

# Newspaper Clips

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## Higher education survey to divide states into 10 groups

**Kirtika Suneja**

**New Delhi, Nov 1:** The first ever survey on higher education will reveal data based on the division of all states into 10 different groups on the basis of geographical contiguity and the number of available institutions within the state.

For the purpose of organising the training and supervision of the field work, the ministry of human resource development has proposed that for each group of states, a supervisor may be recruited to monitor the field work in the states within the group. "In addition, at the central level, a team may be constituted by the task force for overall guidance and facilitating the main survey," according to the pilot survey.

Further, all the institutions of higher learning in the country have been divided into three categories. While Category one is of university and university-level institutions, the second cate-

gory is of colleges and institutions affiliated to universities and the third category is of institutions not affiliated to any university or stand alone institutions.

More than 35 states and union territories have been put in 10 different groups, stating the number of affiliating universities, colleges, stand-alone institutions. According to the ministry, the existing data base on higher education is inadequate and out-of-date and the collection and dissemination of data on higher education suffers from incomplete coverage and inordinate time lag.

"Due to this, gross enrollment ratio (GER), which is being calculated on the basis of available data, does not reflect the correct picture of the country's development in respect of higher education sector," says the ministry which has set a target of increasing the GER from the present level of about 12% to 15% by the end of Eleventh Plan and to 30% by 2020.

Mint ND 02/11/2011 P7

## STANDARDIZING PROCEDURES

## IIMs to meet Sibal, seek more autonomy, admission reform

BY PRASHANT K. NANDA  
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NEW DELHI

Seeking more autonomy in financial and administrative matters, the chairpersons and directors of the 13 Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) will meet human resource development (HRD) minister Kapil Sibal on Wednesday.

Issues such as standardizing the admission process and improving research output will also be on the table during the meeting, which will take place in the wake of a report on reforming the IIMs submitted by a panel led by Maruti Suzuki India Ltd chairman R.C. Bhargava.

"The autonomy issue will be a major discussion area," a ministry spokesperson said. "Mr Bhargava is expected to give a presentation on the issue."

The report, submitted in October 2010, says leading business schools need to hire directors with experience of working abroad, alter their designation and profile, restructure the board of govern-

nors, and source funds from corporate houses in return for certain incentives.

Directors should be given more administrative and financial powers, like the heads of corporations, and their designation should be changed to president-cum-dean, says the report. "Not only would this be in line with the designations prevailing in leading business schools, but would enable the organizational structure to have vice-presidents and vice-deans," it says.

The Bhargava committee noted that global business schools are showing interest in setting up shop in India. "Private investment in management schools is growing rapidly, and the ministry of HRD is keen on attracting foreign direct investment in education, which could include joint ventures. This will pose

new challenges to the IIMs," the report states, *Mint* had reported in October 2010.

Narayanan Ramaswamy, executive director for education practice at consulting and auditing firm KPMG, said autonomy for leading business schools is the need of the hour. The government should not inter-

ferere in their administrative matters as the IIMs themselves teach administration and management to the corporate world, he said.

The meeting will also discuss a proposal to hold common counselling, group discus-

sion and personal interviews of admission seekers after the Common Admission Test (CAT).

Six recently opened IIMs—in Ranchi (Jharkhand), Rohtak (Haryana), Raipur (Chhattisgarh), Trichy (Tamil Nadu), Kashipur (Uttarakhand) and

Udaipur (Rajasthan)—have already decided to do this to reduce hassles for students. But the seven older IIMs—at Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Kolkata, Indore, Lucknow, Kozhikode and Shillong—hold independent sessions.

"The new IIMs have agreed for the common process," said P. Rameshan, director of IIM, Rohtak. "Let's see what the meeting decides. The older IIMs are established brand names and it will benefit us if they too join us."

Himanshu Rai, a professor at IIM, Lucknow, and the convener of last year's CAT, said students prefer giving separate interviews to enhance their chances of admission. "If they do badly in one interview, they still have a chance in the next," he said. "I have not come across a single candidate who is ready to endorse the idea."

The human resource development ministry is in favour of a common interview to obviate the need for students to run from one IIM to another, a ministry official said on condition of anonymity.

One proposal to make the system more uniform is to have a representative from each of the 13 IIMs on a common interview panel, where they can select students of their choice.

Nearly 206,000 students are vying for about 3,300 seats at the 13 IIMs this year.

