

Newspaper Clips

September 19, 2011

Financial Express ND 19/09/2011 P-6

This way up

Engineers don't need to switch to management for career growth

SEPTEMBER 15 is celebrated as Engineer's Day in India. This day is celebrated in honour of Sir Mokshagundam Visvesvarayya, a renowned Indian statesman and engineer. As we commemorate another Engineer's day, Symantec recognises the genius and talent of engineers that has truly transformed the way people live. Engineers across industries today have an important role to play development of the country.

Specifically referring to the IT industry, the Indian software industry has matured over a period of time. Engineers have been known through the ages for their technical skill set and an inventive bent of mind. They have led to some of the greatest inventions in corporate history. There has also been an evolution in roles of IT engineers—a transition of pure-play engineering to the management side of the IT business. The industry today requires both—technical and management talent. Today, customers from across the world demand in-depth technical knowledge from the engineering talent that work on their mission critical projects. All of these factors contribute to the onset of the trend of careers on the technology track.

WE BELIEVE IN NURTURING OUR ENGINEERING TALENT BY PROVIDING THEM WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO FOLLOW THEIR PASSION AND TO EXCEL IN THEIR AREAS OF EXPERTISE

In order to encourage engineers to follow their passion for technology through a career in the technology field, an ecosystem needs to be established. An ecosystem that does not make moving to the IT management track as a default option for engineers.

At Symantec we run a programme called TechTracs that encourages engineers to pursue a career on the technology side. It is important to cultivate engineering talent and foster innovation, recognising which Symantec invests approximately 13% of its global revenue into R&D and has over 1,000 patents till date.

Symantec has over 3,000 employees in India with engineering centres in Pune, Bangalore and Chennai. We provide guidance and foster innovation through formalised brainstorming sessions, cross collaboration between Symantec researchers and product engineering, our Research Sabbatical Programme, and employee recognition programmes and events.

Some of the unique innovation programmes we conduct are InnoQuest and Cutting Edge. To ensure innovation stays at the forefront of their efforts and thinking, Symantec developed the Cutting Edge conference, a conference for engineering, by engineering. Cutting Edge is a series of regional and local Cutting Edge events happening around the world.

InnoQuest is a two-week programme that reflects the vibrant cul-



SUDHANSHU PANDIT

ture of innovation within the India product engineering team along with its affirmative and collaborative effort to harvest strategic innovations that can bring greater value to software products.

We have forums, mechanisms and role models to demonstrate the career path on the technology side and its benefits. This career path of the technology side is rewarding, and has the advantage of allowing employees to do the work they love the most. That's why we have very senior positions for "distinguished engineers" and "fellows", apart from "senior technical directors". These are people whose contribution to technology goes beyond the company and are aimed at the larger benefit of addressing customer requirements through superior technical knowledge.

Lastly, engineering colleges play a major role in building passion for technology leaders of tomorrow. Given the dynamism in the IT industry, it is increasingly important for greater collaboration between academia and industry. Budding talent needs to be provided with a realistic and holistic view of the industry and the relevance between theory and real world. It is this relevance that will ignite passion and vigour for technology among engineers. Some of the initiatives that could be undertaken are syllabus developed in conjunction with industry and sponsored projects.

Most importantly, people need role models. It is the inherent human nature to emulate successful people and the paths that they follow. Creating role models who have been successful in their careers on the technology track is an ideal way to encourage engineers to follow or continue their passion for technology.

'Innovation' is one of the core values at Symantec, along with 'action', 'customer-driven' and 'trust'. Symantec believes in nurturing its engineering talent by providing them with opportunities to follow their passion and to excel in their areas of expertise through several programmes such as TechTracs that enable our engineers to grow in a technical career path. A career at Symantec is uniquely rewarding for an engineering professional, since we provide opportunities in various technology domains—from security to storage to information management. In today's interconnected and information-driven world, Symantec's vision and technologies are more relevant today and in the future.

