

Newspaper Clips

October 14, 2011

ASIAN AGE ND 14/10/2011 P4

SC UPHOLDS IIT-JEE TEST MODULE

New Delhi, Oct. 13: The Supreme Court has refused to interfere with the ranking and selection process adopted for the prestigious IIT-JEE entrance exams saying there was no arbitrariness or ulterior motives in fixing the methodology.

A bench of justices R.V. Raveendran and A.K. Patnaik said courts would interfere with the procedure only if there was proven malafide, caprice or arbitrariness, which it said was lacking in the present system adopted by the the Joint Admission Board, the nodal agency for conducting the exams across the country.

"The fact that the procedure was complicated would not make it arbitrary or unreasonable or discriminatory. There are several statistical methods of preparing the ranking for the purpose of

selecting the best candidates for admission to a course, some simple and some complex. Each method or system has its merits and demerits and can be adopted only under certain conditions or by making certain assumptions," it said.

"Any such statistical technique should be under continuous review and evaluation to achieve improvement in the light of experience gained over the years and new developments, if it is a reliable tool in the selection process," Justice Raveendran, writing the judgement, said. The apex court passed the judgement while dismissing the appeal filed by an aspirant Sanchit Bansal, son of an IIT professor in Kharagpur, who had appeared in IIT-JEE 2006 as a general category candidate.

— PTI

Hindustan Times 14/10/2011 P8

SC upholds IIT-JEE entrance module, say no arbitrariness
NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court has refused to interfere with the ranking and selection process adopted for the prestigious IIT-JEE entrance exams saying there was no arbitrariness or ulterior motives in fixing the methodology. A bench of justices RV Raveendran and AK Patnaik said courts will interfere with the procedure only if there was proven malafide, caprice or arbitrariness.

Indian Express ND 14-Oct-11

P4

SC: Won't interfere with IIT-JEE entrance

NEW DELHI: THE Supreme Court has refused to interfere with the ranking and selection process adopted for the IIT-JEE entrance exams, saying there is no arbitrariness or ulterior motives in fixing the methodology. A Bench of Justices R V Raveendran and A K Patnaik said courts would interfere with the procedure only if it was proven malafide, which it said was lacking in the present system adopted by the Joint Admission Board, the nodal agency for conducting the exams across the country.



RAVINDER
KAUR

Making of a tragedy

What should be blamed for student suicides?

THE recent suicides in elite institutions like IITs and IIMs are worrisome and raise several questions. Due to the high-profile nature of these institutions, suicides within their precincts gain wide publicity. It is possible that there are as many or more suicides in lesser-known institutions in medical, engineering and management disciplines. Many students face immense pressure in many of these and a few succumb tragically to cutting short their lives. Each life lost is precious for parents, friends and family, teachers and institutions, and society at large. Those around are traumatised, wondering what went wrong and if some sort of timely help could have averted the worst. In most cases, institutions rarely have an open attitude towards discussing student suicides, resulting in an eclipsing of the incident, and a head-in-the-sand attitude until the next such case occurs.

According to WHO, India has one of the highest suicide rates worldwide, with about 40 per cent people who commit suicide being under the age of 30. The focus has been on farmer suicides as these have political resonance and their causes can often be traced to economic crises and government policies. The death of a farmer is often the death of a breadwinner, impacting immediately the livelihood of his or her dependants. Though youth suicides outnumber farmer suicides, little attention has been paid to the risk

factors and the causes of suicide in this demographic. Attention to student suicides is paid only around board exams, when stress levels across the Indian urban middle class are high or when a student at an IIT, IIM or the AIIMS, commits suicide.

Institutions conduct internal inquiries and come up with the usual factors of stress, inability to perform, parental pressure or issues of failed personal relationships. Some observers have noted that many Dalit students have committed suicide in elite institutions, pointing a finger at stress experienced due to caste discrimination. Others point to

the person falls victim to suicide. But this can happen in different ways; some individuals become too detached from society and lose their bearings, others are over-integrated with society and find rejection unbearable; yet others succumb due to anomic conditions of society — such as rapid financial or social shifts.

Indian society has been undergoing rapid change since the 1980s. As the economy began to grow and relative prosperity became an achievable goal for larger sections of society, families began to strategise to enter one or the other tier of the middle class. Not

posed to look back or wonder why s/he is there or whether it was even something they ever wanted. Indeed, the majority buy into parental aspirations and desires so completely that when asked what their topmost aspiration is, most say, “to make our parents proud”! Not to become the world’s best engineer or doctor or designer or travel the world or just be a schoolteacher or an artist or a social worker, but simply the desire to get rich, to make their families better than the neighbouring Joneses. It is at the altar of such families and parents that we have to lay the blame, not only for the suicides of those who cannot achieve parental ambitions and are afraid of disappointing them but also for the destroyed lives of many other young people.

Institutions may exacerbate the pressures on such children but they are rarely the sole culprits. At these institutes, students from a variety of caste, class and cultural backgrounds converge. They are under greater pressure. They need to adjust, but the desire to be “cool” does not easily allow thoughts of possible failure. And Indian families do not welcome back failed or recalcitrant students as much as they do not welcome back daughters after a failed marriage. According to them, they have invested too much in both.

