities and reserve seats for the petitioner in any of the IIMs."

CAT is first step for joining any of the IIMs in the country. After a 20-day exercise at 40 centres that began on October 16 last year, the CAT results were published on January 14. Thousands of students had cried foul over the scaling and grading process and had demanded revaluation. However, the demand was turned down by IIM-Indore which was the organizer of CAT-2013. A petition was filed by IIM aspirants Rutvij Waze and Vikram Singh, following which the HC had issued similar notices to the IIMs on February 18.

8 MARCH 2014

Business Standard

WEEKEND



Satya Nadella
CEO, Microsoft
BTech, Manipal
Institute of
Technology; MS,
University of
Wisconsin; MBA,
University of
Chicago

Thomas Kurian
Executive V-P, Oracle
BA, Electrical
Engineering,
Princeton; MBA,
Stanford University

Sundar Pichai
Senior V-P, Google
BTech, IIT-Kharagpur;
MS, Stanford
University; MBA,
Wharton

Nikesh Arora,
Chief Business
Officer, Google
BTech, Institute of
Technology,
Varanasi; MBA,
Northeastern
University

Sonny Singh
Senior V-P, Oracle
BTech, Punjab
Engineering
College; MS,
Stanford
University

Sridhar Ramaswamy
Senior V-P,
Google
BTech, IIT-
Madras, MS &
PhD, Brown
University

**Padmasree
Warrior**
Chief Technology
& Strategy
Officer, Cisco
BTech, IIT Delhi;
MS, Cornell
University

ORDINARY PEOPLE

A middle-class upbringing, with its emphasis on education, the rigour and discipline instilled in schools and colleges in India and American meritocracy are propelling Indians to the top of more and more Fortune 500 tech companies, says **Indulekha Aravind**

"I was rushed from childhood that education was the only salvation, the only security you had, the one thing nobody could take away from you," recalls Anil Menon, president of smart-connected communities at Cisco. His father worked in a telecom company, his mother was a homemaker and his life in Bombay those days was "typically middle-class" and, says Menon, one of the senior-most executives in Cisco. The milieu Menon talks about would be familiar to many Indians who have risen through the ranks of Fortune 500 technology giants, newly-appointed Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella being the latest to join the tribe. While there can be no "formula" for success and without getting into stereotypes, a look at other Indians at the forefront of top US tech companies does reveal similarities.

The kind of background Menon describes is one. "While there are Indians from wealthy segments in important positions as well, you will see a huge number of individuals from the middle-class in leading positions in different companies or running their own companies," affirms Deepak Visweswaraiah, India MD of NetApp. His firm's executive vice-president and one of those next in line for the top job is also an Indian from a similar background: George Kurian's father worked with Graphite India in Bangalore and he and his twin, Thomas, migrated to the US when they were 17. Thomas is now executive vice-president at Oracle, reporting directly to Larry Ellison and, like his brother, talked about as a CEO candidate. Cisco CTO Padmasree Warrior's father was a professor, Google Chief Business Officer Nikesh Arora's an Indian Air Force officer and Nadella's, an IAS officer.

Being a member of this great Indian middle class before liberalisation in an age marked by high reservations in government jobs and few opportunities in the private sector had several implications, principal among them being the emphasis on education and the pressure to prove themselves because you simply could not afford to fail. Arora, the most important executive in Google after founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin and CEO Eric Schmidt, made a similar point in an address at Northeastern University. "My goals were simple when I came here: I had to get through two years, I had to make sure I didn't run out of money, I had to make sure I did well, and I had to make sure I was able to return his money (Arora's father loaned him \$3,000, his life-savings). Failure was not an option."

The foolproof route to success in the pre-'90s India, where these executives grew up, was a seat in one of the five Indian Institutes of Technology, or IITs. Established in 1950 with the first campus in Kharagpur in West Bengal, the IITs soon earned the reputation of churning out world-class engineers, much of that was contributed by the rigorous criteria

for entry. Despite the mushrooming of options after liberalisation, a seat in an IIT continues to be highly prized; nearly 500,000 wrote the entrance exam for the 9,647 undergraduate seats across 17 IITs in 2012, the last year in which admissions depended solely on the exam.

The pre-liberalisation brain drain transported the reputation to the US. As a CRS feature titled *Important from India* notes, "The best and brainiest among them (Indians in the US) seem to share a common credential: they're graduates of the IITs." Though Nadella, a graduate of Manipal Institute of Technology, proved that not all Indian success stories are from IITs, its alumni continue to hold key positions: Cisco's Warrior as well as Google's senior vice-presidents, Sridhar Ramaswamy, Sundar Pichal and Vic Gundotra, to name just a few. Oracle Senior Vice-president Sonny Singh, a Stanford graduate who completed his engineering from Punjab Engineering College, says while Indian engineering colleges in general enjoy a good reputation in the US, the IIT brand continues to remain above the rest. "The quality of education at IIT is extremely high, but more important is the selectivity. When you take the best and brightest of a country the size of India, you're already getting the cream of the crop. And you end up seeing a lot of them come to the US to top-notch universities," says Singh.

Former IITians also give credit to the ecosystem on campus. "While the curriculum is rigorous and challenging, I think I benefitted most from being challenged by a lot of smart people around me. So, when I came to Berkeley to do my PhD, it wasn't as difficult a transition as it might otherwise have been," says Ramesh Govindan, professor of computer science at University of Southern California and an IIT-Madras alumnus. The highly competitive atmosphere in class is considered to serve as a useful training ground for the cut-throat corporate world.