The author is director, HR, Symantec

HindustanTimes

Title : Education in the age of the iPad

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Education in the age of the iPad

CUTTING EDGE With innovative technology increasing its presence in today's classrooms, Gurgaon takes the lead

Abhijit Patnaik and Shubhi Vijay
research@hindustantimes.com

The chalk and the blackboard, brothers-in-arms for many years, have reached the end of the road in many Gurgaon schools, it would seem. With 'smart' (electronic) boards in almost every class, teaching has been brought to life, sometimes quite literally.

With more than 100 schools, Gurgaon has, over the past decade, set the standards of education among Delhi's suburbs.

The 2011 HT- C Fore National Capital Region (NCR) Top School Survey, conducted across schools in the region, graded them according to 14 parameters- from academic rigour and infrastructure to social accountability and the use of innovative teaching methods. The top ten schools in Gurgaon are unchanged from last year, with well known names such as The Shri Ram School, Aravali (TSRS) and Delhi Public School, Gurgaon rubbing shoulders with schools with innovative teaching styles, such as Shikshantar and Heritage.

DAV Public School, Sector 14 came out on top in the score for the 'academic rigour' parameter while The Shri Ram School got top honours in 'extracurricular activities'. The Heritage school did well according to the survey, bagging the highest score in the 'infrastructure' as well as 'individual attention to students' categories.

In today's schools, infrastructure, sports facilities, individual attention to students, 'life skills' education etc are all considered equally important by parents who are pouring in money and time into their children's education. And Gurgaon schools are delivering.

With the government also recognising that effective usage of information and communication technologies (ICT) in the classroom is correlated to positive academic outcomes (including higher test scores), many schools have adopted innovative new teaching methods to meet such demands.

The medium of books is simply not enough in a city where each child is becom-

ing tech-savvy. Many schools are even bringing Ipads/ tablet PC's to aid learning. Some even use computer-based adaptive self learning programmes in various subjects which allow students to learn at their own pace.

"In a changing world, if we teach children today the way we were taught yesterday, we rob them of tomorrow. Ten years from now, when they graduate from schools, they will need different skills than we did," says Bindu Rana, R&D head at Educomp, an education services company that uses ICT in its products.

Increasing use of technology also means that teachers need regular training. "Professional development of teachers to keep up quality standards is a must," she adds.

Uma Diwan, a social science teacher at Salwan Public school, has been in the profession for over 30 years. "When I joined Salwan five years ago, my teaching methodology underwent a sea change. Globalisation had already set in and teaching in a city like Gurgaon means meeting the expectations of all the stakeholders in education," she says.

Parents, however, are looking for all-round development of their child. "Despite growth, negative things such as traffic and congestion have also increased. When I went to school years ago, the bags were lighter and homework was less. The system puts a lot of stress on the kids in terms of marks, hindering the natural development of the child," says Vijay Mehta, whose daughter is a student at TSRS.

And it's not just the pressures of high cut-offs that worry students. With the huge increase in demand for quality education, the schools system is struggling to ensure availability for all. Sky high fees are the result.

"Despite our 'millennium' city tag, we lack basic infrastructure like parks where our children can play. Instead, we need to get sports-club memberships," said Subhashis Sinha, a resident of Gurgaon.

"The school infrastructure is excellent and activity-based approach is good, but I don't see much of a difference from what we learnt in our day except that the cost is a 1,000 times greater," he said.

TOMORROW

To find out which Noida schools come out on top in various categories, from 'individual attention to students' to 'value for money', look out for Part II of the Top School Survey in tomorrow's HT.

AICTE says city has highest number of illegal technical institutes

DELHI BRANDED CAPITAL OF FAKE BIZ SCHOOLS

By Ritika Chopra in New Delhi

DELHI has become the capital of the fake management degree business.

The Capital has bagged host to the largest number of illegal educational institutes in the country. According to data provided by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), as many as 76 institutes in Delhi are enrolling students under technical programmes without its approval. And more than half of them offer degree or diploma programmes in management studies.

Maharashtra, too, shares this dubious honour. Shockingly, both states together account for 45 per cent of all the total unapproved institutes in India.