Though youth suicides outnumber farmer suicides, little attention has been paid to the risk factors and the causes of suicide in this demographic.

fear of failure and dismissal once admission has been gained. No doubt, individual psychology plays a role in every case.

How does one understand the nature of suicides in such institutions? David Émile Durkheim, the French sociologist who published a classic study of suicide in 1897, argued that we must separate the surface causes or immediate provocations for a suicide from the real and deep-rooted causes. The former constitute the tipping point that sends an individual over the edge. According to Durkheim, suicide is an outcome of the individual’s relation to society. If this relation gets vitiated in an extreme way,

that families never strategised before, or that families in all strata do not strategise, but “planning” has become more calculated and more so with the aspiring middle class. The various sections of the middle class invest everything in their children — “concerted cultivation” — as expensive a school education as they can afford, coaching classes that easily destroy up to two years of a growing teenager’s life by denying him or her normal socialisation during these psychologically and emotionally precarious years. Admission of children to elite professional education is a dream of most middle-class Indians, and once it happens, no child is sup-

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Tribune ND 14/10/2011 P-11

LIFE IN THE STRESS LANE

Does a suicide in IIT mean it's because of IIT? Tanya Thomas thinks other factors are at play.

IIT SUICIDES

FOUR. That was the number of times he had attempted suicide, he said, jogging down a verdant track on the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (IIT-M) campus.

As spotted deer galloped ahead in the fading evening light, he described how the mind goes blank in those tense seconds. He had calculated with scientific precision the exact moment when death would arrive, and how it would shut down his senses. The farewell arrangements were already in place — a terse message to his family, a suicide note, and a bitter Facebook status message.

Mercifully, his courage failed him in those crucial moments, and he lived to tell the tale.

But others haven't. Like V. Anoop (February), Nitin Kumar Reddy (May) and Gowri Shankar (August) who took their lives on the IIT-M campus this year. A blog called Suicides at IIT's (sic) maintains a veritable death toll, listing news reports on a little less than 40 suicides in all IITs combined since 1981.

Attributing all these cases to academic pressure would only be simplifying a layered issue, say academicians and psychiatrists. The reasons for these deaths appear to be very different, and in some cases, even unexplained, they point out.

Some suicide notes blamed project extensions and low grades as the final straw. But Gowri Shankar's suicide, on the other hand, baffled those who knew him. A post-graduate student, he had excellent academic scores, a seemingly happy family life with his wife and two children and a 10-year-old job with HAL. He didn't leave a suicide note.

A first-year student said that suicides were usually played down, with the management

unwilling to examine the issue in public glare. This unwillingness has led to most of the causes being shrouded in mystery and "knee-jerk responses."

For instance, the internal committee probing the November 2010 suicide of IIT-Kanpur student Madhuri Sale (who had hung herself from a ceiling fan) famously decided to replace all ceiling fans with pedestal fans, and to reduce the speed of internet connectivity in hostels. But this didn't deter Mehtab Ahmed, a first-year undergraduate student of Material and Metallurgical Engineering at IIT-Kanpur, from ending his life less than a week ago. (The case is under investigation.)

Inordinate project extensions in the final year of a course don't just damage a student's future plans, but are also hugely taboo in the institution's self-contained environment. However, the institution defends the practice, clarifying that the IITs cannot compromise on quality norms and give passing grades to a student who hasn't completed course requisites satisfactorily.

Many within IIT's walls are angered by the media's "one-sided reporting" of student deaths on campus, "headlining" them as cases of academic pressure even before investigations are through. This, without mentioning the support network built around student and faculty bodies. Parents are often informed when a student's grades nose-dive, or when social withdrawal has been observed.

The support network at IIT-M is the Guidance and Counselling Unit (GCU). A vast body headed by a single faculty member and some faculty volunteers, it has a male and female student-in-charge under whom work an infinite number of counsellors — college students who watch out for each other.

The drive to succeed, to get to



“It's very difficult to fail in the IITs. We allow a lot of leniency here because we know we've got the best students. But once they receive their job offers in the final year, some students ignore projects that need to be completed on time. So extensions become necessary. We have about 7,000 students here, and 95-98% of them finish their work satisfactorily.”

— An IIT Madras professor

the top of the pecking order; can make mediocrity hard to digest here. Students spend most of their non-class time “sitting alone in rooms, surfing the internet or watching movies all day” with little peer interaction.

A sentiment echoed by a former faculty head of the GCU,

who criticises the lack of social connection in a student population which would rather vent frustrations on online networks than speak to a friend next door. In response to the recent suicides, a 24/7 helpline involving the alumni was set up. And since early September, a Chief Happiness Officer with Happiness envoys has been instated, who students can approach to talk their problems through.

Another advocate for the campus support system is the student who had attempted suicide four times. “It's a strong network”, he explains, allud-

ing to his otherwise lonely life at IIT. His problems were both academic and familial. Senior faculty members had assisted him through his period of terrible mood swings, and he now takes psychiatric treatment, which includes a course of antidepressants, sedatives and mood elevators.

