A sustainable model for IITs

Dr. M.M. Mayoorem

The Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) occupy an important and special position in the country, playing a crucial part in the career aspirations of lakhs of students. At the same time, policy-makers are grappling with two questions on their real — and additional funds generated through higher fees can be used to build research infrastructure...

The IITs can be given the freedom to determine their fees as do the IIMs, and the additional funds generated through higher fees can be used to build research infrastructure...

...To ensure that higher fees do not pose an undue burden on any student, a loan to cover the fees may be sanctioned to each student.

The committee, which is likely to be headed by Prime Minister's science advisor CNR Rao, will comprise faculties of the IITs too, top sources in the Human Resource Development Ministry told Deccan Herald. The Human Resource Development Ministry had proposed to hold a single entrance examination for admissions to all engineering colleges in the country, following recommendations from a committee headed by T Ramasami. As states’ participation in the proposed test remained unclear, it, later, decided to hold an Indian Science and Engineering Eligibility Test (ISET) for centrally-funded technical institutions only, but kept it open for all the states to adopt the system. After receiving demands from the IITs, the ministry later named the test as Joint Entrance Examination which was proposed to be conducted in two parts—Joint Entrance Examination-Main and Joint Entrance Examination-Advance.

The proposed test also stipulated for giving weightage to candidates’ class XII board marks.

Soon after the proposal got approval of the Council of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), a section of Indian Institutes of Technology started raising objections to the test formats. Giving in to the demands of the IIT faculties, the IIT council, headed by Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal, approved that only top 20 percentage holders of the respective school board will be eligible for admission to IITs on the basis of their performance in Joint Entrance Examination-Advance to be designed and conducted by the joint admission board of the premier technical institutions.

IIT faculties accepted the new format for admissions in to their institutions but the debate over the government’s move to launch a single entrance system in the country.

“The new basic objective is to fine-tune the test format in which first common entrance is to be held in 2013,” ministry sources said.

DH News Service

Govt to again push for one-test system

IIT faculties will be part of the new panel; to set up ‘fine-tune’ format of CET

Praeksh Kumar

NEW DELHI: In a fresh move to launch a single entrance test for engineering aspirants in 2014, the Centre is planning to board faculties of IITs who played a сплот, by demanding an add-on test for entry to their system during finalisation of the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) to be conducted in 2013.

As preparations for holding the first JEE for admissions to centrally-funded technical in-
Anyone worried about what’s wrong with our education?

ON RECORD
Kapil Sibal, Union HRD Minister

Union HRD Minister Kapil Sibal is ready with a raft of proposals on education to present in the coming session of Parliament. He is banking on the powers of the Parliamentary panel on education to make the country’s educational policy more effective. He says that the panel will recommend the National Academic Depository Bill and the CBSE Act, among other things. He says that the panel will look into the issue of how to improve the quality of education in the country.

Education tribunals Bill

The Bill has already been passed by the Lok Sabha, and it has also been passed by the Rajya Sabha. The Bill contains provisions for the establishment of educational tribunals to hear and decide cases relating to educational institutions.

Your Congress colleagues blocked your Bill in the Rajya Sabha. Some feel there is a tearing haste. That’s political dynamism. I am glad I am in a hurry, because the easiest way out is to do nothing. The easiest thing in the world is not to take any decisions.

Are you working on any new laws?

This Monsoon Session, we will introduce a Bill to give statutory powers to the CBSE. We are working on a draft bill to prevent unfair practices at schools, including the recharging of fees, denial of admission and discrimination on the basis of caste or religion. We are also planning to introduce the National Academic Depository Bill, which will provide for the establishment of educational tribunals to hear and decide cases relating to educational institutions.

The Tribune ND 05/08/2012 P-11

‘Better to be in a hurry than do nothing’

I don’t know how else I could have handled it. Never before has there been a two- or three-hour discussion on an IT Bill, and I have not had an opportunity to explain the need for it. I am surprised that the Opposition has not seen the need for it. They have not seen the need for it. But I am not here to explain the need for it. I am here to implement the need for it. I am working on a draft Bill to provide for the establishment of educational tribunals to hear and decide cases relating to educational institutions.

What about ordering a review of the NCERT cartoons?

I had set up a review committee. It is a joint venture of the Director of the House in the Lok Sabha, what could I do? The cartoons had been there since 2005. I had not seen them. But when the whole Parliament opposed and there was not a single dissent, I could not have ignored it. Personally, I think cartoons in themselves are not objectionable. But if there is a series of cartoons which could be taken as a threat, then I would have to consider it. But that is not what I am doing. I am working on a draft Bill to provide for the establishment of educational tribunals to hear and decide cases relating to educational institutions.

The Act bans detention but states feel this is leading to indiscriminate detention. The intent behind no detention under the Act has been misunderstood. It’s a matter of clarification in the definition and we are open to it. The intent was to give a weak student the confidence to move up and not demoralise him by detaining him in class. But that does not mean a child who never comes to school gets to be promoted or a child who deliberately acts in a manner that destroys the harmony of the school gets promoted. That was certainly not the intent. These issues need clarification.

Do you think the single engineer- ing test issue could have been handled better with the IT Bills?

