

Newspaper Clips

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A step for the better

The common entrance examination for admission to undergraduate engineering courses to be held from the next academic year is a positive step — not just because it aims to set a national standard to evaluate students, but it also puts the focus back on doing well at school. Students who neglected school-leaving exam grades and joined coaching centres, aiming solely at cracking the IIT entrance test, will now have to find a balance that may serve them better in their lives and careers.

The compromise formula, with varying percentages of weightage to school finals, marks in two different tests — JEE Main and Advanced — to be taken the same day and percentile calculations to determine the mean to bridge marks from different streams (like CBSE, ISC and state boards), may seem a complicated way of tinkering with the existing system. But the new system should eliminate the need to take multiple entrance tests in different parts of the country at great expenditure of nervous energy in students and financial cost to parents. It's now up to the states to devise a common standard that should, in the long run, offer all citizens a level playing field.

If concessions are sought and exceptions made, it would once again lead to the kind of chaotic choices that students must make in determining their careers. We will of course have to think again if the new system adversely affects the prospects of rural students, some of whom now excel at the IIT entrance tests.

REFORMS IN ENTRY TO , NIITS A GOOD MOVE

The inclusion of Class 12 results in assessing the eligibility of students seeking admission to engineering colleges is a good step. The stress on engineering entrance tests for admissions to all prominent colleges made students neglect the Class 12 board exams and also increased pressure on them. Similarly, holding a single entrance test for , and other centrally-funded will save students' time and effort, as they would not be required to prepare differently for different exams. This will also help choosing accomplished candidates.

29 May 2012 | Hindustan Times (Lucknow)

TOPPERS HAIL ANNOUNCEMENT

The city's toppers are happy with Union HRD minister Kapil announcement of making class 12 marks count for IITJEE. Many of those students who haven't done well in the and the AIEEE are excited that this new format would give them a fair chance. Priyanshu Gupta of RLB, who scored 96.8%, says: "It is a welcome move and we appreciate the decision." Son of an army officer, Anirudh Kulkarni (96.2%) of APS Nehru Road said it is a good initiative by and this would give a better chance to students. Tirath Raj Dwivedi (95.8%) of APS also hailed the decision. Apurva Tewari of RLB, who scored 96.2%, was happy that for admission to all the centrally-funded , there would be 40 percentage weightage for performance in class 12 (after normalisation of marks).

reforms force students of Class 12 to redraw study strategy

MUMBAI: More work, greater emphasis on Class 12, a sudden reorientation of mindset: students appearing for the Joint Entrance Exam () next year are fretting over the announcement of the new pattern merely 10 months before they sit for the exam.

is the admission criterion to the Indian of ().

On Monday, the human resources development ministry announced a two-part admission process next year for the , including a first part screening process followed by a second exam that would determine the merit . In the first part weightage will be given to a student's Class 12 board exam based on a percentile score.

"It's wrong to do it when we have just 10 months left to give the exam," said Harsh Khara, 17, a aspirant. "They could have brought it in for 2014. We will have to prepare harder for the boards now. We will need to reorient ourselves."

With two exams, one main and one advanced, students suspect they will have to work harder.

Senate members of IITBombay also pointed out that it would be unfair to those candidates who had taken the exam this year and plan to attempt the exam again next year.

The ministry's rationale for bringing in the reforms includes doing away with the proliferation of coaching classes and bringing back importance into the school system. Coaching see in the reforms further opportunities. Pace is planning to open more junior colleges where students prepare for both and Class 12, in addition to the six that are already operational in Mumbai.



"I am seeing a big rush for these integrated programmes," said Praveen Tyagi, director of IITian's Pace, a coaching . "All my expansion has been along these lines."

Anand leads protest against new IIT admission test format

TNN | May 30, 2012, 03:11 AM IST

PATNA: Hundreds of underprivileged students aspiring to join IITs on Tuesday took out a rally in the city under the leadership of Super-30 founder and noted mathematician Anand Kumar to protest against the Centre's decision to change the format of IIT admission test from next year.

Under the new format, instead of one examination for admission to the 15 IITs across the country, there will be two examinations - JEE-Main and JEE-Advanced. In the main exam, 50% weightage will be given to performance in the Class 12 boards, which will be used as a filtering process. A candidate's performance in the advanced examination will determine his/her admission to the IITs.

Besides, there will be no separate examination for admission to non-IIT engineering colleges from next year. Admission to the various National Institutes of Technology (NITs) and centrally funded engineering colleges across India will be based on the JEE-Main and JEE-Advanced

examination.

"If there can be one test for the more competitive AIIMS examination, which has fewer seats and more candidates, and IITs, why can there be no single test for IITs? The process being adopted is more cumbersome and it will only add to pressure on students," Anand said.

He told mediapersons that the move to change the examination format from 2013 would cause confusion among the current batch of students. "They have already completed their Class XI. If at all the new system is to be implemented, it should be effective from 2014, so that the students get enough time to adjust. After all, the changes are for students only," he added while reacting to the Union HRD minister's decision.

Maintaining that there was still uncertainty about the mechanism of two-tier test, he said if the JEE-Main and JEE-Advanced examination are held the same day, it would be psychologically draining for the poor students. "More thought needs to be given to the proposed changes before implementing them," he added.

"The proposed reform to bring focus back to the schooling system by giving weightage to performance in Class XII Board examinations normalized on percentile basis would also be a serious challenge, as there is huge gulf between schools of the CBSE and ICSE boards and those under state boards. The formula to be adopted for percentile calculation is also not clear, as all state boards have different yardsticks," Kumar added.

Anand said the new system would make students more dependent on coaching, as they would have to prepare for three different tests - JEE-Main, JEE-Advanced (which will also have aptitude test), and for scoring high marks in the Plus Two examinations. "What is more, the students from rural areas, who don't have the advantage of quality schooling, will face disadvantage in qualifying for the JEE-Advanced examination for no fault of theirs," he said.

Engineering CAT will hit rural students: Super 30 founder

PATNA: The move of the joint councils of IITs, NITs and IIITs to hold a common admission examination would make it more difficult for students, especially those from rural areas where school infrastructure is poor, Super 30 founder Anand Kumar said on Tuesday.

'If there can be one test for more competitive AIIMS examination, which has fewer seats and more candidates, and IIMs, why can't there be so similar test for IITs,' Kumar said.

'The process being adopted is more cumbersome and it will only add more pressure on the students,' he said.

Anand said the move to implement the common admission examination from 2013 would create



Anand Kumar's Super 30, set up a decade ago, has been lauded by Time magazine as the best in Asia. The institute provides free residential coaching to 30 meritorious students from the underprivileged sections of the society and so far 263 students have made it to the IITs

confusion among the current batch of students. 'If at all the new system is to be implemented, it should be at least from 2014 so that the students could have enough time to adjust. After all the changes are for the students.'

Maintaining that there was uncertainty still about the mechanism of the proposed two-tier test, he said if JEE-Mains and JEE-Advanced were held the same day it would be psychologically draining for the students. 'More thought needs to be given to the proposed changes before implementing them,' he added.

Anand said the present system would make students more dependent on coaching, as they would require it for three different examinations.