But the Capital having the same number of illegal educational institutes as the third largest state in country is definitely a bigger reason for concern. Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal have the second and third highest number of unapproved institutions, respectively.

The AICTE is the only authority empowered to grant recognition to technical courses run by different universities and institutes in the country.

There are close to 3,500 management institutes alone approved by the AICTE, of which 3,000 offer MBA programmes and 500 offer diplomas.

According to the Council regulations, any academic programme related to the field of

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K.R. Mangalam Institutions of Higher Education in GK (left) and FOSTIMA Business School in South Extension are two such unapproved institutes.

Capital tops list of fake tech colleges

Continued from Page 1
architecture and town planning, management studies, engineering and information technology, pharmacy, hotel management and catering require AICTE approval. And in the absence of the Council's nod, the degrees handed out by the defuncting institutes are not worth the paper they are printed on.

"The degree or diploma awarded by such institutes does not hold any value in the job market, especially if the student wishes to seek employment in the government sector," said M.K. Hada, head of the approval department of the Council. The Council can do little other than give wide publicity to the fact that such institutes are not approved by it. It uploads the names of such institutes on its official website, and issues newspaper advertisements from time to time. The names of all the 348 unapproved institutes are available on www.aicte-india.org.

Action against erring institutes has to be taken by the respective state administrations. In a reply to a Parliament question given by the ministry of human resource development in the Lok Sabha earlier this month, the state and UNION territory governments have been advised from time to time to issue necessary instructions to the district administration or police to take action against such institutes. The last such communication was issued by the ministry on May 2 this year.

The ministry had also issued a public appeal to students, advising them to take necessary steps to ensure that their institutes are recognised under the law and offer courses of quality and repute.

Despite this, many of the illegal institutions continue to lure and enroll students as a spot check by

Q&A

■ WHY IS THE AICTE APPROVAL IMPORTANT FOR AN INSTITUTE OFFERING TECHNICAL COURSES?
Approval by AICTE grants legitimacy to a technical course. Without it, your diploma or degree will not hold any value in the job market.

■ WHICH TECHNICAL PROGRAMMES ARE GENERALLY REQUIRED TO GET THE AICTE APPROVAL?
Academic programmes related to architecture and town planning, management studies, engineering and information technology, phar-

macy, hotel management and catering require AICTE approval.

■ HOW CAN ONE FIND OUT IF AN INSTITUTE IS APPROVED BY AICTE?
Every year, the Council provides wide publicity to its list of unapproved institutes. This list is also available on their official website. www.aicte-india.org

■ DOES AICTE INITIATE ANY ACTION AGAINST ILLEGAL INSTITUTES?
The AICTE also asks the state governments, from time to time, to take action against the erring institutes.

UNAPPROVED INSTITUTES	
STATE	INSTITUTES
Delhi	75
Maharashtra	75
Andhra Pradesh	52
West Bengal	34
Uttar Pradesh	30
Karnataka	27
Haryana	16
Tamil Nadu	14

was offered by Mysore University, which is UGC-recognised. Similarly, the FOSTIMA Business School in South Extension, a five-year-old institute that boasts being set up by seven alumni of IIM Ahmedabad, also said its MBA degree was legal as it was offered through a tie-up with Pondicherry University.

The gimmick obviously works. The students at these institutes that Manu Taneer contacted had had no idea whether the programmes they were enrolled in were approved by the AICTE or not.

But the Council pleads helplessness as far as youngsters falling into the trap of such institutes are concerned.

"We do everything we can as far as giving publicity to the list of unapproved institutes is concerned. Even if the institute does not give them information, students should visit our website as all the information is also uploaded there," said a senior AICTE official, who did not want to be identified. Mantha, however, said that the Council is currently also trying to come up with alternative ways to counter this problem.