The visiting psychiatrist at the campus hospital, Dr. Vasantha Jayaram is reluctant to speak on an issue she calls ‘controversial’. But she categorically states that most cases of depression and suicide are multi-factorial, where all stakeholders (parents, professors and the student) play a part.

Another unexplored aspect is the increased likelihood of mental health difficulties in the higher academia, with many confessional blogs by depressed academics. An article in the American Journal of Psychiatry states that there is no relation between higher mental capacity and psychic illness. But it does concede that a higher incidence of mental illness is indeed reported among this population.

But does this let institutions like the IITs off the hook? Some professors feel if students are determined to take their lives, the institution cannot be held responsible. A position contested by Shankar, a volunteer at a Chennai-based suicide helpline, Sneha. From his experience with suicidal callers, he believes that nobody is determined to die and there is no specific category of people prone to commit suicide.

“It is a reaction to prolonged stressors”, and can be successfully dealt with in all cases by identifying triggers and keeping them at bay.

*Names withheld to protect privacy.

Tanya Thomas is a student at the Asian College of Journalism, Chennai.

PARENTS NEED TO BE PROACTIVE



“Sometimes students feel helpless, especially in a society like ours which lays emphasis on just a few conventional careers. Furthermore, we also place too much emphasis on the men being

the bread winner. Being born in a society where keeping the family happy is paramount over individual happiness, and an acute fear of failure in our ultra-competitive society makes many teenagers opt for the subjects for which they lack the aptitude. They deny their own identity and while some can take it, others crack up.

They are the quiet ones who never confide in anyone. Parents have a responsibility to constantly remind their kids that there are viable options out there that go beyond being mere engineers. In fact, parents need to be proactive and change their own viewpoint before they start putting pressure on a child to pick up a career. Finally, picking a career that utilises an individual's strengths will always be useful. I have come across a case where a teenager having a talent for languages went on to do engineering like any 'good' Indian kid despite her distaste for it. After four wasted years, no job and no motivation left to live, she finally discovered that translators for foreign investors and for UN can make upwards of \$100 an hour.

Doing homework on your child's strengths and options available is most important. Being there to listen and show that you are with them no matter how they perform or what they decide is most important.”

— Dr. Kanu Priya, formerly practising psychologist, presently Assistant Professor at Arkansas State University (as told to Vipul Grover)



“Obviously the pressure to succeed is very high in the IITs, more so than in most other academic institutions. However, IITs (at least the older ones) have a counselling in place, the effectiveness of which may be in question now.”

— Amitabh Tripathi, Professor, IIT Delhi



“Each part of the individual's life, be it the institute, family, friends etc. have a responsibility to show that they care; not only when the individual is feeling good, or bad but that they care always. Period. That they would always be there for him or her, whatever may happen.”

— Jyotirmaya Desai IIT Kanpur

Tribune ND 14/10/2011 P-1

With little Jugnu, IIT-Kanpur takes a giant leap into space

Adm TANDON/TNS

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 13

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur, has ended India's import dependence on the West for ejection systems needed to launch nano-satellites into space.

For the first time in its history of nano-satellite launching, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) yesterday used the indigenously built separation mechanism (ejection system) designed by IIT-

THE NANO WONDER

- The project is part of the golden jubilee year (2009-10) celebrations of IIT-Kanpur
- The satellite's production cost is ₹15 lakh while infrastructure and other costs are around ₹2 crore
- It will take images in the infrared zone and transmit these to the ground station at IIT-Kanpur
- The project started after a go-ahead from former ISRO chief Madhavan Nair in 2008

Kanpur to release "Jugnu" into space. Until now, ISRO had been importing this technology from Canada.

Jugnu yesterday became

India's first indigenously designed nano-satellite to be successfully placed into its orbit. It was launched by ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch

Vehicle (PSLV-C18).

"The successful launch of Jugnu has validated the separation mechanism we designed as part of the nano-satellite project. It means we now have indigenous capability in this new area of technology and much more flexibility to design our systems. We will soon file for the patent through ISRO and dedicate the development to the nation," N Vyas, Professor, Department of Mechanical Engineering at IIT-Kanpur and Jugnu project

leader, told The Tribune in an exclusive interview.

ISRO currently has ejection systems only to launch satellites ranging from 100 to 1,000 kg, but not nano-satellites (under 10 kg). Before ISRO used the new IIT-Kanpur system, it was tested several times and approved and certified by the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre.

"We designed the system and got it fabricated by Simulations Design, Bangalore. Continued on page 8

A giant leap into space

From page 1

Before the launch, my biggest worry was whether the nano-satellite will eject at the right time. Now that it has been successfully tested, we can use the indigenous ejection system for future launches," Vyas said. The institute will get several other protocols in Jugnu patented through ISRO.

Asked if import costs of ejection systems for nano-satellites were significant, Vyas said, "Import cost per nano-satellite launch is around Rs 50 lakh. But in space research, it is not the cost that matters, it is the capability, which we now have," said Vyas, who earlier headed the Technical Mission on Railway Safety set up during the NDA regime. Of the 12 projects the mission recommended, five are in progress.