AGENCIES

Nitish urges Sibal to reconsider new criterion for IIT-JEE

Urging union HRD Minister Kapil Sibal to reconsider his move to change the existing eligibility criteria in the IIT joint entrance test, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Tuesday said the new proposal will discriminate against students with poor socio-economic status.



In a letter faxed to Sibal today, Kumar said, "Such proposals will favour students with elite background and discriminate against students with poor socio-economic status. Any examination system should be inclusive. Any change in the existing examination system will have far reaching consequences, which is unwarranted."

Sibal had yesterday mooted a new proposal, whereby a student would have to secure at least 80 per cent marks in the class 12 Board examinations as compared to the present requirement of 60 per cent for sitting in the IIT-JEE test.

Requesting Sibal to reconsider the proposed change in the existing examination system, the chief minister said students from backward regions of the country would be the most affected by the new proposal.

"In the existing system, larger pool of students with different socio-economic background are able to appear in the entrance examination. This explains better performance of students from backward regions in the IIT examination," he added.

RJD supremo Lalu Prasad also opposed the move and described it as a "wrong step".

"The proposal has been brought under a conspiracy to deny entry of the students coming from poor and deprived backgrounds into the IIT," he said.

"We strongly oppose it and I will personally take up the issue with Sibal," he added. When contacted, Congress leader Shakeel Ahmed refused to comment, saying he did not have any details about what the HRD minister had proposed.

Coaching centres cash in on new JEE norms

M.SARASWATHY
Mumbai, 29 May

Institutions offering coaching classes for admission to the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) have been quick to sniff business opportunities in the new norms for entrance examinations to these. Some have already increased fees, citing additional expenses on preparing study material for board examinations.

Yesterday, it was decided that from 2013, there would be a single entrance examination for admission to the IITs, the International Institutes of Information Technology and the National Institutes of Technology. Equal weightage would be given to marks secured in Class XII Board examinations and performance in the entrance test.

Coaching institute IITian's Pace already has an integrated programme for the IIT-JEE entrance test and Class XI and XII examinations, through its junior colleges in Mumbai. Managing Director Praveen Tyagi says, "The decision has come as a boon for us, as we have already been offering coaching for Board examinations. About 90 per cent of the new admissions are for the integrated programmes." He added there was a rise of 20 per cent in the institute's fees in April, owing to investment needed for material for Board

examinations.

Rao IIT Academy also plans a 10 per cent rise in fees for the batch appearing for the IIT entrance test this year. Chandan Dikshit, planning and strategy head, says the fee increase would help provide aggressive coaching for Board examinations.

Triumphant Institute of Management Education Director Manek Daruwala said there would be no impact on the institution, as students here were already tutored for Board examinations. "We just need to be more involved with schools for Class XII preparation," he said. For now, the institute would not increase fees.

Major institutes such as Career Point in Kota already began offering coaching for Class XI and XII examinations from January. "The new pattern, which gives 50 per cent weightage to Board examination marks, will actually increase business in the tutorial space," said chief executive Pramod Maheshwari. The institution would not increase fees this year.

...कोचिंग संस्थान फिर भी हैं किंग!

एम सरस्वती
मुंबई, 29 मई

नए परीक्षा पैटर्न से संबंधित नियम भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान (आईआईटी) में दाखिले के लिए ट्यूशन मुहैया कराने वाले कोचिंग संस्थानों के लिए नए कारोबारी अवसर के तौर पर सामने आए हैं और कोचिंग संस्थान भी इसका फायदा उठाने की तैयारी में जुट गए हैं।

कोचिंग संस्थान न केवल नए पैटर्न से निपटने को तैयार है बल्कि कुछ संस्थानों ने तो अतिरिक्त सामग्री की आवश्यकता को देखते हुए अपने अपने शुल्कों में भी इजाफा कर दिया है। प्रवेश परीक्षा के नए नियमों के तहत 12वीं बोर्ड के परीक्षा में प्राप्त किए गए अंक को भी समान महत्व दिया जाएगा और यही वजह है कि कोचिंग संस्थानों ने अतिरिक्त पाठ्य सामग्री मुहैया कराए जाने की स्थिति को देखते हुए अपने अपने शुल्क में इजाफा कर दिया है। कल ही इस आशय का फैसला किया गया कि वर्ष 2013 से केंद्र सरकार से सहायता प्राप्त सभी इंजीनियरिंग संस्थानों में प्रवेश के लिए एक कॉमन प्रवेश परीक्षा आयोजित की जाएगी। इन संस्थानों में

12वीं में प्राप्त अंकों को बराबर महत्व मिलने के फैसले के बाद इंजीनियरिंग की कोचिंग देने वाले संस्थानों ने फीस में की वृद्धि।

आईआईटी, अंतरराष्ट्रीय सूचना और प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान (आईआईआईटी) और राष्ट्रीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान (एनआईटी) शामिल हैं। 12वीं बोर्ड में प्राप्त अंक और प्रवेश परीक्षा में प्राप्त अंक का अनुपात 50:50 होगा। कोचिंग संस्थान पहले ही आईआईटी जेईई कोचिंग देते हैं। पेस के एमडी प्रवीण त्यागी ने बताया, 'यह फैसला हमारे लिए वरदान की तरह है क्योंकि हम पहले से ही बोर्ड परीक्षा के लिए कोचिंग दे रहे हैं। वास्तव में 90 फीसदी एडमिशन इंटीग्रेटेड कार्यक्रम के लिए होता है जिसकी पेशकश हम कॉलेजों में करते हैं।' त्यागी ने बताया कि इस साल अप्रैल से शुल्क में 20 फीसदी का इजाफा हो चुका है। उन्होंने बताया कि जेईई के लिए एक सामान्य प्रवेश परीक्षा के बारे में पता चलने के बाद इस बार दोगुनी संख्या में दाखिले हुए हैं।

आईआईटी में दाखिला हुआ मुश्किल

बिनायक प्रसाद

पटना। देश के सबसे बड़े संस्थान आईआईटी में अब केवल गुणवत्ता पूर्ण छात्र ही जा सकेंगे। दरअसल केंद्रीय मानव संसाधन मंत्री कपिल सिब्बल ने ग्री स्टेप का फार्मूला इजाद किया है। जिसमें एपीटीयूड टेस्ट, आईआईटी की परीक्षा और प्लस टू के मार्क्स होंगे। ऐसे में कपिल सिब्बल की आईआईटी में दाखिले की नई तरकीब का विरोध भी शुरू हो गया है। सिब्बल की नीतियों की खिलाफत का बीड़ा पटना के आनंद सुपर थर्टी संस्थान ने उठाया। संस्थान के मुताबिक सिब्बल के फार्मूले से बिहार के ग्रामीण इलाके के छात्रों को खासा नुकसान होगा। सिब्बल को अपनी नीतियों में बदलाव लाते हुए सिंगल सिस्टम को लाना चाहिए। संस्थान के प्रमुख आनंद का कहना है कि बिहार बोर्ड में छात्रों के सीबीएसई की तुलना में कम नंबर आते हैं। छात्रों का आईआईटी में जाना मुश्किल हो जाएगा।