IIMK launches innovative course

Kozhikode, Sept. 18

The Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode (IIMK) has launched what it termed an innovative 'managerial perspective' course. The week-long compulsory course for the institute's post-graduate programme (PGP) participants is being led by 32 faculty members of the institute as also by invited dignitaries from corporations. According to Prof. Debashis Chatterjee, Director of IIMK, "this course, offered for the first time by any school in the world, will challenge our industrial age teaching and make learning more learner-centred than ever before. - Our Bureau

Business Line ND 19/09/2011

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Maharashtra teachers shocked over Kakodkar panel report

Press Trust of India

Mumbai, Sept. 18

The Maharashtra Federation of University and College Teachers Union has expressed shock over the recommendations made in a report submitted to the state government by the Anil Kakodkar Committee on Higher Education.

"It is surprising and shocking to learn from the report that it has taken a stand to dismantle the system of public-funded education and promote private funded education (self financing educational institutions) in Maharashtra," Ms Tapati

Mukhopadhyay, General Secretary of MFUCTU, told PTL.

The report has been prepared with a different perspective to reduce the government expenditure on social infrastructure and welfare heads, namely education. All recommendations of the report have been aimed at reducing the role and responsibility of the government, she said.

"Unfortunately, the Kakodkar Committee has not suggested anything for saving the public-funded education in India," Ms Mukhopadhyay said.

► *At present, with amended Right to Education Bill, the pre-primary education has gone into private hands, pushing a large number of lower income groups outside the schooling system. Many fundamental subjects are closing down. Teachers are becoming surplus.*

At present, with amended Right to Education Bill, the pre-primary education has gone into private hands, pushing a large number of lower income groups outside the schooling system, she

said, adding that in colleges, many students are averted from fundamental subjects such as physics and chemistry in science, or in literature. "They are attracted by the market-oriented subjects.

Many fundamental subjects are closing down. Teachers are becoming surplus. Many educational institutions and departments are on the verge of closure," she added. Ms Mukhopadhyay said the report was a replica of earlier two committee reports set up by the Centre - the Ambani-Birla Report and Knowledge Commission Report.

The Ambani-Birla Report was never placed before Parliament.

It was highly criticised by the academic community. The Knowledge Commission set up by the Prime Minister,

Dr. Manmohan Singh, consisted of members under eminent technocrat, Mr Sam Pitroda, she said.

"The Kakodkar Report closely reflects the recommendations of the Knowledge Commission.

Recommendations of both these reports show the hidden intention of the government to be relieved from the burden of educational expenses, paving the way for private educational institutions," she said.

The panel also suggested that varsities be compared with Special Economic Zone and this indicates the promo-

tion of private and foreign investment in education, she said.

Public opinion on inviting foreign varsities in India is sharply divided. The Private/Foreign University Bill has been passed in the Maharashtra Assembly, while the Foreign University Bill is yet to be passed, Mukhopadhyay said.

"The Private/Foreign University Bill promotes elite education system, which only students from affluent families would be able to afford.

"Comparison with China has been mentioned in the report.

Times of India ND 19/09/2011

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New biofuel? Orange peel turned into oil

Washington: Believe it or not, a scientist in UK has built a microwave which he claims can turn orange peel into oil.

James Clark at the University of York says the high-powered microwave could break down the molecules in fruit peel to release gases that could be collected and distilled into a liquid product. These valuable gases can then be used to produce oil, plastics, chemicals and fuels.

According to him, the microwave method could also be used on a variety of plant-based waste to make fuel or other products. They include straw, cashew nut shells, apple peel, coffee or rice husks, the Daily Express reported.

"Orange peel is an excellent example of a wasted resource. In Brazil, the world's largest producer of orange juice, half the orange fruit is left as waste once the juice has been recovered. This corresponds to eight million tons a year of orange peel that can be used to produce chemicals, materials and fuels," he said.

Clark built the 200,000 pounds microwave, which looks like one found in any kitchen, at his laboratory in

A new microwave breaks down fruit waste to gases, which are then used to produce oil, plastics and fuels

the Green Chemistry Centre at the university.

It can only treat small amounts of food waste, but soon, a model that can process 30kg of waste an hour is due to be in operation. And Clark says much bigger models, costing one million pounds, could treat six tons of food waste an hour and could soon become a familiar sight at recycling centres across UK.