PTI contributed to this story.

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The meeting will take place in the wake of a report submitted by a panel led by Maruti Suzuki chairman R.C. Bhargava

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Times of India ND 02-Nov-11 P-11

# Joint counselling on IIM meet agenda

Akshaya Mukul | TNN

**New Delhi:** Meeting of chairpersons and directors of IIMs on Wednesday would take up the issue of common counselling for admission to the institutes.

To be chaired by HRD minister Kapil Sibal, the meeting would also discuss the publication of proposed IIM Business Review on the lines of the Harvard Business Review. Besides, Sibal would take stock of progress on the establishment of six new IIMs.

The substantive issues would be amendment in the memorandum of association of IIMs and related issues like the size of board of governors, accountability of board, selection process of directors and chairpersons.

All the IIMs have amended their MoAs that have been sent for approval to the ministry. A clearer picture would emerge after the meeting. The issue of IIM-Indore offering a five-year diploma course has been cleared by the ministry, but on the condition that the institute cannot offer a degree. "A degree cannot be giv-

## IIT-B, Amity bid for campuses in New York

**T**he Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay and Noida-based Amity University are among 15 institutions worldwide that have submitted bids to the city of New York to set up a science and engineering campus in the city under a plan by Mayor Michael Bloomberg to drive local economic growth and create jobs. The city received seven proposals from a total of 17 institutions. PTI

en by IIMs. We have made it clear to IIM-Indore," sources said. The contentious issue of number of teaching hours in IIMs is on the agenda. "In many IIMs, faculty is protesting against 160 hours of teaching annually. Even time spent on research gets factored in this.

"The protest is misplaced and needs to be sorted out. It has been found that faculty feels 160 hours of teaching would get in the way of their consultancy work," a source said.

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Bridging the gap: A file photo of students at a computer lab at an institute in Punjab.

#### SEAMLESS SHARING

## Govt to connect higher education institutes

**572 universities, 25,000 colleges and 2,000 polytechnics will be networked to promote the use of technology**

By PRASHANT K. NANDA  
prashant.n@livermint.com

NEW DELHI

At least 15 million college students pursuing higher education will be able to share information, lab experiments and classroom content as the Union cabinet on Tuesday approved a proposal to connect 572 universities, 25,000 colleges and 2,000 polytechnics as part of its mission to promote technology usage in higher education.

This approval will merge the National Knowledge Network, promoted by the erstwhile National Knowledge Commission, and the National Mission on Education through Information Communication and Technology (NMEICT).

With this, all colleges and universities can hope for seamless connectivity that will enable e-learning, and enhance e-content repository and sharing of best practices.

"The ultimate target is to provide last-mile connectivity and provide high-quality e-content to be used with the connectivity being provided to the universities and colleges across the country," Ambika Soni, Union minister for information and broadcasting, said after a cabinet meeting.

In colleges and universities with Internet access, the technology will be upgraded to optical fibre cables from copper wire-based connectivity, the cabinet note says. Every institute will have a "provisioning of 400 nodes of LAN (local area network) on an average."

Initially, the government had approved connecting 18,000 colleges and 419 universities. The addition of polytechnics is a part of the government's push to promote vocational and skill education to bridge the demand-supply gap for efficient human resources in the country.

The government has not specified the amount to be spent on the initiative.

Since 2009, only 11,600 colleges have got Internet con-

nectivity—a success rate of 47%, according to data from the human resource development ministry. States that have benefited include Haryana, Punjab, Kerala and Karnataka.

Once seamless connectivity is established, students will have complete access to the e-content being generated under NMEICT.

Several hundred hours of lectures of Indian Institute of Technology professors will be available for free. In addition, the ministry is promoting a virtual lab and an interactive online audio tutorial.

In October, the government launched a low-cost computer for students. But both government and private experts have said such devices will not drive a change in learning unless college have access to the Internet.

With the latest decision to improve connectivity, the \$35 computer can be used better despite its several configuration limitations.

**Several hundred hours of lectures of Indian Institute of Technology professors will be available for free**

Human resource development minister Kapil Sibal had said the device 'Aakash' will help eliminate digital illiteracy, but the country needs high-quality study content to be made accessible to students

online.

Private universities say the move is a good step, but Internet connectivity and e-content need to be integrated for students to benefit.