आईआईटी में प्रवेश के लिए जारी रहेगी काउंसिलिंग

आंध्र प्रदेश हाईकोर्ट द्वारा अल्पसंख्यक कोटा को रद्द करने का मामला

● अमर उजाला ब्यूरो

नई दिल्ली। ओबीसी कोटा के भीतर अल्पसंख्यकों को अलग से 4.5 प्रतिशत आरक्षण दिए जाने पर भले ही आंध्र प्रदेश हाईकोर्ट ने रोक लगा दी है लेकिन मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय इसके आधार पर तत्काल कोई आदेश नहीं जारी करेगा। आईआईटी में चल रही प्रवेश प्रक्रिया भी जारी रहेगी। मंत्रालय को उम्मीद है कि 14 जून को आईआईटी में प्रवेश के लिए नाम तय किए जाने से पहले केंद्र सरकार सुप्रीम कोर्ट से हाईकोर्ट के फैसले पर स्थगन आदेश हासिल कर लेगी। उल्लेखनीय है कि केंद्र सरकार द्वारा अल्पसंख्यकों को 27 फीसदी ओबीसी कोटा के अंदर अलग से 4.5 प्रतिशत कोटा देने का फैसला सभी केंद्रीय शिक्षण संस्थानों में प्रवेश पर लागू किया गया है। वर्तमान में इसी कोटा के अनुसार आईआईटी में प्रवेश की प्रक्रिया शुरू की गई है। अभी काउंसिलिंग चल रही है। इसी बीच आंध्र प्रदेश हाईकोर्ट ने एक आदेश में अल्पसंख्यकों को अलग से कोटा निर्धारित

इंजीनियरिंग का सिंगल एग्जाम बनेगा सिरदर्द

पटना। आईआईटी, एनआईटी, आईआईआईटी और अन्य केंद्रीय संस्थानों में इंजीनियरिंग की सिंगल प्रवेश परीक्षा के मुद्दे पर नाखुशी के सुर भी सामने आने लगे हैं। पटना की प्रतिष्ठित कोचिंग सुपर-30 के संस्थापक आनंद कुमार ने कहा कि सिंगल प्रवेश परीक्षा होने से छात्रों के लिए आईआईटी में दाखिला पाना और मुश्किल हो जाएगा। खास तौर से ग्रामीण तबके के छात्रों को सबसे ज्यादा परेशानी होगी। कुमार ने कहा कि एम्स जैसे कम सीटों वाले संस्थान में प्रवेश के लिए एक टेस्ट होता है, जबकि उसमें छात्र भी ज्यादा बैठते हैं। वहीं आईआईएम के लिए भी अपना अलग टेस्ट है तो फिर आईआईटी के लिए अलग टेस्ट क्यों नहीं हो सकता है। जो नई व्यवस्था अपनाई जा रही है, वह काफी ऊहापोह वाली है। इससे केवल छात्रों पर दबाव ही बढ़ेगा। कुमार ने यह भी कहा कि 2013 से सिंगल प्रवेश परीक्षा लागू करने से मौजूदा बैच के छात्रों में भ्रम बढ़ेगा। यदि नई प्रणाली लागू की जानी है तो इसे 2014 से लागू किया जाना चाहिए, जिससे छात्रों को पर्याप्त समय मिल सके। उन्होंने कहा कि नए प्रारूप के तहत जेईई मेन और जेईई एडवांस्ड दोनों पेपर एक दिन में होने हैं, ऐसे में छात्रों पर इसका मनोवैज्ञानिक दबाव रहेगा। इसलिए बदलाव को लागू करने से पहले इस पर और विचार करने की जरूरत है। एजेंसी

किए जाने के फैसले को खारिज कर दिया है। ऐसे में आईआईटी ने केंद्र से पूछा है कि वह क्या करें। मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय के एक वरिष्ठ अधिकारी ने बताया कि वर्तमान में केवल आईआईटी में प्रवेश

प्रक्रिया चल रही है। अभी छात्रों की काउंसिलिंग की जा रही है। अल्पसंख्यकों को ओबीसी कोटा में से 4.5 प्रतिशत कोटा के तहत आईआईटी में कुल 443 सीटें रिजर्व हैं।

छात्रों की शिकायत सुलझाने को हर संस्थान में बनेगी कमेटी

नई दिल्ली। उच्च शिक्षा संस्थानों में पारदर्शिता लाने तथा छात्रों की समस्याओं की सुनवाई के लिए विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग ने सभी शिक्षण संस्थानों में एक कमेटी गठित करने का आदेश दिया है। इसके अलावा विश्वविद्यालय स्तर पर राज्य सरकार की ओर से ओम्बुड्समैन भी तैनात किए जाएंगे। समिति का गठन नहीं किए जाने पर यूजीसी संबंधित कालेजों व विश्वविद्यालय के अनुदान पर रोक भी लगा सकती है। यूजीसी ने इस संबंध में एक नियमावली जारी की है। आयोग से संबद्ध सभी विश्वविद्यालयों, कालेजों तथा डीम्ड विश्वविद्यालयों पर यह नियमावली लागू होगी।

30 May 2012 | Hindustan Times (Chandigarh) | HT Correspondent letters@hindustantimes.com

ORDER MAY HIT SELECTED STUDENTS' CHANCES

NEW DELHI: The government may challenge an order of the Andhra Pradesh high court, which scrapped the minority sub-quota on Monday, and obtain an interim stay. The development, however, is likely to jeopardise the chances of 335 students who qualified under the sub-quota in this year's Indian Entrance Exam (-JEE).

This year, the had allowed a 4.5% sub-quota within the 27% seats reserved for other backward classes (OBC) — the non-creamy layer-obc. Though as many as 445 seats were reserved for this category, only around 335 students qualified.

"We will wait for the human resource development ministry's order in this regard," said Dr GB Reddy, organising chairperson for 2012 -JEE.

Sources, however, maintained that if the government does not acquire an interim stay, the subquota seats will have to be merged with the OBC category.

IIT hopefuls left in a lurch as politicians escalate quota war



Salman Khurshid is battling for minority quota in IITs (left, IIT Delhi). The BJP, however, has accused him of appeasing the minorities for political gains.

By Ritika Chopra in New Delhi

THE fate of over 300 students is hanging in balance because of a brewing quota war.

On Tuesday, political parties escalated the war. BJP's L.K. Advani led the offensive from the principal Opposition party. Minority affairs minister Salman Khurshid played a strong defender of the cause.

The IITs had shortlisted 325 Muslim candidates for admission this time under the 4.5 per cent minority sub-quota introduced by the Centre recently.

According to IIT-JEE chairman G.B. Reddy, all of them were sure to get admission in the premier tech institutes as the number of seats reserved under the sub-quota is more than the number of students short-listed.

But with the Andhra Pradesh High Court striking down the minority sub-quota within OBC reservation, the fate of these students seemed uncertain on Tuesday. The Centre's announcement on challenging the high court's decision in the apex court wasn't of much help as Khurshid could not define a timeframe within which this would be done. Moreover, both Khurshid and the HRD ministry did not elaborate on what the IITs should do meanwhile.