They could also be sited at shopping centres to treat waste food from cafes and restaurants. "The unique feature of our microwave is that we work at deliberately low temperatures. We never go above 200 degrees. You can take the limonene off or you can turn limonene into other chemicals. It works really well with waste paper. It can take a big range of bio-waste material," Clark said. PTI

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A plant found in Brazil that sows its own seeds

Washington: Scientists have discovered a tiny plant which they say bows down and sows its own seeds. The dainty, inch-high plant with pink-and-white flowers was found growing in the backyard of a local plant collector in rural northeastern Bahia, Brazil, one of the world's most biologically diverse areas.

A team of scientists from Rutgers University, the State University at Feira de Santana in Bahia, and Western Carolina University then collaborated to confirm that the plant was indeed a new species, LiveScience reported.

"It is very easy to think we

have found and described most plant species of the world already, but this discovery shows there are so [many] left out there without name and recognition," Lena Struwe, a Rutgers University specialist in plants of the Loganiaceae family, said.

When the plant's fruits form, the plant slowly bends its small, fruiting branches down, depositing the seed capsules carefully onto the ground — and sometimes burying them in the soft cover of moss. Due to the plant's dexterity, the team decided to name the new species *Spigelia genuflexa*. PT



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GATE PREPARATION

Could you please tell me something about the GATE exam? Are MSc students eligible to take the exam? For how many years is the score valid? Where can one get the sample papers from?

Umesh Rao



This time, IIT Delhi will coordinate and conduct GATE 2012.

While the online exam is on January 29, 2012 (Sunday), the offline exam will be held on February 12, 2012 (Sunday).

The application deadline (website closure) is on October 17 (October 24 for printed version of online application).

GATE 2012 results will be announced on March 15, 2012 on the GATE websites of IITs and IISc. The GATE score is valid for two years from the date of announcement of the GATE results.

GATE is a single 100-mark paper, which is held for three hours with 65 objective type MCQ questions for each of the 21 disciplines.

Each paper has a general aptitude (GA) component of 15 marks.

For details of the exam structure, log on to: <http://gate.iitd.ac.in/GATE/gppattern.php>

Admission to postgraduate programmes with MHRD and some other government scholarships/assistantships in engineering colleges/institutes is open to those who qualify in GATE.

GATE qualification is also the minimum requirement to apply for various fellowships awarded by many government organisations.

The eligibility to appear for GATE is BE/BTech/BArch and those who are in the final year of such programmes.

Masters degree holders in any branch of science/maths/statistics/computer applications or equivalent, and those who are in the final year of such programmes can apply.

Candidates in the second or higher year of the four-year integrated Masters degree programme (post-BSc) in engineering/technology can apply.

Candidates in the fourth or higher year of five-year integrated Masters degree programme or dual degree programme in engineering/technology are eligible to apply.

Candidates with qualifications obtained through exams conducted by professional societies recognised by UPSC/AICTE [e.g. AMIE by Institute of Engineers (India); AMICE by Institute of Civil Engineers (India)] as equivalent to BE/Btech can also apply. Those who have completed section A or equivalent of such professional courses are also eligible.

Details: <http://gate.iitd.ac.in/GATE/>

US ADMISSIONS

I want to opt for a Masters programme in the US. I am contemplating either communications or journalism. Which colleges would you suggest? Also, would it be advisable to go to the US next Fall since the country is going through yet another phase of recession?

Deina Pinto

American universities offer Masters courses in communication studies and journalism. So what's the difference between the two? Well, journalism is more about the making of communication while communication studies, as the programme is called, focuses more on the study of communication.

Amongst the better universities for graduate programmes (for postgraduation) are: Columbia Graduate School of Journalism, University of California at Berkeley, Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, University of Missouri's School of Journalism, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Journalism programmes broadly have three 'tracks': magazine, newspaper or broadcast (TV & Radio). You will also intern at a publication or broadcast station. At the graduate level, courses are less about the theoretical aspects of journalism and more about the tricks of the trade. Missouri, for example, offers intermediate and advanced writing, newspaper reporting and magazine editing. The MS programme at the Columbia School of Journalism includes courses such as personal and professional style, covering ideas and the deadline in depth.