As for "Jugnu", it began in 2008 when IIT-Kanpur started working on micro electro-mechanical systems, a new field of engineering dealing with micro systems. "We had heard of micro satellites and

wanted to develop one. ISRO extended support and that's how "Jugnu" started as a student project," Vyas recalls.

He said the project aimed at creating space research capability and rekindling interest for research among IITians. "Those were the days of IT boom and students were hankering after body shop jobs. But Jugnu changed all that. Soon students were quitting jobs to join the project. Our student leader Shantanu Agarwal opted for MTech after finishing B Tech just to be able to contribute to Jugnu. He is still with us." Other major IIT-Kanpur student participants of the project are Shashank and Preneet (physics), Kshitij Deo (mechanical) and Anant Goyal.

IITians have also begun setting up their own research companies. "Three companies dealing with embedded systems development used for automations are currently being incubated at IIT-Kanpur itself. Students are driving these," Vyas says.

Economic Times ND 14/10/2011

P-10

State of Higher Education

Occasional Paper

MANOJ PANT

Two seemingly unrelated developments motivated this article. One, Mr Mani Shanker Aiyar's rather irresponsible statements on the English capabilities of Mr Maken. Second, Mr Narayana Murthy's statements about the declining standards of IIT graduates as a consequence of the 'teaching shops' in the country. Apart from the implied humour in Mr Aiyar's statements, there was an inference about the relative merits of two colleges of Delhi University. In the same vein, Mr Murthy's statement reflected more a failure of the higher education sector in India rather than that of the private 'teaching shops'. While one can cavil about the political correctness of either Mr Aiyar or Mr Murthy's statements, it is difficult to disagree that something ails our higher education sector.

Consider the comparison that Mr Aiyar (implicitly) made. Despite the politically-motivated outcry, issues of various magazines devoted to surveys of the higher education sector have periodically brought out that all higher education institutes (universities and professional colleges) do not bring out the same quality of students. Yet, while Delhi University as a whole is still the premier institution in the country, it's also true that in many subjects (Economics for one!), St Stephen's College is

no longer the premier institution even in the Capital.

What is, however, more disconcerting is that the relative ranking of various institutions have more or less remained the same and there seems no 'levelling out'. Even more important, standards in most state universities are declining drastically and there seems no end in sight. Why this situation?

Let us get back to St Stephen's, admittedly the premier institution in India (and not only because Mr Aiyar studied there!). The question is whether the students excel because of the institution or the other way round. With all due apologies to St Stephen's College, the second explanation is closer to the truth. If the best enter St Stephen's, it is not surprising that they outperform others at the university level. This is what Mr Murthy was saying. The IITs attract the best students but add little value so that graduates remain unemployable. However, here, Mr Murthy must realise that the 'teaching shops' are probably adding some value in enabling weaker students to compete in exams. The 'teaching

shops' also exist only because of so much competition for just a few institutions of excellence.

One radical solution is to 'randomise' the entry of students to higher institutions: let admission be related to non-merit parameters like location of students, income of parents, etc. This would lead to a political outcry from the reservation lobbies (caste and religion) in particular: how can state education be non-discriminatory?

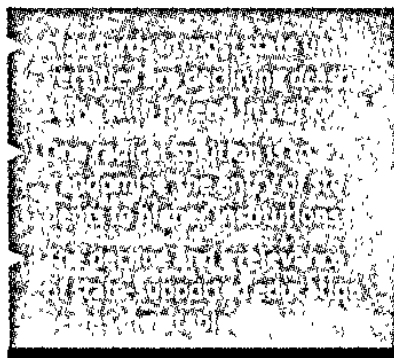
The problem is the vicious circle: good students attract good faculty who then attract the best students, and so on. How to break this circle? Another solution is to start with the faculty. Today, NAAC — the UGC's rating system for higher education institutes — is a reality. So, suppose faculty in institutions lower down the ladder are offered a higher salary. To one extent, this is being done today. Central universities in backward and hilly areas get an additional DA of 12.5% (NEHU in Shillong actually gets an additional 25%, but that is another story). What if this system were to be extended to other institutions based on a NAAC as-

essment? Rating changes every 5-10 years would then allow the system to be tweaked. This is likely to work better than merely setting up central universities in every state and then find most suffering due to non-availability of faculty.

Both these solutions sound radical. Yet, something on these lines is necessary as the market solution is worse (but unstoppable). While state universities are mired in procedural issues in appointing faculty, the private sector is snapping them up. Politicisation of the student body makes most decision-making nearly impossible. Worse, CAG has noted that some universities have mis-utilised money for faculty travel. Yet, around the world, faculty is penalised for not utilising funds set aside for attending conferences.

India has about 320 universities of which only 40 are central universities where some control on quality — and politicisation — still exists. They can only absorb less than 15% of the growing student population. The US has about 4,000 accredited institutions and caters to students across the globe! Indian public sector education must survive given the low cost and the need for state-funded R&D. But while Parliament is obsessed with Anna or the '2G scam', two Bills for regulating and creating autonomy for higher education lie in cold storage. Benign neglect or malign intent: the decline and irrelevance of state-supported education seems inevitable.

(The author is faculty at JNU)



Higher Education Summit kicks off in U.S.