Aman Mittal, deputy director at Punjab's Lovely Professional University, said the facility is unlikely to be free.

"This is a good step as students and professors can now access a lot of information available outside their own campus. But what is required is to boost the e-content repository and clear framework on how to use it better," he said. "But anyway, availing IIT lectures will be of help to students."

Colleges and universities that have already adopted technology will benefit more, he said. "But I believe there should be some agreed framework on the usage. If a lecture series is happening at any IIT or a leading varsity, we can benefit if there is some broad agreement on content sharing." India has some 130 private universities, according to official statistics.

Times of India ND 02-Nov-11  
P1

# Student suicides up 26% in 4 yrs

Anahita Mukherji | TNN

**New Delhi:** Here's a compelling argument for education reforms in the country: student suicides increased by 26% from 2006 to 2010, with metros Bangalore, Delhi and Mumbai having most victims, in that order. And this is just the official data.

While 5,857 student suicides were reported in 2006, the figure jumped to 7,379 in 2010, according to data released by the National Crime Records

## ► 'Exam, job pressure', P 13

Bureau. In other words, 20 students killed themselves every day in 2010, something both academicians and mental health professionals blame on a flawed education system where performance pressure ranks above all else.

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## 'Exams, job pressure driving students to suicide'

Anahita Mukherji | TNN

**New Delhi:** A flawed education system and rising pressure of exams and employment is behind the surge in number of students committing suicide, academics and mental health professionals feel. Figures released by the National Crime Records Bureau show a 26% jump in numbers in 2010 compared to 2006. For the first time in the past five years, Maharashtra recorded the largest number of students killing themselves, followed by West Bengal. Over the past decade or so, the two states have only interchanged positions in the top, a phenomenon unexplained by even educationists. Delhi, as a city, alone accounted for 133 deaths in 2010, while as a state, it accounted for 166 deaths.

"The examination system and the selection process for institutions of higher education weigh heavily on young people," says Shyam Menon, vice-chancellor of Ambedkar University in Delhi. "The volume of students passing out of the school education system and vying for admission to tertiary education has dramatically increased over the years, with levels of competition increasing too. At a time when higher education can result in social mobility, the stakes are very high. Today, there is a greater link between employability and higher education."

Menon believes changes in the education system over the years reflect the changes in the Indian middle class and their high aspirations, which push young people to perform or perish. Psychiatrist Dr Sanjay Chugh feels the NCRB data is the most reliable evidence that things are only going from bad to worse in the Indian education system. Chugh blames a myopic education system for forcing students to learn what they may never need in life. "Why do we expose our children to such nonsense, with examinations becoming a 'do or die' situation where students need a minimum percentage to get into a halfway decent college," asks Chugh.

An inadequate system, coupled with lack of proper social support, pushes students over the brink, says Chugh. "If a child's parents do not add to the pressure that the education system puts on him, chances are his stress levels will never cross the threshold for suicide," he adds.

Professor Armaity Desai, former chairperson of the University Grants Commission, points to the lack of quality education institutions in the country, with the result that there is a great deal of pressure to perform at critical points of a student's life, such as board exams. When it comes to student suicides, Desai feels the situation is not being addressed by Centre or state governments.

# IIT-Mumbai, Amity bid for engineering campuses in New York

YOSHITA SINGH  
Press Trust of India

THE Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai and Noida-based Amity University are among 15 institutions worldwide that have submitted bids to the city of New York to set up a science and engineering campus here under a plan by mayor Michael Bloomberg to drive local economic growth and create jobs.

The city received seven proposals from a total of 17 institutions. Name of the institute selected to set up the engineering and applied sciences campus would be announced in January after an extensive selection process that will choose a project, which generates the greatest benefit to the city and its taxpayers,

Bloomberg said.

The winner of the 'Applied Sciences NYC' initiative will get incentives like free city land and as much as \$100 million in capital for the project. IIT Mumbai is part of a consortium that includes New York University, University of Toronto, UK's University of Warwick, City University of New York and Carnegie Mellon.

The consortium is proposing to set up a centre for urban science and research in downtown Brooklyn for more than 500 graduate students. Amity University has submitted a proposal to set up a campus in governor's Island.

"Universities are always a major magnet for talent — and the world's most dynamic companies always gravitate to places where they can find the best and the



**LUCKY DRAW:** Name of the institutes selected to set up campus would be announced after an extensive selection process that will choose a project

brightest," Bloomberg said.