The 'tracks' within communication studies are loosely defined, so you can focus your curriculum to suit your interests. Typically these would be in the following areas: organisational communication, communication industries and technologies, rhetoric, media and public culture, relational communication, media and politics, and argumentation and advocacy.

Do keep in mind that Grad-school is quite expensive, almost prohibitive by Indian standards. The one-year graduate programme at Columbia costs US\$ 75,000 including tuition and living expenses, which is around Rs 35 lakh. Also, many of them, prefer a couple of years of work experience in the field.

INFORMATICS OLYMPIAD

Our son is very good with computers. He has been writing small programmes ever since he was a kid. He is presently studying in a boarding school. What can we do to sustain his interest?

Pavni Dubey

I would strongly urge you to encourage him to participate in the Informatics Olympiad 2011-12, which is jointly organised by the CBSE & the Indian Association for Research in Computing Science, Mumbai.

The Olympiad is open to all school students across the country, from any school board. It is conducted at two levels for students of class VIII-XII.

Stage 1: The Zonal Informatics Olympiad (ZIO) will be held on Saturday, November 19. This is the first round towards qualifying for the team, which will represent India at the International Olympiad in Informatics held in Italy in September 2012.

The ZIO does not involve any actual computer programming but tests the student's aptitude, logical competence, problem-solving skills and critical thinking.

It would help to refer to the previous years' question papers and solutions, which are available on the official Olympiad website (www.iarcs.org.in) along with the list of centres (40+) and up-to-date news about the contest.

Stage 2: If your son qualifies in the first stage exam, he can sit for the second stage exam i.e. the National Informatics Olympiad on January 21, 2012, which is a test of programming skills.

MBA AT IIT

I am a fourth year B.Tech (electrical) student. I am keen on applying for an MBA at the IITs. What is the eligibility criteria and how can I apply?

Neeraj Gaur



Several of the IITs have schools or departments of management studies that offer postgraduate programmes in business and management. These are very highly regarded both by students and recruiters, and accordingly, the competition can be quite stiff. The IITs that offer such programmes are IIT Bombay, IIT Delhi, IIT Kanpur, IIT Kharagpur, IIT Madras and IIT Roorkee.

Till last year (academic year 2010), the IITs (and IISc, Bangalore) conducted a separate entrance exam known as the Joint Management Entrance Test or JMET.

The JMET now stands discontinued despite the High Court ruling upholding JMET as one of five 'All-India' management entrance tests. Partly the reason for this was the declining number of takers for the JMET in recent years.

For the academic year 2011, the IITs and IISc will use the scores from the Common Admission Test (CAT) conducted by the IIMs to shortlist

students for the group discussion and personal interview stage.

Eligibility: You will have to meet the separate eligibility requirements of both the CAT and the specific IIT/IISc you wish to apply to.

Eligibility for CAT is a graduation (any stream) with a minimum of 50% aggregate.

The requirements for the management programmes at the IITs is a Bachelor degree in engineering/technology/architecture/pharmaceutical science/agriculture engineering with a minimum of 60% or a Masters in physics/chemistry/maths/stats/computer science/informational science/electronics science/environmental science or a Masters in economics/commerce (with maths/stats at the Bachelor's level) with a minimum of 60% in aggregate.

Regarding the current US economic downturn/recession, do keep a couple of things in mind. One, understand the impact the recession has on jobs and hiring outlook in your desired field. By and large with lower spends from advertisers, traditional mainstream media does reduce its hiring but that doesn't mean they don't require skilled, qualified and motivated professionals. Be prepared to work hard and do well both academically and in your internships to improve your chances of landing a job.

Secondly, during a recession most universities actually see an increase in applications with people wanting to ride out the tough times and improve their skills and thereby making themselves more employable. As a result, getting admissions into the better programmes actually becomes harder.