Such has been the export of IITians to the US that the moment you get out of grad school, you become a part of an enviable network. "Many American cities have pan-IIT alumni chapters, while in places like the Bay Area in San Francisco individual IITs have active chapters. For example, at an IIT-Madras alumni meeting there, at least 100 people turn up. That's also a factor in the continuance of the success of IITians in the US," says R. Nagarajan, dean (International and alumni relations), IIT-Madras.

It is tempting to buy into the theory that "Indians are good at technology", and that technical careers in the US are the field of Indians especially with Microsoft founder Bill Gates famously remarking that South Indians are the "second smartest people in the world, after the Chinese." But this notion is more the result of the numbers than just a stereotype, argues Singh, currently based in California. "If you take all the people of Indian origin in the US workforce and which part of a company they work in, you will see a lot of people in finance, human resources and at various levels of

management but the concentration of people, just by the virtue of how they've come here, happens many a time to originate in the technology side — It's less of a stereotype than the reality." But that doesn't mean that they are not good at other things, he cautions, with a chuckle. "It's dangerous to confuse causality and correlation."

But irrespective of whether you studied at IIT or a regional college, an Indian undergraduate is usually held to possess certain qualities. Mani Chandry, professor emeritus of computer science at California Institute of Technology, says there are attributes he has noticed among Indian students that sets them apart from other foreign students. These include "superb written and spoken English, familiarity with textbooks, technical papers and online courses, and experience with modern software technologies." The hunger to succeed among first-generation immigrants holds as true for Indians. Extending this to the analysis about why Indians are occupying senior positions in more and more Fortune 500 technology companies, Chandry says: "Many learn disciplines in addition to their undergraduate majors — some computer science graduates also learn, informally or formally, about business, law or even medicine."

The Indian system develops the ability to work long hours and to be focused, adds Menon, who considers his formative years at a Mumbai Jesuit school and the discipline it inculcated his "secret weapon." Arora, in an interview to *The Indian Express*, had expressed similar sentiments. "You can have a debate about which education system is better, and I think for a majority of us, at least for me, what worked in the Indian education system was the rigour."

Many Indians are also picked up outside the classroom, growing up in India. For Nadella, it was playing cricket when he was in the Hyderabad Public School team that helped him learn some valuable lessons. "I think playing cricket taught me more about working in teams and leadership that has stayed with me throughout my career," he had said after he was named CEO, Google's Arora, in a 2012 interview with *Business Standard*, credited his ability to adapt to any situation to the peregrinations that came with being the son of an Air Force officer: a quality he had been told at his Google interview would be essential.

Equally important was their experience in US universities and, later, in corporate America. "In my experience, the key to the success of Indians is that deep down they have developed a confidence, not just in their abilities, but in the fact that if you put in the hours, the system will reward you," says Menon. Despite the occasional talk of racism and glass ceilings, the culture of meritocracy in the US is crucial. Author Sujata Mehta, currently working on a book on migration, wrote in *TIME* recently, "When my family went to America,

we left behind a system in which people are often denigrated because of their caste, religion, language or skin colour. The US, of course, has its own deeply troubled history with regard to race, but its path has tended toward more equality," Govindan agrees. "The US system comes close to a meritocracy: at least in the tech industry, it matters less who you know, and what your history is, and more what you're capable of technically and whether you have the emotional maturity to lead and to be effective in teams."

The other claim that Nadella's elevation has provoked is that Indians are finally increasing their representation in the top management of Fortune 500 companies. Success stories like PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi and MasterCard CEO Ajay Banga would lend credence to this. Oracle's Singh, while agreeing that there are definitely more Indians in managerial roles now than a couple of decades ago, sees it as a natural result of more Indians joining the workforce. "It's a natural expansion of opportunity that takes place as the numbers go up. As the size of the Indian diaspora and population in the US increases, you will find more people of Indian origin in the workforce and simultaneously, more people in different parts of the organisation and hierarchy."

But when an Indian makes it to the top of a Fortune 500 company, is the ecstatic reaction "back home" justified, given that their success had been achieved outside India? (Some even suggest that India, with its excessive emphasis on frugal engineering and environment management, may not be the best place to nurture global CEOs — which calls for highly evolved skills in innovation, finance and human resources.) Cisco's Menon says we need to differentiate between taking pride, which is acceptable, even natural, and taking credit. Nadella, he says, could be a role model for many students growing up in India. "The jobation in India is not really about chest-thumping. MindTree Chairman Subroto Bagchi says, "We only take pride in the certificate of origin; we have the humility to accept that way too many factors contribute to an individual's success in life," he adds. "We feel happy that one among us has made it. It is an illustration of what we can achieve both individually and collectively, despite the state of the environment in the country."

Oracle's Singh says even taking credit would not be entirely amiss. "We should not take away from the fact that people like Nadella or Nooyi or Anshu Jain (Deutsche Bank co-CEO) have achieved pretty significant positions in their respective companies — that in itself is cause for celebration. That they are Indian is a great source of pride — we should enjoy and celebrate that. And if there's a bit of media frenzy, so be it."

Page 2: On a group and a prayer