"Along with everything we are doing to diversify and strengthen our economy, a new applied sci-

ences campus has the potential to be a real economic game changer that will create jobs immediately, and for generations," he added.

Bloomberg had in July this year invited proposals from universities, institutions and consortiums to develop and operate a 'new or expanded state-of-the-art' campus in the city dedicated to engineering and the applied sciences. The proposals submitted contain plans for new facilities ranging from 400,000 square feet to over two million square feet.

The institutions propose private investments of more than \$800 million in the first phases of their projects and this could be increased to \$2.5 billion. Proposals feature plans for new labs, classroom and research space, new public open space and space for companies that will spin out from these institutions.

The new campus would focus on areas of information technol-

ogy, digital media, sustainable urban growth, electrical engineering, public health, genome sequencing and computer science.

In addition, it will help create more than 30,000 permanent and construction jobs for New Yorkers at a variety of skill levels, and roughly \$1.2 billion in direct and indirect taxes for the city. The proposals will be evaluated by the city as well as an advisory committee over the next several weeks.

Once selected, the institution will be expected to comply with deadlines and other requirements related to construction timelines, number of enrolled students and dedicated faculty members as well as establishment of applicable academic and research programmes.

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## IIT-Mumbai, Amity submit bids for engg campus in New York

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Name of the institute se-

lected to set up the engineering and applied sciences campus would be announced in January after an extensive selection process that will choose a project which generates the greatest benefit to the city and its taxpayers, Bloomberg said in a news conference here.

The winner of the "Applied Sciences NYC" initiative will get incentives like free city land and as much as \$100 million in capital for the project.

*PTI*

# IIT-GN to take US varsity students on India-Ki-Khoj

**AHMEDABAD:** In order to acquaint the students of the US-based California Institute of Technology (Caltech) with ancient and contemporary research in India, the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar, (IIT-GN) has specially designed a two-week

long course titled "India-Ki-Khoj". Ten students of Caltech shall be visiting IIT-GN this year in December as part of a student exchange programme.

"The idea of India-Ki-Khoj is to introduce students of a foreign university— Caltech — with some of the rich cul-

tural heritage, social, economic, ancient and contemporary research of India," IIT-GN director Prof S K Jain said.

"The course content has been carefully planned so that students of Caltech visiting in December next get to learn about ancient science and

technology of India," he said. "How India's gift of concept zero to the world laid a basis for all arithmetic calculations, besides contributions of Acharyas like Charaka and Sushruta, who were founders in the fields of medicine and surgery," Jain said. **PTI**

Hindustan Times ND 02-Nov-11  
hteducation P-1

## CHOOSE A SUBJECT: Computer science and engineering

# The future is here

Computer science and engineering graduates have to handle everything from programming and designing apps for mobile phones to developing software for space vehicles and sci-fi films

M Balakrishnan

Every person in the developed Western world uses more than a hundred "computers or computing engines" in his day-to-day activities. An urban Indian may have already crossed 25. All these need to be loaded with applications which are designed, developed and maintained by computer science and engineering (CSE) graduates.

Computer science originated mainly from mathematics. As computing became widespread, a special branch of mathematics developed into the specialisation we call computer science today.

Courses like theory of computing, discrete mathematics, graph theory etc are still considered to be on the interface of computer science and mathematics. On the other hand, computer engineering emerged out of electrical engineering — with courses such as digital design and computer architecture still on the interface of the two. With CSE emerging as a discipline and software becoming more and more complex, courses in software design and development, system software and software engineering were developed to create a comprehensive new discipline of computer science and engineering. It is still not uncommon in the United States or in European universities to have computer science programmes as part of the science faculty (sometimes even mathematics and computer science). Computer engineering programmes, too, are offered by engineering schools — even electrical and computer engineering programmes.

In India though initially BSc and MSc programmes in CS were started in some universities (and have continued), there's been growth mainly in computer science and engineering as demand for practitioners (read programmers) has increased. With pressure to increase the

intake to satisfy market demands, many institutions started BTech or BE in information technology by heavily borrowing from the CSE syllabus but to this day it remains an unfocused programme without a distinct career path.