Narayan Lakshman

WASHINGTON: On a rainy, wind-swept morning at Georgetown University here, the first-ever India-United States Higher Education Summit was kicked off on Thursday by Union Minister of Human Resource Development Kapil Sibal and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

Among the top issues they will consider during a full day's discussions is the prospect of U.S. universities entering into partnership agreements with Indian higher education institutions under the aegis of India's Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations) Bill.

Addressing the summit delegates, Mr. Sibal outlined the case for ramping up the "supply" of higher education in India in the years ahead. Arguing that India's Gross Enrolment Ratio was around 15 per cent, he said that increasing that proportion to 30 per cent by 2020 would require India to provide for opportunities in higher education for an additional 30 million children.

"To do that, we will need to build an additional 1,000 universities and 50,000 colleges. To serve these institutions, we will require quality faculty of over a million assisted by quality support structures," he said.

Secretary Clinton remarked that the Singh-Obama Knowledge Initiative "provides \$10 million for increased university partnership and junior faculty development." However, she cautioned that in the wake of the Tri-Valley University scam, in which many Indian

students were left in limbo following visa fraud allegations against that university, the U.S. was taking steps to block such fraudulent universities from reaching Indian students.

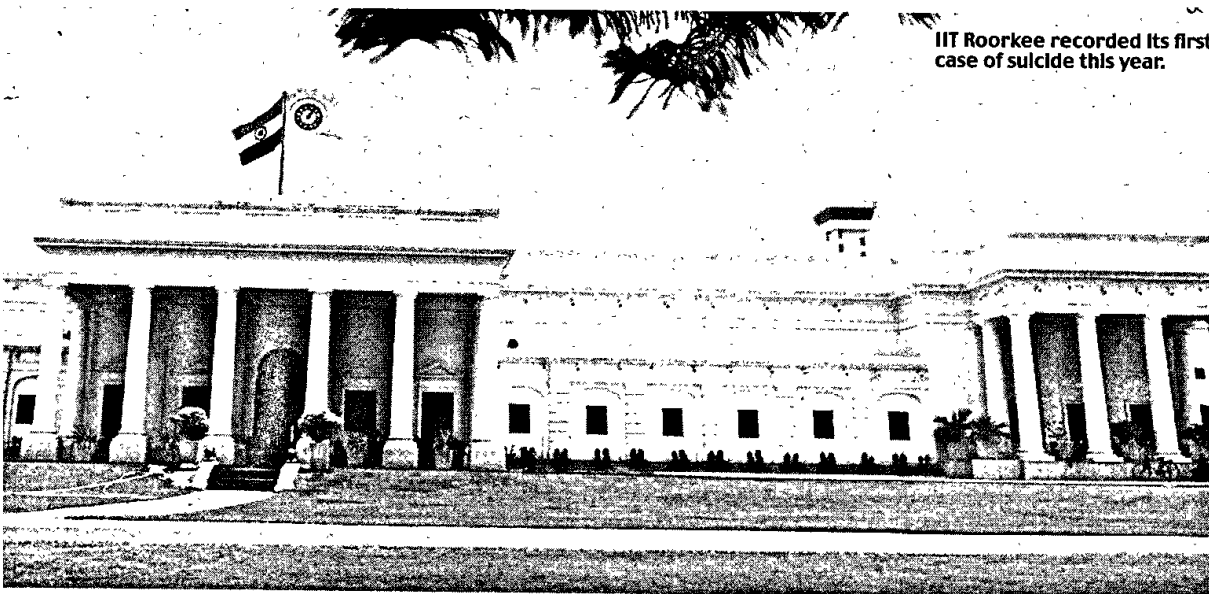
In comments at an earlier event organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Mr. Sibal made an eloquent case for greater U.S.-India partnerships in the higher education field arguing that the U.S.' institutions were the "envy of the world."

Speaking at another pre-summit meeting organised by the U.S.-India Business Council, U.S. Deputy Secretary William Burns touched upon some of the themes of the dialogue saying, "I challenge all of you during tomorrow's Summit to seek out new avenues for cooperation we have not fully explored, including community college, distance learning, and new technologies in education."

While the leaders are expected to announce some prospective partnership agreements at the end of the Summit, some outstanding questions remain.

One of these is whether any top-tier universities will be willing to invest in the full range of education opportunities in India given that foreign universities are prevented from repatriating any profits that they make from such ventures.

A second, more fundamental, question is whether the next step for India should be to promote greater expansion within the existing domestic higher educational institutions before it turns to foreign providers.



IIT Roorkee recorded its first case of suicide this year.

by Ritika Chopra In New Delhi

THE University Grants Commission (UGC) has cracked the whip on caste discrimination prevalent in institutions of higher education.

An increasing number of suicides by Dalit students over the last few years has forced the regulatory authority to issue a circular asking universities to keep their biases in check.

In two circulars sent to 578 state, central and deemed universities, including IITs, in July, the UGC has acknowledged the prevalence of caste discrimination in colleges and universities against students.

Asking institutions to ensure that the officials and faculty members do not indulge in discrimination, the missive dated July 19 issued by joint secretary C.C. Pathak states: "I am directed to inform you that instances have come to the notice of the UGC that suicides (are) being committed by Dalit students in higher education institutes due to caste discrimination on grounds of their social origin. If any such incident comes to the notice of the authorities, action will be taken against the erring official/faculty members promptly."