"I've spoken to the HRD minister (Kapil Sibal) and he said that the admission process at the IITs



● We haven't stopped the counselling process, but we are worried as we haven't heard anything from the (HRD) ministry yet. We're trying to convey our concern to them ●

— G.B. Reddy, IIT-JEE chairman, on shortlisted Muslim candidates

was not complete. But the Supreme Court is on vacation and our law officers are also travelling. The attorney general should be back early next week and then we can take a call on how to go on about it," Khurshid added.

This is the first year of the new

sub-quota that the Centre had announced before the assembly elections in five states last year. The HRD ministry had subsequently asked all institutions under it to implement the quota from January. The IITs would have been the first to do it.

The law minister put up a strong defence for the reservation. "The expression of the word minority is both religious and linguistic. Moreover, the 4.5 per cent reservation is commensurate with the population of backward minorities based on Mandal Commission," he argued.

The BJP, however, said the quota was directed at appeasing Muslims for electoral gains. Terming the decision to approach the apex court as "unfortunate", Advani said the matter which should be solved by the executive is now being taken up by the judiciary. "The government is using it for its vested interest," he said.

Quota cloud over 325 who cracked IIT

Himanshi Dhawan &
Subodh Ghildiyal | TNN

New Delhi: The future of 325 IIT aspirants belonging to backward sections of minorities appears to be in limbo in the wake of the Andhra Pradesh high court striking down the 4.5% sub-quota for minorities within OBC reservation.

► 'They can move SC', P 11

The students, who are in the middle of the counselling process, were expected to be allotted seats by June 14.

With around 432 seats reserved for the minority sub-quota, these students were assured of a college and course of their choice, but now they face the prospect of losing their seat altogether as the court decision will mean they will have to compete for the 27% OBC seats.



'Quota candidates can move SC'

Himanshi Dhawan &
Subodh Ghildiyal | TNN

New Delhi: Law minister Salman Khurshid on Tuesday said HRD minister Kapil Sibal had told him that the IIT admission process was not complete yet, thereby implying that quota admissions may have to be scrapped unless the superior court intervened on the Andhra high court's ruling scrapping the 4.5% minority sub-quota.

Commenting on the fate of some 325 IIT aspirants belonging to backward sections of minorities, Salman Khurshid said, "The selected candidates can go to Supreme Court and seek relief." Sources in HRD ministry said they were evaluating the situation following the HC order even as Khurshid said they would move the apex

Cong misleading minorities, says BJP

The BJP on Tuesday slammed the government for deciding to challenge in the Supreme Court, the Andhra Pradesh high court's order quashing the 4.5% sub-quota for minorities and accused the Congress of misleading them with this politically-motivated step. "The fact remains that this is an issue where everybody has agreed to giving reservation on grounds of backwardness for which a provision exists. But to have to bring in a category based on religion is not sustainable," BJP spokeswoman Nirjala Sitharaman said. "The Congress is misleading, particularly the minorities, by saying there is strength in the argument," Sitharaman added. ■

court against the high court ruling. But till such time that the government moves a vacation bench of the SC, and is successful in obtaining a stay to the HC order, the future of these candidates appears bleak.

In fact, sources in the IIT Joint Admission Board confirmed that the tech institutes had sought advice from the

HRD ministry on the way ahead. Counseling for admission to 15 IITs and IIT-BHU and ISM-Dhanbad is currently underway and the process will go on till June 10. The web release of the first seat allotment will be made on June 14.

The HRD ministry had asked all institutions to implement the sub-quota from January 2012. The IITs are the first

to implement the government's decision.

Khurshid said the HC judgment had raised some interesting points and the Centre would challenge it in the SC.

He defended giving reservation to minorities, saying the quota was not given to specific religious groups but was targeted at a group of backward communities in the OBC list which belonged to religious minorities.

Expressing optimism, Khurshid argued, "It is no political setback to the government. We are in the process of helping the country discover the contents of affirmative action. We based our decision on the nine-judge Indira Sawhney judgment. If our understanding of the order is correct, then the Supreme Court will support us."

अल्पसंख्यक कोटे से दाखिले की चुनौती बढ़ी

जागरण ब्यूरो, नई दिल्ली : केंद्रीय शिक्षण संस्थानों और सरकारी नौकरियों में अल्पसंख्यकों के 4.5 प्रतिशत आरक्षण के खारिज होने से आइआइटी में दाखिला लेने वाले अल्पसंख्यक कोटे के छात्रों के समक्ष नई चुनौती खड़ी हो गई है। खास तौर से उन छात्रों के सामने जिन्हें काउंसिलिंग के बाद शॉर्टलिस्ट किया जा चुका है।

आंध्र प्रदेश हाई कोर्ट के फैसले के खिलाफ सुप्रीम कोर्ट से जल्द ही इस मामले में राहत न मिली तो यह समस्या और गहरा सकती है। इस बीच, आइआइटी ज्वाइंट एडमिशन बोर्ड ने सरकार से इस मामले में सलाह मांगी है।

सूत्रों के मुताबिक, हाई कोर्ट के फैसले से उपजी स्थितियों पर मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय भी हरकत में आ गया है। जरूरी तथ्यों के साथ कानून मंत्रालय की मदद के लिए मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्री कपिल सिब्बल ने अफसरों से मशविरा भी

- शॉर्टलिस्टेड छात्रों के दाखिले के लिए सुप्रीम कोर्ट पर टिकी निगाहें
- आइआइटी ने सरकार से मांगी सलाह
- जल्द राहत नहीं मिली तो समस्या और गहरा सकती है

किया है। मंत्रालय मानकर चल रहा है कि कानून मंत्रालय जल्द ही हाई कोर्ट के फैसले को सुप्रीम कोर्ट में चुनौती देगा। वहां से उसे स्थगनादेश मिल जाएगा और दाखिले की प्रक्रिया बाधित नहीं होगी। केंद्रीय कानून मंत्री सलमान खुर्शीद ने बताया कि उन्होंने भी मंगलवार सुबह इस मामले पर सिब्बल से बात की है।

बीते दिनों आइआइटी-जेईई के नतीजे आने के बाद पास हुए अभ्यर्थियों की इस समय काउंसिलिंग चल रही है, जो 10 जून तक चलनी है। 14 जून से अभ्यर्थियों को संस्थानों का आवंटन शुरू होने की उम्मीद

है। बताते हैं कि सभी भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थानों (आइआइटी), आइटी बीएचयू और इंडियन इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ माइंस (धनबाद) में पिछड़ों की कुल सीटों में 4.5 प्रतिशत कोटे के लिहाज से अल्पसंख्यकों के कोटे में चार सौ से अधिक छात्रों का दाखिला होना है। काउंसिलिंग के बाद सवा तीन सौ अल्पसंख्यक छात्र शॉर्टलिस्टेड भी किए जा चुके हैं।

आइआइटी की काउंसिलिंग पूरी होने के दौरान ही हाई कोर्ट के फैसले को चुनौती के साथ यदि सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने उस पर रोक लगा दी, तब तो दाखिला प्रक्रिया तय कार्यक्रम के तहत ही पूरी हो जाएगी, और अल्पसंख्यक छात्रों को पसंद के पाठ्यक्रम व संस्थान मिल सकते हैं, लेकिन ऐसा नहीं हुआ तो अल्पसंख्यक कोटे के लिए शॉर्टलिस्ट किए गए सवा तीन सौ छात्रों की सीटें भी 27 प्रतिशत पिछड़ों के सामान्य कोटे का हिस्सा हो जाएंगी।

Deccan Herald, ND 30/05/2012 P-8

Post IIT-JEE milestone

12-yr-old scores 85 pc in Class XII exam

PATNA: After cracking the highly competitive IIT-JEE, Satyam Kumar, the 12-and-half-year-old boy from Bihar has now passed Class XII examination with 85 per cent marks.