### Career options

The initial visible growth came from the programmer body-shopping outfits followed by the outsourced software development industry. As an industry catering to international markets, its pay packages have always been attractive. This meant that lots of students switched dis-

ciplines to join as programmers — a trend that started in the early '80s and is declining now with the explosive growth of CSE programmes in the country. This growth has led to increased career opportunities in academics. Well-qualified postgraduates, thus, have no dearth of jobs.

So, if you are motivated, ready to put in the hard work and have an aptitude for 'programming', you can grow fast. It is not unusual for software engineers with two to three years experience being called group leaders and with five to six years of experience becoming managers. The challenge though is the con-

stant need to update yourself due to the very fast pace of change in technology. This is true whether you are in education, industry or even in sales and maintenance.

### Are you good enough?

Core computer science and engineering requires a good understanding of mathematics and basic electronics. Only a person capable of logical thinking can become a good programmer.

*The author is a professor of computer science and engineering, Department of Computer Science & Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi*

SOURCE: RED CHILLIES ENTERTAINMENT

GREAT JOBS YOU CAN GET AFTER YOUR DEGREE			
Paths	Secondary area	Work titles/fields	Work description
BSc/MCA + BEd BTech/ MSc/ MCA, MTech, Ph D	Education	Teaching	Teaching in schools. At colleges, though MTech is technically required, due to serious shortage BEds are accepted). Teaching in a university/teaching-cum-research institutions
MTech Ph D	Research	R&D labs	Entry-level positions in both industry and government laboratories. Entry level in multi-national R&D labs but middle to senior positions in all labs
BE/ BTech/ MCA	Industry	Software development	A very large number of jobs in the industry are categorised as such. The basic profile requires application programming using languages like Java, C++ etc) and environments like (Windows *, Linux etc)
BE + database training/ skills	Industry	Database management	The jobs require management of large databases, their interface development etc
BE + network training/ skills	Industry	Network management	Here jobs are of two types: software jobs requiring network programming and management and hardware jobs require installation and maintenance of networks and related equipment
BE + VLSI training/ skills or MTech	Industry	VLSI & EDA	A related industry which draws talent from both electronics and CSE is the EDA and VLSI industry. EDA refers to electronics design automation and the jobs require development and maintenance of large number of VLSI design tools. VLSI design refers to the job of designing new VLSI or electronics devices
BE + embedded training/ skills	Industry	Embedded software & hardware	This area is linked to the enormous growth of embedded systems. Hardware and software entering simple consumer home appliances to automobiles have triggered its growth
Any graduate + training/ aptitude	Industry	Sales	PCs and laptops are seeing a tremendous growth and this has created a demand for sales engineers. Bigger companies employ CSE graduates but smaller outfits employ anyone with an aptitude for mastering the rapidly growing terminology
Any graduate + special vocational training	Industry	Maintenance	The growth in demand has generated a huge demand for those who can install and maintain these machines. Again anyone with some skill training through vocational schools/ training schools can find employment in this sector. Person with the right aptitude can grow tremendously as well

From space to special effects: Computer science can give a movie like Ra.One a special dimension and help a space mission achieve the goals set out for it

## 5 best choices for BE, BTech in CSE/IT

### In Delhi

- Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, [www.iitd.ac.in](http://www.iitd.ac.in)
- Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology, Delhi, [www.iiitd.ac.in](http://www.iiitd.ac.in)
- Netaji Subhas Institute of Technology, Delhi, [www.nsit.ac.in](http://www.nsit.ac.in)
- Delhi Technological University, [www.dce.edu](http://www.dce.edu)
- Indira Gandhi Institute of Technology (for women only), Indraprastha University, Delhi, <http://www.ipu.ac.in/igi/about.html>

### Across India

- All IITs (7 old + 8 new), multiple locations across the country, <http://jee.iitd.ac.in/>
- Indian Institute of Science (MTech only), Bangalore, [www.iisc.ernet.in](http://www.iisc.ernet.in)
- IITs, multiple locations across the country
- National Institutes Technology, multiple locations
- Birla Institute of Technology & Science, Pilani, [www.bits-pilani.ac.in](http://www.bits-pilani.ac.in)

Genius is one percent inspiration, ninety-nine percent perspiration," is the famous line that Thomas Alva Edison, World's greatest inventor, scientist and businessman, said when he founded General Electric. GE as it is known today is the world's most successful and enviable industrial enterprise. Although Edison had no formal schooling his success is much talked about.