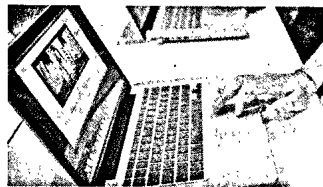
Lastly, the recession has a definite impact on funding, aid and scholarships available, especially so for international students. Most international students look at a combination of university scholarship and aid, and scholarships and grants from their home country to fund their education.

But don't let the prevailing economic scenario stop you from applying in the first place. You're targeting the academic session of 2012 and will graduate in 2013 — that's a long way off and things should improve by then.

Selected candidates will be called for intensive training for the final selection of candidates for the International Informatics Olympiad.

Don't miss the application deadline: October 15.

The final team will be selected after a residential camp in June, where the shortlisted bunch of students will be trained by computer scientists from leading academic institutions such as the IITs, IISc, TIFR, CMI and IMSc.



The four finalists will be sent for the International Informatics Olympiad.

Incidentally, India's track record at the previous IOIs has been excellent. All four participants bagged medals in the IOI-2010 at Waterloo, Canada and bagged two silvers at the IOI-2011, Pattaya City, Thailand.

कैट से खुलेंगे बी स्कूलों के गेट

कल्पना पाठक और विनय उमरजी

भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान (आईआईटी) दिल्ली ने ज्वाइंट मैनेजमेंट एंट्रेंस टेस्ट (जेमैट) से हटने का निर्णय लिया है। बिजनेस स्कूलों में प्रवेश के लिए आईआईटी और इंडियन इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ साइंस द्वारा आयोजित की जाने वाली करीब एक दशक पुरानी इस अर्हता परीक्षा (क्वालिफाइंग टेस्ट) की जगह कॉमन एडमिशन टेस्ट (कैट) लेता जा रहा है। कैट इंडियन इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ मैनेजमेंट (आईआईएमएस) द्वारा प्रवर्तित है।

आईआईएम कैट की बढ़ती लोकप्रियता से प्रफुल्लित हैं। करीब एक दर्जन से भी ज्यादा मैनेजमेंट क्वालिफाइंग परीक्षाओं में कैट ही केवल एकमात्र परीक्षा है, जिसमें हर साल लाखों छात्र भाग लेते हैं।

कैट के 2011 के संयोजक जानकीरामन मूर्ति ने कहा कि आईआईटी जैसे गुणवत्ता वाले संस्थानों के कैट को क्वालिफाइंग परीक्षा के रूप में स्वीकार करने से प्रोत्साहन मिलता है। इससे कैट की भी विश्वसनीयता बढ़ी है। इसके चलते न केवल कैट की लोकप्रियता बढ़ेगी बल्कि पंजीकरण की तादाद में भी 25 फीसदी बढ़ोतरी होगी।

जेमैट के खत्म होने का कारण यह भी हो सकता कि यह कैट की सामग्री से ज्यादा अलग नहीं था। ज्यादातर छात्र जो जेमैट में भाग लेते हैं, वे कैट में भी भाग लेते हैं। इसके अलावा 2010 में 30,000 छात्रों ने जेमैट में पंजीकरण कराया, जबकि 2009 में यह संख्या 40,000 थी। वर्ष 2010 में कैट के लिए 2,06,000 पंजीकरण हुए।

हालांकि पिछले दो साल में कैट में भाग लेने वाले छात्रों की संख्या घटी है, लेकिन आईआईएम का कहना है कि उन्हें इस साल बढ़ोतरी की उम्मीद है। वार्षिक परीक्षा के कंप्यूटर आधारित तीसरे संस्करण में आवेदनों की संख्या 25 फीसदी बढ़ने की संभावना है। वर्ष 2008 में करीब 2,76,000 प्रतिभागियों ने कैट में भाग लिया था। यह संख्या 2009 में गिरकर 2,40,000 रही।

कैट के आवेदनों की संख्या में बढ़ोतरी की उम्मीद इस बात से भी लगाई जा रही है कि 2009 में ऑनलाइन टेस्ट की खराब शुरुआत के बाद पिछले साल



जेमैट जैसी प्रतियोगी परीक्षाएं खत्म होने के कगार पर हैं, ऐसे में ज्यादातर संस्थान कैट स्कोर के आधार दाखिला दे रहे हैं