Satyam has become the youngest in the country to clear the Class XII CBSE examination, family sources on Tuesday claimed.

Satyam, a resident of Bakhrapur village in Bhojpur

district, cleared IIT-JEE from the Mumbai zone with an all-India rank of 8,137. He has been the youngest to crack what is considered to be the toughest qualifying exam in the country.

Satyam is currently studying in Rajasthan's Kota town, well-known for its IIT-JEE coaching centres. He stays with his younger brother and uncle. Satyam had also done his Class X from Kota.

"We are happy and celebrating his rare success. After all, it is a matter of pride for the family, village and the state," Satyam's uncle Rampukar Singh told agencies over telephone.

Singh said, "CBSE officials informed us that Satyam is the youngest to clear Class XII. The entire village is upbeat because he has become a role model for others."

The village celebrated his

success by bursting firecrackers and distributing sweets when he cracked IIT-JEE on May 18.

Satyam is busy preparing for next year's IIT-JEE. After cracking IIT-JEE this year, he made it clear that he would not join IIT because of his poor rank. He will attempt next year for a better rank. Kumar's father, Sidhnath Singh, a farmer, is proud of him.

Agencies

Heat index: Sitaram Bazar on top

CP & Bhikaji Cama Place Also On List Of 'Heat Islands', Says IIT Study

Jayashree Nandi | TNN

New Delhi: It's that time of the year when the scorching sun saps the energy out of you. But if you have been feeling hotter in certain parts of the city, blame it on the 'urban heat island (UHI) effect.' Heat islands — as they have been termed by scientists — are hot neighbourhoods which can record temperatures almost 8 to 10 degrees higher than areas with dense green cover. With the highest UHI level of 10.7 degree Celsius, Sitaram Bazar in Old Delhi tops the list of such spots.

In a previous study called Delhi-I, conducted by IIT Delhi and Meisei University, Connaught Place (CP), Sitaram Bazar and Bhikaji Cama Place emerged as the hottest places with a UHI level of around 8.3 degrees Celsius. The team's latest study Delhi-II has found that even night temperatures at these spots are equally high. At Sitaram Bazar, the night temperature is around 10.7 degree Celsius higher than the temperature at the coolest spot in the city. Scientists say that night temperatures are more in certain areas because during the day heat gets trapped in concrete structures like buildings.

Not only areas in Delhi, but places in Noida, Janakpuri, Badarpur, Lajpat Nagar also recorded a high UHI level. "The reasons are obvious. The built-up area at these spots is much higher

CAPITAL HOT SPOTS

Photo: Mohammed Ilyas

WHAT IS UHI? ▶ An Urban Heat Island (UHI) is a metropolitan area significantly warmer than its surroundings. As urban areas develop, buildings, roads and other infrastructure replace even little patches of open land or vegetation. Surfaces that were once permeable and moist become impermeable and dry. These changes cause some urban regions to become warmer, forming an 'island' of higher temperature

CAUSES OF UHI

- ▶ Lack of vegetation
- ▶ Built-up area
- ▶ Artificial heat from vehicles, car and building air conditioners

WHY SHOULD WE WORRY ABOUT UHI?

- ▶ Higher temperatures in summer increase energy demand for cooling and increase pressure on the electricity grid during peak periods of demand

- ▶ Increasing energy demand generally results in greater emission of air pollutants and greenhouse gases from power plants. Higher air temperatures also promote the formation of ground-level ozone

- ▶ Warmer days and nights, along with higher air pollution levels, can contribute to general discomfort, respiratory difficulties, heat cramps and exhaustion, non-fatal heat stroke, and heat-related mortality

UHI levels in different parts of the city as per IIT study

- ▶ **Very High:** Sitaram Bazar, CP, Bhikaji Cama Place, Noida, Badarpur
- ▶ **High:** Janakpuri, Moti Nagar, Kaushambi, Adarsh Nagar
- ▶ **Medium:** Lajpat Nagar, Sailing Club, Parmanand Hospital, Chirag Dilli, Yusuf Sarai
- ▶ **Low:** Neb Sarai, Dwarka, Rohini, Majnu Ka Tila, Loni 1, Loni 2, Vasant Kunj
- ▶ **Very Low:** Gurgaon, Buddha Jayanti Park, Sanjay Van, JNU



The team's latest study, Delhi-II, has found that even night temperatures at these spots are equally high. At Sitaram Bazar, the night temperature is around 10.7 degrees Celsius higher than the temperature at the coolest spot in the city. Residents blame cooling devices like ACs for the extreme heat

Meanwhile, residents of Sitaram Bazar blame cooling devices like air-conditioners for the extreme heat. "Houses in the area are very closely built and heat from the ACs doesn't get enough space to flow out. May be that makes the area hotter than other parts of Delhi," said Salim, a shopkeeper. "Scarcity of trees in the area also makes it warmer," said a cloth merchant.

Those who frequent CP felt that the ongoing construction work could also be a factor escalating the heat. Bijay Mandal, a security guard at CP, said, "Delhi Metro work and the increased pollution levels have turned the area into a furnace. There are 5-6 machines running here which emit enormous amounts of heat everyday."

(With inputs from Somreet Bhattacharya)

than that in other parts of the city. Moreover, heat generation from air-conditioners in cars and emissions from vehicles is more here," said Manju Mohan, professor, Centre for Atmospheric Sciences, who has led the study.

The team also compared Delhi's UHI level with other cities like London (8 to 9 degrees), Beijing (7.9 degrees) and Tokyo (8.1 degrees). Though some parts of Delhi

recorded a higher UHI level than that in other cities, Mohan said, "In most cities abroad, the effect has been measured for years before 2009 so we cannot say that Delhi's UHI level is the highest. But Delhi's figure is surely comparable to other cities globally. Most urbanized centres are facing the same problem."

The team is now working on how the UHI level can be

reduced. "To reduce the impact of the built-up area, we have to increase the reflectivity of surfaces. Buildings can be painted white and insulating material can be used on walls. Vegetation in these areas must be increased to minimize the UHI effect," Mohan added. Environment Protection Agency (EPA) of the US also suggests increasing the reflectivity of roofs and pavements.

Sibal asks students not to worry about DU cutoffs

New Delhi: HRD minister Kapil Sibal on Tuesday assured DU aspirants that there would be "no problem" of the kind they faced last year when the cutoff touched 100%. The minister was responding to a question posed by a reporter, a day after the CBSE

Class XII results were announced. According to statistics, over 3,000 students have scored more than 95% this year. The high cutoff marks, including 100% in one of Delhi's famous colleges, had triggered panic last year. ❧

Four IIMs among eight in Business Standard's top B-school bracket

BS REPORTER
New Delhi, 29 May

India's management education fraternity has delivered its judgment on the country's top business schools. Among the top 10 schools in India (mentioned alphabetically here) are the Indian Institutes of Management in Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Kolkata and Indore; Management Institute of Development Institute of Gurgaon; National Institute of Industrial Engineering in Mumbai; Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar; and XLRI, Jamshedpur.