Where did all these great heroes like Bill Gates and Steve Jobs who had not completed college get their inspiration from?

Nearer home, Dhirubhai Ambani, Founder of Reliance Group, India's most valuable business empire, too evaded school. What makes these people and millions like them successful? It clearly is not academics or degrees. There is some other knowledge, skills and attitude at work.

It is not a revelation that we all require some common sense to succeed in life. Yet, it is seldom a course we study. Yes, life evaluates us on parameters "out of syllabus". This is the bane of Indian Education. We leave our youth to learn the most critical employability skills by osmosis in real life, while Educational Institutions own this responsibility academically, professionally, and morally!

In today's highly competitive employment market, jobs and roles are often described in terms of competencies which are a combination of behaviours that lead to superior performance in a job. The two major concerns of employers are finding good workers and training them.

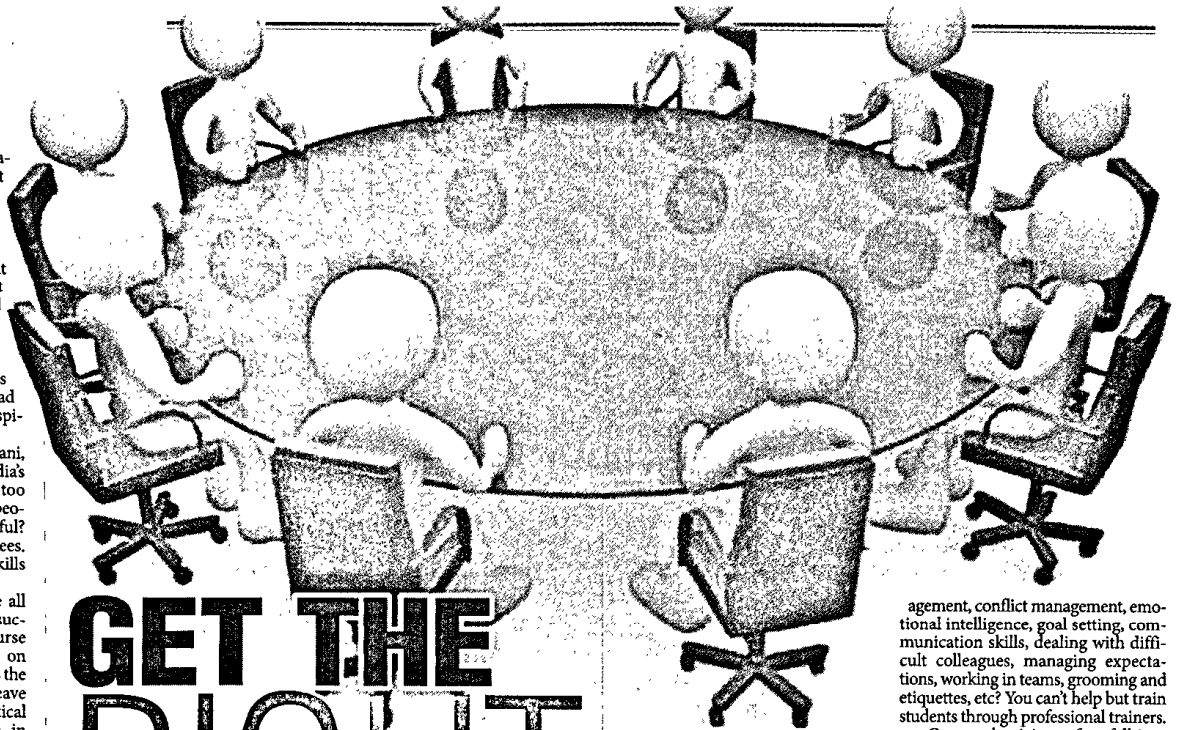
The skills-gap, which is the difference between the skills needed on the job and those possessed by applicants, is of real concern to managers and business owners looking to hire competent employees. India currently has 600 million youth below 25 years of age of which 320 million are in schools and colleges. Less than 25 per cent of these are employable due to the skills gap!

#### KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

Employability skills can be divided in three areas of learning. Knowledge is theory or technical understanding of a subject, the ability to comprehend, apply, analyse, synthesise and evaluate to arrive at solutions. Knowledge plays an essential role as a foundation, the basic building block supporting Skills and Attitude. Knowledge is what one knows, like technical designs, software languages, statistical programming or financial modeling.