The message was reiterated in another circular issued on July 29. Currently, government educational institutions have mandatorily reserved 15 per cent of the seats for students of Scheduled Caste (SC) or Dalit category and even and half per cent for the Scheduled Tribe (ST) quota.

Though the UGC has not maintained a record of suicides stemming from caste bias in higher education, there have reportedly

Circular issued to 'keep bias in check'

been about 18 such suicides in the last five years. Most of the cases were reported at engineering and medical institutes. While some of the deaths of Dalit students have been attributed to caste discrimination specifically, the cause of others remains largely unknown.

"Though such incidents have been brought to our notice, but we don't know the exact number of suicide cases. The trend, however, is shocking enough for us to issue the circular," a UGC official who is not authorised to speak to the media, said.

UGC calls for checks to stop Dalit suicides

Most cases attributed to caste bias

THOSE WHO KILLED THEMSELVES THIS YEAR

Name: G. Varalakshmi (18) of Vignan Engineering College, Hyderabad

When: January 30, 2011

A first year BTech student of Hayathnagar (a sub-urban town of AP), Varalakshmi succumbed to burn injuries. Unable to bear the harassment by the college management for not being able to pay tuition fee, she committed suicide. The delay was caused by the state government not

granting fee reimbursement.

Name: Manish Kumar (20) of IIT Roorkee

When: February 6, 2011

His death was IIT Roorkee's first suicide. A second year student from Muzaffarnagar, Manish jumped off the fifth floor of his hostel. Kumar's family alleged that he took killed himself after a few senior students made "castelst" remarks about him.

Name: Llnesh Mohan Gawle of National Institute of Immunology, Delhi

When: April 16, 2011

Llnesh Mohan Gawle, a PhD student committed suicide in his hostel room. He came from a poor Dalit family who lived in Dindori tehsil near Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh. Reasons for his suicide remain unknown. Most suicide cases are reported in technical and medical institutes.

This year, three suicides (see box) have been reported already of which the families of two students have openly alleged discrimination in the respective institutes.

For instance, on February 6 this year, Manish Kumar, a second year student from Muzaffarnagar at IIT Roorkee, committed suicide by jumping off the fifth floor of his hostel. His death was IIT Roorkee's first suicide case and Kumar's family alleged

that he took this step after a few senior students made "castelst" remarks against him.

G. Varalakshmi (18), an engineering student at a private institute in Hyderabad, was allegedly driven to take his own life in January this year as she was unable to bear the harassment by the college management for not being able to pay the tuition fee. The delay was caused by the state government not granting fee reim-

bursement on time.

To ensure that the embarrassing trend doesn't rear its ugly face again, the UGC has advised universities to take some preventive steps.

"The universities/institute/college may develop a page on their website for lodging such complaints of caste discrimination by Dalit students and also place a complaint register in the Registrar/Principal office for the purpose," the circular states.

Hindustan Times 14/10/2011 P6

Over two lakh get ready to bell the CAT

Shaswati Das

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NEW DELHI: The countdown has begun and it's that time of the year again. Students have started taking stock of their basics in mathematics, English and logical reasoning to appear for the much-awaited Common Admission Test (CAT).

The exam, conducted by Prometric, will begin on October 22 and continue till November 18 across all Prometric centres in India.

"While in 2010, the total number of students who had registered for CAT was 2.04 lakh, this year the number stands at 2.05 lakh, which shows an increase of 1,000," said a Prometric spokesperson.

Despite the exhaustive preparation by students, the exam still remains one of the biggest chal-

lenges every year.

"Since I have studied engineering, handling the quantitative and LRDI sections are not much of a challenge, but the verbal section is difficult to get a grip on. Everyday, we have to memorise the meanings and usage of hundreds of new words. The comprehension section is also tough as a lot depends on how you infer the passage and answer the questions," said Gaurav Misra, who dropped a year to prepare for CAT.

Apart from CAT, students will appear for other examinations such as NMAT (NMIMS Management Aptitude Test), IIFT (Indian Institute of Foreign Trade) and XAT (Xavier's Admission Test), while admission to Delhi University's Faculty of Management Studies (FMS) will be based on CAT scores.

'Use Hinglish words to promote Hindi'

NEW DELHI: Do Hindi words like *misil*, *pratyabhuti*, *kunjipatal* and *sanganak* leave you puzzled?

Noting that such puritan use of Hindi generates disinterest among masses, the Union Home Ministry has recommended that these be replaced with English alternatives in Devnagari script for official work.

So, *misil* can be replaced with *file*, *pratyabhuti* with *guarantee*, *kunjipatal* with

keyboard and *sanganak* with computer. These were some examples cited by the Ministry's Department of Official Language secretary Veena Upadhyayin a circular. The circular advocates use of popular Hindi words and English alternatives to make the language more attractive and popular in offices and masses.

"Whenever during official work, Hindi is used as translating language, it becomes difficult and complex. There

is an urgent need to make changes in the process of English to Hindi translations. Translations should carry expression of the original text rather than word-by-word Hindi substitute," said the circular.