The BS Best B-School Survey 2012 has been conducted by Business Standard in association with IMRB International, a leading market research agency in India,

and the results of the thirteenth survey of B-schools are available in the May 2012 issue of the Indian Management, which is now on stands.

The survey does not aim to rank the institutes, but puts them in 14 hierarchical categories: Super League 1, Super League 2, A1 through B4. The scores have been allotted on two broad parameters—audit scores and perception scores. The final score is a weighted aggregate, which has been used to put the institutes in one of the 14 categories that have been worked out. The audit module is comprehensive—it takes into account a range of elements such as intellectual capital, infra-

structure, admissions and placements, industry interface, governance and the scale of operations, each of which can be measured objectively. The perception scores take into account the viewpoint of the industry and the alumni.

This makes the survey of B-schools totally objective, unbiased and transparent, and helps benchmark the management institutes in addition to providing authentic information to all the stakeholders.

The survey is open to business schools all over India. The eligibility criterion is that they should be approved by the All India Council for Technical Education or the government or a university. Also,

at least two batches of students should have passed out of the institute. This is to assess the placements that happen at the campus. The questionnaires are sent to all approved B-schools, and they are requested to revert with the completed questionnaires to IMRB. Each completed questionnaire is thoroughly scrutinised for missing and misrepresented data, if any. The data are checked against the previous years' figures to discover and subsequently validate any major changes. Following this, a query sheet is generated for and cross-checked with each institute, through e-mail, phone or personal visits.

For the latest survey, questionnaires were sent to 2,400 business schools. About 200 schools sent their entries within the time limit.

ON THE TOP

The survey puts the B-Schools in 14 hierarchical categories. Here are some institutes falling in the top two categories

SUPER LEAGUE 1

- Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad
- Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore
- Indian Institute of Management, Kolkata
- Indian Institute of Management, Indore
- Management Development Institute, Gurgaon
- National Institute of Industrial Engineering, Mumbai
- Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar
- XLRI, Jamshedpur

We had to drop a few institutions from the final 197 that appear this year because the data supplied by

them were incomplete or there were some unexplained deviation from the data presented last year.

We are glad to note there were 63 new entrants in the list this year compared to last year.



SUPER LEAGUE 2

- Great Lakes Institute of Management, Chennai
- Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode
- Institute of Management, Nirma University, Ahmedabad
- Institute of Management Technology, Ghaziabad
- Institute of Management Technology, Nagour
- International Management Institute, New Delhi
- Jain Institute of Management Studies, Mumbai
- KJ Somaiya Institute of Management Studies & Research, Mumbai
- SP Jain Institute of Management & Research, Mumbai
- Symbiosis Institute of Management Studies, Mumbai

Deccan Herald, ND 30/05/2012 P-11

Upgrading teaching and teachers to meet new challenges

By M A Siraj

This century, already a decade old, presents the challenge of measuring up to the fast paced and breath-taking changes. India would need to adopt the latest technology in every sphere of life to ensure essentials of life for its 1.25 billion people. Former chief justice of the Supreme Court Justice M N Venkatachaliah recently put this challenge of technology in perspective at a recent round table dialogue on the topic 'Is India a failing state?'. He said: "Fifteen per cent of the world innovates, 50 per cent absorbs technology and 35 per cent is technologically disconnected."

The kind of changes that might occur in the very next decade demand that at least 20 per cent of the population in the 18-24 age group should be in the universities at any given time". Currently, only 12 per cent of those who complete Grade 12 go for higher studies and if timely action is not taken to enable a sizeable section to enrol and complete higher education, the

country would be a considerable disadvantage.

A predominantly agrarian economy, deficient planning, under-resourced education system, caste system, economic inequalities are some of the immediate issues we need to address. A phenomenal leap in educating the masses and skill development will hold the key to the future challenges. If indeed quality education could be ensured for a sizeable section of populace, India will emerge an economic powerhouse and will wield disproportionate influence in an area extending from the Straits of Malacca to Casablanca in meeting the needs of education and skill development of people in all those nations.

The first step to address the challenge begins with upgrading the quality of education in government schools, attended by 74 per cent of the nation's school-going children. It is this sector that is in a real shambles. What we need to do is to lift those at the bottom faster and the top higher. The task therefore begins from government schools and the ones who can



bring about the change are government school teachers, whose performance has so far eluded any effective monitoring and rigorous assessment.

To find out why some schools succeed where other do not, research agency McKinsey studied 25 of the world's school systems, including 10 of the top performers. The outcome of the study suggested that

three things mattered most with them: 1. Getting the right people to become teachers; 2. Developing them into effective instructors; and 3. Ensuring the system is available to deliver the best possible instruction for every child.

Best performing schools

McKinsey looked at the world's 10 best-performing schools systems, such as Finland's and Singapore's, and compared them to less accomplished ones. The study then identified six distinguishing features of the people who become teachers in these successful countries:

- The university students see the teaching profession as one of the top three career choices
- The ratio of applications to available places in initial teacher-education courses in these countries is roughly ten to one
- The starting salaries for teachers are in line with other graduate salaries
- The teachers in these successful countries spend about 10 per cent of their time on professional development - far higher

than in the US—and these same teachers regularly invite one another into their classrooms to observe and coach. It is therefore easy to conclude that 'the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of teachers' as was observed by a teacher in South Korea. Conversely, the lower performing school education systems rarely attract the right kind of teachers.

Such being the teachers' role, India must focus on recruiting the best teachers. But it is easier said than done as under the policy of social inclusion and affirmative action, the recruitment of government employees has to necessarily also take teachers from sections that had no good schooling themselves. It will therefore be instructive to shift the focus on imparting training at the entry level and introducing a system of constant 'recertification' of skills. Every teacher should be made to earn a tenure rather than resting their 35 to 40 years of teaching career on qualification attained in the remote past. Currently, the only way a teacher can get a substantial raise is to

leave the classroom and become headmaster or principal. The system should be done away with and pay and future promotion should be linked with recertification and performance.

Schools in Colorado (the US) and some other states have experimented with an innovative idea. Colorado state senator Michael Johnston initiated a programme named 'New leaders for new schools'. It identified 'effective teachers and principals' in the state schools and videographed their classes and uploaded them onto a website. They were paid a stipend for the videography of their classes and teachers are advised to visit the website and emulate the essential characteristics of these 'effective career leaders'. It was found that graduation rates in 'new leaders' high schools were substantially higher than district graduation rates.

Success will go to those individuals or countries which are quick in adapting, slow to complain and open to change. The task for the government will be to ensure that the country rises to the challenge.