Skills move a person from theory (knowledge) to action. To be skilled one must be able to undertake a task with competence. Skills are learned and repeatable. In short, skills are what one can do with knowledge, example presentation, sales, management, communication, etc.

Attitude is receiving and responding to the environment and people; it



# GET THE RIGHT SKILLS

Out of a population of 600 million youth below 25 years of age, 320 million are in schools and colleges. Surprisingly less than 25 per cent are employable due to the skills gap. **AMIT BHATIA** tells you more about this gap and what one can do to reduce it



is the value a person attaches to others, situations or environment. Attitude plays a frontline role and is a major driver for converting one's potential into reality. In short, attitude is how one behaves: for instance motivation, teamwork, confidence, etc.

Together, knowledge, skills and attitude provide a platform for a winning and successful career.

#### HOW ARE STUDENTS TRAINED

Employability skills are not taught. They are learnt. At the under-graduate or post-graduate level, the andragogy (not pedagogy) is experiential training (not teaching). Adults don't change behaviours because they are "taught", only when they "experience" its virtues and are convinced about the new set of behavior or attitude. They have to be internally inspired, not externally motivated. This learning is problem-centric, not content-centric.

This training is fundamentally different from academic teaching. India still has enough to catch up on "project-oriented" or "activity-based" academic learning from blackboard-and-chalk based rote learning that the same teachers are unlikely candidates for training students in an experiential format. This has to be left to expert trainers who often have clinical psychology (for soft skills) or speech pathology (for communication skills) backgrounds.

The training is mostly role-play or game-based and does not have much "theory".

It has takeaways from experiences, which are very personalised and become each individual's learning. Consider topics like positive attitude and confidence, time man-

agement, conflict management, emotional intelligence, goal setting, communication skills, dealing with difficult colleagues, managing expectations, working in teams, grooming and etiquettes, etc? You can't help but train students through professional trainers.

Our academicians often fall into the classic trap of finding a book in these subjects and use traditional teaching methodology in the classroom! The result: 25 per cent employability. Training is not teaching.

Our education system's emancipation will lie in academia's self-realisation that we cannot leave employability skills to accidents. This is exactly what employers want.

#### WHAT EMPLOYERS WANT

If most employers valued degrees, they would not host aptitude tests, group discussions and personal interviews. McKinsey, world's leading day 0 employer across the world, for many decades, looks at problem solving, leadership, communications and presence.

Every time I make educators and business leaders fill up a survey, I am not surprised that the Top 5 priorities of both for a student's future are different. This is the industry-academia gap.

Educators rate technical skills at the top. Business leaders frequently rate communication skills at the top. When will the twain meet? Our nation's demographic dividend, albeit our future lies in ensuring our youth is put to work. Students seeking admission to institutions of higher learning should stop buying degrees, infrastructure or placements. Instead, they should demand comprehensive learning, including employability skills.

More importantly, educators must think about employability skills as a shift from teaching to training, from after-thought to proactive action, from discretionary indulgence to mandatory, embedded curriculum.

(The writer is founder and CEO, Aspire Human Capital Management)



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## IMA not to endorse govt's 3.5 yr med course

Kounteya Sinha | TNN

**New Delhi:** A day after TOI reported on the Union health ministry's plans to roll out the 3.5-year medical degree, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) asked the Medical Council of India (MCI) not to compromise on patients' safety.

Reacting to the three-week ultimatum given by Union health minister Ghulam Nabi Azad to the MCI on the BRM (bachelor of rural medicine), national president of IMA Dr Vinay Aggarwal on Tuesday said the MCI would not bend before the government and refused to endorse the course. IMA called for more debates ahead of falling in line with the government's directive. "IMA is willing to cooperate with the government to find a solution on rural health," the letter said.

It added, "There are better ways to overcome the shortage of modern medicine professionals in rural area. Lowering the standard of medical education and producing low-quality professionals is not the solution."

Dr Aggarwal said, the MCI is mandated to uphold certain standards and cannot be bullied. "It is duty-bound to consider patient safety and cannot obviously reverse a process initiated by the Bhore Committee report of 1946 to abolish such mediocre short-term courses." IMA says it is not convinced about the government's intentions on BRM.

"The notion that over 30% of primary health centres do not have a MBBS doctor is not supported by statistics. Only 5.3% of PHCs are without a qualified doctor.