It said use of popular words of Urdu, English, and other regional languages should be promoted in official correspondence. Pure Hindi should be for literary purposes and practical "mixed" ver-

sion for work purposes.

"Foreign words which are now popular in Hindi like ticket, signal, lift, station, police, bureau, button, fee...and Arabian, Turkish, Farsi words like Adalat, Kanoon, Muqadma, Kagaz, Daftar...should be used as it is in Hindi correspondences," it said.

The Ministry said it is better to use popular English terms in Devnagri script than to translate them into pure Hindi. - PTI

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Tyagi is new HAL chairman

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bangalore: R K Tyagi, CMD, Pawan Hans Helicopters Ltd, who was appointed HAL chairman on Thursday, will succeed Ashok Nayak who retires on October 31.

The appointment comes even as the company deals with the suicide of Sqn Ldr (ret'd) Baldev Singh, director (corporate planning and marketing). His family and colleagues said work pressure had forced him to take the extreme step.

While Tyagi is an outsider to HAL, he has had stints at Pawan Hans and ONGC. He's a BE (electronics and telecommunication) from IIT Roorkee and an MBA (marketing). Prior to the Pawan Hans assignment, he was general manager and head, air logistics, ONGC, managing 20 helicopters.

FRAMEWORK ISSUES

Ministries fight over vocational education

BY PRASHANT K. NANDA
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NEW DELHI

A row has broken out between the ministries of labour and human resource development (HRD) over the latter's attempt to lay down a framework for vocational education.

Officials at the labour ministry, the nodal agency for vocational education, say the HRD ministry is stepping on their toes by proposing a national vocational education framework.

But HRD ministry officials argue that the labour ministry has failed to meet rising skilled manpower requirement, creating the need for them to step in and integrate skill training with mainstream education.

The government has asked the labour ministry to create a pool of 100 million skilled workers by 2022, as part of an overall target of 500 million workers, to meet the needs of various industries.

The labour ministry supervises more than 9,000 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and Industrial Training Centres, where at least 1.2 million students are enrolled.

Though the labour ministry has its own accrediting body and institutes to design courses, monitor and issue certificates, the HRD ministry plans to link these functions with private bodies, such as sector skill councils, under its vocational education framework, two labour ministry officials said.

"They are entering our domain," said R.L. Singh, who heads the Directorate General of Employment and Training under the labour ministry. "What is the

accountability mechanism the HRD (ministry) is working on for the vocational framework?"

Three rounds of discussion have failed to sort out differences between the ministries, said a second labour ministry official. "We can take this to the Prime Minister's Office," this official said, asking not to be identified.

An HRD ministry official said the labour ministry has failed to perform its task.

"We are the ministry in charge of education, and are free to design our own course and have our own affiliation. As such, the ITIs are not great examples of quality vocational training institutes," said the official, requesting anonymity.

The official said 22 ministries, including HRD, have been tasked with creating the required pool of workers under a national skill development mission.

S.J. Amalan, head of the Regional Directorate of Apprenticeship Training, Kolkata, a body under the labour ministry, said the labour ministry's stance is correct, but it needs to expand its capacity-building network.

"We have to be contemporary and industry-worthy while expanding our base," he said.

Students seeking certification from the labour ministry sometimes get caught up with procedural delays, Amalan said. The ministry should expedite the process.

The HRD ministry earlier had a similar row with the health ministry over the regulation of medical education. The health ministry prevailed by retaining the right to monitor and regulate medical education and the practice of medicine.

MOHIT SHARMA

I STILL remember the chill I had felt when I had walked into my new hostel room in second year. A712 had been empty for six months - its last occupant had committed suicide by hanging himself from the ceiling fan. People didn't really know him by his first name, as is common here. His nickname was a legend in the institute's internal virtual world though. Over the years, he had accrued a few backlogs because of which he would have had to stay in the institute for another year. Those backlogs also meant that his chances of getting a good job were affected. If I ended this anecdote with a

simple "So, he committed suicide", it would be highly simplistic. Let me tell you why. The IITs were, and still remain, one of the most exclusive colleges in the world. Getting in is no easy task, as lakhs of aspirants find out every year. Few manage to get in and fewer manage to get branches of their choice.

Inside, it is a tough world. Everyone has been an NTS scholar or an established quizzier or a classical musician or, at the very least, the standout kid of the class. Think of those one-off bright stu-

dents in your class who seemed to score on exams without having to study. Imagine having such students constitute half of your batch, the other half being made of people who'll persist till they break problems down and make them beg for mercy. Add to this, the beast of relative grading where the top performer typically gets a 10 in a course and the bottom-most one a 4, or one of the varied fail-grades, and you begin to get a sense of the situation.

It is not that students at IIT study a lot - that impression should be

reserved for our friends in medicine. Competitive as we all were, we instead make it out to be a race for those other titles and laurels - a club head, a college fest official, a coveted internship. These were things which made you a *stud*. In fact, academics, or acads as we referred to them, used to be last day affairs - one *nightout* per exam minimum. The rat-race at IIT was in every single pursuit of yours, not just academics.