Indian B-Schools Now Attract Global Faculty

Many faculty members from abroad have taken a pay cut to teach in India

KALA VIJAYRAGHAVAN
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In the first quarter of 2012, Rajib L. Saha left the University of Rochester in the United States to join the International School of Business (ISB), Hyderabad, as assistant professor in information systems. The triggers for relocation were both personal — the alumna of the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, can now be closer to his family in West Bengal — and professional. “The structure here allows for a higher level of interaction between the resident faculty and the visiting faculty compared to the US structure. There is a lot of scope to grow by working closely with research and industry than by merely attending conferences” says Saha. Cut to the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Trichy, where Mouloud Madoun is on the institute’s list of permanent faculty. After teaching at business schools in France, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Ire-

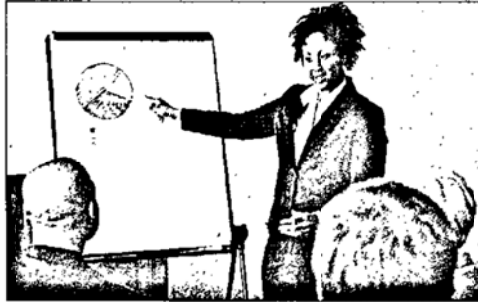
land, Romania and Poland, Madoun recently packed his bags and headed for India. At IIM, Trichy, the professor teaches human resource management, organisational behaviour and corporate social responsibility, among other subjects.

“My decision to relocate to India is professional. Although I may have earned four times what I do in India, I am a lot happier here,” says the professor of French origin who taught for two decades at the Marseille School of Business.

Like Saha and Madoun, a number of global faculty members — including some of Indian origin — have figured the grass is greener on Indian B-school campuses. In 2011, Dr Galit Shmueli, an Israeli-American professor, joined ISB as the Srinji Raju Centre for IT and the Networked Economy chaired professor of data analytics & information systems. Her three compelling reasons for relocating: family, contribution to society, and lifestyle.

Other global faculty of Indian origin who joined ISB in 2011 include Siddharth Singh from Rice University, US, Sarang Deo from Kellogg School of Management, US, and Suman Ann Thomas from the National University of Singapore.

ISB, says Sanjay Kallapur, senior associate dean, faculty development, targets research-oriented faculty from international schools



WORLD IS A CLASSROOM

who are equally keen to join institutes where the research environment and infrastructure are solid. “The pay too has to be competitive and we pay 60% of what US schools offer,” says Kallapur. “We have to compete with Asian B-schools from countries such as China and Singapore where sizeable grants come in from the government, enabling these institutes to offer top dollar to attract international top faculty,” he adds.

If global faculty is willing to take a haircut in pay packets, it’s because they are coming to India with specific mandates and missions. Madoun, for instance, is researching a new management

model based on Indian values and culture. “I think the management models in Europe and America are facing a lot of problems. India has the right ingredients to build a sustainable model,” he says.

Similarly, Shmueli is pursuing a “dual life” in Asia. “In one life, I am an active academic, conducting research, teaching on-ground and online, and performing other academic roles. In the second life, I am a social entrepreneur in Bhutan where I co-direct the Centre for Advanced Learning Technologies at the Rigsum Institute of IT & Management.”

For those with roots in India, getting back makes immense sense

now that pay parity has narrowed substantially in the past two years.

“Indian academics today want to bring up their children in the Indian culture as opposed to a confused desi in the West,” says Dr Bala Balachandran, founder, dean & chairman, Great Lakes Institute of Management, Chennai. Adds S Bhardwaj, who returned to India from Maryland University, US, way back in 2006: “Many people abroad feel out of place although materially they do well. Although earlier the pay packets were terrible, they have significantly improved in the past few years. The fact is even with relative pay parity people are happier in India.” Bhardwaj now teaches marketing and consumer behaviour at Great Lakes.

The average annual income of an untenured professor in a top-class B-school in the US is about \$150,000; and roughly \$400,000 for a tenured and full chair professor. A fully accomplished, top-of-the-line scholar in India with all the necessary degrees and qualifications heading a top-of-the-line B-school makes roughly about \$50,000, or a little over Rs 25 lakh a year. A few professors who have relocated to India in recent times take home salaries of over Rs 55 lakh a year, which is 70-80% of what they would have earned in the US and the UK, said the dean of a top B-school on condition of anonymity.

Pay packets are not immaterial, but then those coming to India — particularly those with an ancestral stake in the country — are attracted by other factors, too. Nagesh Rao, who was recently appointed director of Mudra Institute of Communications, Ahmedabad, had worked in different universities in the US for around 23 years before joining the IIM Ahmedabad, in 2010. “I came back because of professional as well as personal reasons. There is no comparison between pay packages of India and the US, but I did not look at the compensation factor as I wanted to come back to India,” says the professor who has taught at the University of Maryland, Ohio University, and University of New Mexico.

There is a view that India does not need to proactively woo global faculty, and if there is a rush into the country, it’s because of the more attractive prospects here. Debashis Chatterjee, director, IIM-Kozhikode, says he gets a lot of applications from the UK from faculty keen to relocate to India. “There is no need to chase global faculty; the knowledge creation is happening here and they (overseas professors) are as keen to be a part of it. If research wasn’t happening here, why would a Harvard want to set up a research base in India?”

(Additional reporting by Parag Dave in Ahmedabad)

Lifestyle can affect your memory

Dr. R. Vatsyayan

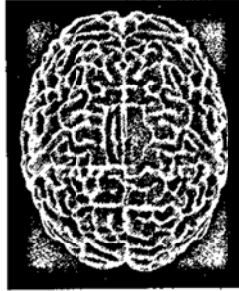
Giving due importance to various mental faculties, ancient Vedic literature has described good intellect, a sharp sense of discrimination and unflinching memory a basic necessity for a healthy and long life. When we talk about memory, it is described as a complex cognitive process involving stages of acquisition, consolidation and retrieval of information. To the contrary, forgetfulness can be understood in many ways as absentmindedness, transient loss of memory and persistently failing to recollect something very usual or important.

In our daily life we come across many old people having a razor-sharp memory whereas we also listen from young persons, whether they are students or entrepreneurs, complaining that they easily forget a thing. Nevertheless, for most people occasional lapses in memory are considered to be normal, but if these become more pronounced affecting one's daily performance then it can be termed as a medical condition. In general, failing memory has to be distinguished

from dementia and Alzheimer's disease which are the progressively degenerative medical disorders affecting a person's cognitive functions.

Though various theories have been propounded to ascertain what makes good memory, it has been an equally well-researched fact that factors like our general health, working environment and lifestyle contribute a lot to making or reducing our brain power. Sometimes, even what looks like a significant memory loss can result due to many reversible factors. But before getting panicky and starting any treatment, it is important to look into some of the possible causes of failing memory.

Many patients complain of cognitive lapses or memory loss like side-effects when they are using some prescription or over-the-counter drugs. Common medicines that affect brain functioning are sleeping pills, antihistamines, pain-killers and anti-depressant or mood altering medicines. Recent researches have put the role of the much-used statins under scanner as they have been found to be one of the



reasons for reversible memory loss in certain patients. Unbridled and overuse of some restorative herbs is also a cause for giving euphoric feeling to a person resulting in poor concentration.