यह व्यवधान मुक्त रहा है।

वर्ष 2009 में आईआईएम और प्रोमेट्रिक को टेस्ट दो चरणों में आयोजित करवाना पड़ा था, क्योंकि विभिन्न केंद्रों पर हजारों छात्रों को तकनीकी खामियों का सामना करना पड़ा था। इसके कारण प्रोमेट्रिक ने भी एनआईआईटी से अपनी साझेदारी खत्म कर ली थी और मेरिट ट्रेक और एवोरॉन का दामन थाम लिया था।

इस साल 10 और गैर-आईआईएम बिजनेस स्कूल कैट स्कोर को स्वीकार करेंगे, जिससे कैट के अंकों के आधार पर प्रवेश देने वाले गैर-आईआईएम संस्थानों की संख्या 165 हो जाएगी। आईआईएम के पास पंजीकृत बिजनेस स्कूलों को कैट के अंकों का इस्तेमाल करने के लिए पहली बार 2.5 लाख रुपये और नियमित रूप से 2 लाख रुपये प्रतिवर्ष देने होंगे।

आईआईएम की योजना इस परीक्षा को भविष्य में अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर तक ले जाने की है और इसका आयोजन वर्षभर करने की है। अंतरराष्ट्रीय बिजनेस स्कूलों ने उनसे आग्रह किया है कि उनके लिए कैट का आयोजन किया जाए।

आईआईएम की योजना कैट को एक अलग संस्था बनाने की है।

मूर्ति ने कहा कि 'लेकिन इसमें एक-दो साल का समय लगेगा। हमारा उद्देश्य इस साल से टेस्ट को और मजबूत करने पर ध्यान देना है। कैट के लिए एक अलग संस्था बनाने से आईआईएम प्रबंधन शिक्षा पर ध्यान केंद्रित कर सकेंगे। जबकि कैट इस परीक्षा के आयोजन को संभाल

सकेगा।'

छात्रों की सुविधा के लिए पहले के 33 परीक्षा केंद्रों के अलावा तीन नए शहरों भिलाई, जम्मू और देहरादून में केंद्र बनाए गए हैं। इसका फायदा उत्तरी राज्यों के छात्रों को मिलेगा।

मूर्ति ने कहा कि इसके अलावा अब परीक्षार्थी एक्सिस बैंक की 201 शाखाओं से कैट के वाउचर्स खरीद सकेंगे। इस महीने से शुरू हो चुके कैट के पंजीकरण 28 सितंबर तक खुले रहेंगे।

इस साल कैट का आयोजन नए प्रारूप में होगा। इसमें तीन के बजाए दो ही खंड होंगे। पहला खंड क्वान्टिटेटिव एबिलिटी और डाटा इंटरप्रेशन से संबंधित होगा, जबकि दूसरा मौखिक योग्यता और लॉजिकल रिजनिंग से। इन दोनों खंडों को अलग-अलग समय सीमा के साथ लागू किया जाएगा। परीक्षा 140 मिनट की होगी, जिसमें प्रतिभागी को प्रत्येक खंड में 30 प्रश्नों का उत्तर 70 मिनट में देना होगा। इसके लिए ऑनस्क्रीन काउंटडाउन टाइमर होगा। जैसे ही पहले खंड का समय पूरा होगा, उनके लिए दूसरा खंड शुरू हो जाएगा। वे पहले खंड के लिए और समय नहीं ले सकेंगे।

मूर्ति ने कहा कि 'नया प्रारूप शुरू करने के बाद हम यह देखना चाहते हैं कि प्रतिभागियों को विशेष सामग्री पर ध्यान केंद्रित करने में यह कैसे मदद करता है। नए प्रारूप के तहत प्रतिभागी उस खंड पर ध्यान दे सकेंगे, जिस पर वे काम कर रहे हैं। इससे उन प्रतिभागियों को अनुचित लाभ नहीं मिलेगा जो एक खंड विशेष में ज्यादा मजबूत हैं।'