Most psychologists would probably talk of a good support system necessary to deal with such pres-

sure. But then, your parents and relatives rarely understand your situation. You were always the blue-eyed kid of the class. How did you suddenly become average!? Or worse, how did you get a backlog! As if that was not enough, even your friendships have a competitive edge to them. In such an environment, it is very easy to fall through the cracks. One weak moment leads to another and before you know it, you find yourself in a deep hole, where everyone around you looks like an achiever. You forget your own as

well as your life's worth in such a situation, and this is where most cases stem from.

Often, suicides are imputed to a bad academic record. While it is true that academics can be unforgiving, more so at IIT Kanpur than maybe at IIT Bombay, it really shouldn't be any other way. The real core of the problem lies in the extreme peer environment, without which IIT would not have been what it is. Thus, the best attempt at solving the problem can only involve shoring up support systems on campus in

the form of mentorship or buddy programmes, greater interaction with parents in the first semester to help them understand the environment at IIT and a larger team of full time psychologists. The system already has these ideas in place, at least at IIT Bombay and Kanpur.

Beyond that, there is nothing anyone in the system can realistically do. The brilliant young men and women who come here have to learn how to measure their true worth through their own eyes and not through their projected images.

(The writer, an alumnus of IIT Bombay, is working with Price Waterhouse Cooper, Mumbai)

It is so easy to fall through the cracks

Rashtriya Sahara ND 14/10/2011

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आईआईटी-जेईई परीक्षा में हस्तक्षेप से इनकार

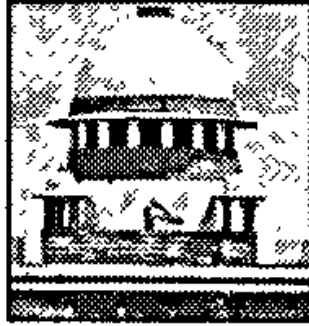
नई दिल्ली (एजेंसी)। उच्चतम न्यायालय ने प्रतिष्ठित आईआईटी-जेईई की रैंकिंग और चयन प्रक्रिया में हस्तक्षेप करने से इनकार कर दिया और कहा कि चयन के तौर तरीके तय करने में कोई मनमानापन या अन्य उद्देश्य नहीं है।

न्यायमूर्ति आरवी रवींद्रन और न्यायमूर्ति एके पटनायक की पीठ ने कहा कि अदालतें प्रक्रिया में तभी हस्तक्षेप करेंगी जब इसमें अनियमितता या मनमानापन साबित होता हो। पीठ ने देश भर में परीक्षा संचालित करने वाली नोडल एजेंसी संयुक्त दाखिला बोर्ड (जेएबी) द्वारा स्वीकृत मौजूदा प्रणाली में कोई गड़बड़ी नहीं होने की बात की। पीठ ने कहा कि किसी परीक्षा में उम्मीदवारों की रैंकिंग तय करने के कई तरीके हैं जिनमें कुछ सरल और कुछ जटिल हैं। हर प्रणाली या तरीके में कुछ गुण और कुछ दोष होते हैं।

इसके साथ ही न्यायालय ने उम्मीदवार संचित बंसल

की अपील को खारिज कर दिया। आईआईटी खड़गपुर में एक प्रोफेसर का पुत्र संचित 2006 में सामान्य श्रेणी के उम्मीदवार के रूप में आईआईटी-जेईई में शामिल हुआ था। संचित को गणित में 75, भौतिकी में 104 और रसायन विज्ञान में 52 अंक मिले थे। उसे कुल 231 अंक प्राप्त हुए थे। बोर्ड ने गणित के लिए कट आफ अंक 37, भौतिकी के लिए 48 और रसायन विज्ञान के लिए 55 अंक निर्धारित किया था। कुल कट आफ अंक 154 तय किया गया था।

संचित को रसायन विज्ञान में 55 अंक नहीं मिले। इस वजह से वह परीक्षा में सफल घोषित नहीं किया गया। संचित ने इसके बाद परीक्षा की प्रणाली को चुनौती देते हुए दलील दी थी कि उससे कम अंक पाने वाले छात्रों का चयन कर लिया गया जबकि उसके दावे को खारिज कर दिया गया।



Dainik Bhaskar ND 14-Oct-11 p1

आईआईटी-जेईई परीक्षा प्रणाली में हस्तक्षेप नहीं

नई दिल्ली। सुप्रीम कोर्ट आईआईटी-जेईई परीक्षा प्रणाली में किसी तरह का हस्तक्षेप नहीं करेगा। अपने फैसले में गुरुवार को कोर्ट ने कहा, इसमें हस्तक्षेप तभी किया जा सकता है, जब प्रक्रिया में मनमानी या कोई छिपा मकसद पाए जाने का सबूत मिले। जस्टिस आरवी रवींद्रन और एके पटनायक की बेंच ने कहा 'इस तथ्य के आधार पर कि प्रक्रिया जटिल थी, हस्तक्षेप नहीं किया जा सकता। सर्वश्रेष्ठ छात्रों के चयन के लिए कई प्रणालियां हैं। इनमें से कुछ आसान हैं तो कुछ जटिल। सभी के अपने गुण-दोष हैं।'