Head injury, wasting diseases and conditions involving serious systemic infections besides old age, can lead to selective, generalised or more serious memory loss in susceptible patients. Of the psychological factors, chronic stress, anxiety and depression are known to badly affect a person's ability to remain attentive and organised. Similarly, overactive or under active thyroid can also make a person restless, confused or sluggish as the case may be. Vitamin deficiency and slower nutritional

absorption rate damage the neurons resulting in faster degeneration of the brain. Persistent abuse of alcohol is also a perceptible cause affecting the brain functioning, making a person temperamental, careless and less focused.

When we talk about the factors that improve memory, it is seen that the same practices which help us to live a healthy life and maintain vitality also contribute to building good brain power. Antioxidants found in abundance in fresh produce and the diet meeting the requirements of a given age is good for healthy mind and body. Nutritional elements like vitamins, proteins and Omega 3 fatty acids are proven aids for keeping the grey matter rejuvenated. Avoiding the intake of unnecessary fat also helps reduce cholesterol levels, thus minimising the risk of cerebral vascular problems.

Regular exercise boosts good circulation of blood and also reduces the risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease, the two main factors leading to stroke. Depending upon one's cardiovascular status, daily workouts or

walks help maintain good functioning of the brain, as exercise is a highly recommended aid in managing stress and alleviating anxiety and depression. Adopting yoga, pranayam and meditation techniques improve concentration and tranquillity of the mind which is a pre-requisite for good memory. Proper and timely sleep also freshens the brain and the mind.

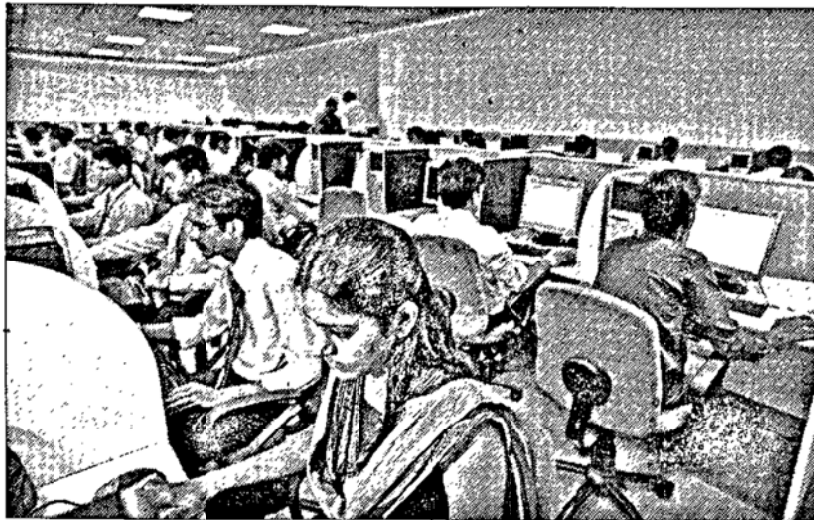
Shunning smoking or abuse of alcohol should be the mantra of persons who are prone to memory lapses. Smokers perform worse than non-smokers in cognitive and withholding skills. Similarly, heavy use of alcohol also impairs memory. Keeping oneself positively busy and focused whether it is the normal work, social interactions or recreational activities and engaging the brain with hobbies like reading, writing and learning stimulates and sharpens one's recollecting abilities.

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Speed up technology use for studies

NO generation, which is now predominantly made up of "digital natives", is more at ease today with online education because it has grown up in an immersive computing environment. Recently, both Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) joined hands to launch an ambitious \$60 million initiative under which they will offer free online courses to students, a collaboration that would be headed by India-origin professor Anant Agarwal. An organisation established by MIT and Harvard, 'EdX', will develop an open-source technology platform that will feature teaching designed specifically for the web. Features will include: Self-paced learning, online discussion groups, Wiki-based collaborative learning, assessment of learning as a student progresses through a course and online laboratories. The platform will also serve as a laboratory from which data will be gathered to better understand how students learn. Because it is an open source, the platform will be continuously improved. EdX will support Harvard and MIT faculty in conducting research on teaching and learning on campus through tools that enrich classroom and laboratory experiences. At the same time, EdX will also reach learners around the world through online course materials. It will move beyond the standard model of online education that relies on watching video content and will offer an interactive experience for students. The EdX website will begin by hosting MITx and Harvardx content, with the goal of adding content from other universities interested in joining the platform. EdX will also support the Harvard and MIT faculty in conducting research on

Arun Nigavekar



VIRTUAL EDUCATION: What is important for India is to be alive to all shades of problems and work on the most acceptable solution for bringing online education blended with F2F education as a pivot for quality education

teaching and learning. EdX will release its learning platform as open-source software, so that it can be used by other universities and organisations that wish to host the platform themselves. Because the learning technology will be available as open-source software, other universities and individuals will be able to help EdX improve and add features to the technology.

Few years ago, the New Media Consortium sponsored a white paper to the Economist Intelligence Unit on "The Future of Higher Education: How Technology will Shape Learning". The white paper was based on a global online executive survey and in-depth interviews, to gain deeper insight into the wider impact of technology on both higher education and the job-preparedness of today's graduates. The major findings of this research survey were that technology has

had, and, will continue to have, a significant impact on higher education and that online learning is gaining a firm foothold in universities around the world.

Well, today, it is a reality that large scale use of e-learning objects is now spreading across world in spite of what was being talked about for the past one-and-half decade both by techno experts and whatever the reactions were of academicians on the advantages and disadvantages of web-based learning in India and abroad. This is of great importance to India mainly because of past efforts of launching an exclusive education satellite, initiating countrywide experiment by the University Grants Commission (UGC), and enhancing the quality of engineering education through joint programmes initiated by IITs over the past two decades. However, there is still low use of technology in the

learning process. The reasons are two-fold. First, we had a very weak connectivity infrastructure, and secondly, the teaching community was not literate to use e-learning in classrooms and more so because of non-awareness of the use of technology and expertise to create e-content. Over the years, the scenario has changed. In the 10th plan, the UGC Network connected all universities with 100 mbps backbone and colleges were given dialup connectivity. Now, through a major initiative of the National Knowledge Commission, there is an emerging national network with terabyte backbone and one gigabyte connectivity available for universities. There is strong support coming through UGC's Consortium of Educational Communication (CEC) and its network of 18 Educational Multi-Media Research Centre's and a strong foundation that the IITs are

laying on creation of e-learning materials for engineering education. Both these activities focus on training teachers to use technology in classrooms, creating of e-content and exposing them to the pedagogy of e-learning. They have truly made a big impact on the higher and professional education domain. But, they have touched just the tip of challenges that one faces in online education. At present, roughly only 15 per cent of teachers in the true sense are technology savvy and are using online education as a supplement to their face-to-face (F2F) education approach in the classrooms. Thus, the first challenge is to undertake a massive attempt to bring a larger number of teachers to take advantage of the efforts that are being made both by CEC and IITs. This would require large investments and both short and long-term strategies for IT's alignment with overall leadership and policy setting. We also need to conduct intensive research on understanding e-learning pedagogy, and also, on facts such as possible rise of plagiarism and cheating because the student community, as is prevalent in the US, may have discourteous behaviour, while operating in an online environment. So, there are human issues. These perturbations in no way reduce the importance of online education. What is important for India is to be alive, to all shades of problems and issues, and work on the most acceptable solution* for bringing online education blended with F2F education as a pivot for quality education.

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