I don’t know how else I could have handled it. Never before has there been a two- or three-hour discussion on an IT Bill, and I have not had an opportunity to explain the need for it. I am surprised that the Opposition has not seen the need for it. They have not seen the need for it. But I am not here to explain the need for it. I am working on a draft Bill to provide for the establishment of educational tribunals to hear and decide cases relating to educational institutions.
IIMs plan to engineer a level playing field

By Ritika Chopra in New Delhi

STUDENTS from the humanities stream may finally be able to 'bell the CAT'.

The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) is willing to tweak the Common Admission Test (CAT) to enroll students from diverse academic backgrounds, and not just engineers.

Currently, classrooms of the premier B-schools have a skewed composition, with as much as 80 per cent of seats being reserved for engineers. (see box). At IIM Ahmedabad, for instance, 90 per cent students, for the past three years, have been tech graduates.

Though unwilling to divulge when the changes are likely to be made, some IIM directors confirmed to Mail Today that the B-school is keen to revisit the CAT format to make it more 'inclusive' and tap brilliant students from the humanities stream as well.

The idea was mooted by the heads of old IIMs at a meeting held in Kochi last month to discuss the future roadmap for the test.

Engineers have been able to adapt to this format of the exam because of the continuous assessment during each semester in college. We are not against admitting engineers. The test will not be changed to prevent them from qualifying. The idea is that there should be a level playing field, in terms of the test, for students of all disciplines. But I insist that no changes are being made this year,' said Debashish Chatterjee, director of IIM-Kozhikode, which is organizing CAT 2012.

"Look at how GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test) has been revamped. I am not saying the changes in CAT will be similar, but it's a good idea to view the test system," said Devi Singh, director of IIM Lucknow.

The two directors, however, did not elaborate on how the changes could be made to widen the scope for students from all streams. "We are looking at this issue and can't say anything, as no consensus has been reached on it," Chatterjee added.

For the uninitiated, the IIMs use CAT as an important component in selecting students for the business administration programs. The test is conducted every year by one of the IIMs on a rotation basis.

CAT, which is rated among the toughest tests in Asia after UPSC and IIT-JEE, has two sections (quantitative and verbal) which test quantitative ability, data interpretation, verbal ability and logical reasoning.

Although the Institutes haven't revealed how a level playing field could be provided for humanities students, experts feel this can be done by simplifying the quantitative section.

"The results of GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test), which also tests quantitative and verbal ability, do not show a bias for engineers. This is probably because the mathematics part of the test is not as difficult and that helps non-engineering students do better. Although the mathematics tested by CAT are of Class X and XII level, the questions are more difficult than the ones in GMAT," said Uday Varagkar, director of T.I.M.E., Delhi, a coaching institute.

According to Varagkar, another possible solution can be to make CAT computer adaptive like GMAT. In computer adaptive tests, test questions are selected by the computer to match the ability level of each student. The real-time results can better gauge the student's individual growth and knowledge than any type of testing previously available.

Himanshu Rat, former convener of CAT and a professor at IIM-Lucknow, does not think changing the format of CAT could break the dominance of engineers in the IIM classrooms.

"I have serious doubts about how this can happen. Engineers do well in both verbal and quantitative sections of CAT. So even if you increase the weightage to verbal ability by one-and-a-half times, engineers will still do better. Let's not forget that what the IIMs want as their input (good quantitative and verbal ability) is what usually engineers are good at," said Rat, who has analyzed CAT data of the past few years.

"What the IIM directors have in front of them is a big challenge. I don't think it's feasible to change the content of CAT as the study of management does require a fair degree of quantitative ability. Adding subjective questions is also not an option as evaluating the papers of 2.5 lakh students will be a nightmare. So the options are limited," Bakul Dholakia, former director of IIM Ahmedabad, said.

"We are not against admitting engineers... (but) there should be a level playing field for students of all disciplines,'" -- DEBASHISH CHATTERJEE

IIM Kozhikode director

GMAT results don't show a bias for engineers. This is probably because maths is not as difficult as in CAT,' -- UDAY VARAGKAR

T.I.M.E Delhi director

"I don't think it's feasible to change CAT content as study of management does require a fair degree of quantitative skills,'" -- BAKUL D. DHOLAKIA

IIM Ahmedabad ex-director
TEACHERS of government colleges in West Bengal started demanding another university to which their colleges should be affiliated soon after the chief minister promised to accord Kolkata's St Xavier's College the status of a university. This is, of course, a natural corollary to bestowing university status on the erstwhile Presidency College. The idea of upgrading this college to university status dates back to early 1970s and came to fruition only recently after years of shadow political battles between the former and current chief ministers of West Bengal. But it could open a Pandora's box and could lead to an inflation of universities with each passing election. Could we bring some order to this haphazard development?

The euphoria generated with the Chandernagor Presidency, shared by all ex-Presidents, made us forget that we were all students of Calcutta University once. Not only had we received our first degrees from Calcutta University but also completed our postgraduate education there. In 2004, Calcutta University was ranked by the Times Higher Education Supplement among the world's top 50 arts and humanities universities. It has one of the most illustrious research traditions in India. The university has had some of the greatest scholars on the faculty - from Jyotirmohan Seal and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan to CV Raman and SN Bose - during its long and chequered history. It is incredible how effortlessly we drifted our loyalty to our alma mater in the wild expectation of a miracle happening to our favourite college.

The reason lies in the fact that innumerable colleges are affiliated with Calcutta University, thereby making it difficult for the postgraduate students to have an emotional bond with the university. This is in sharp contrast to the bond they forge with the undergraduate college which they enter right after finishing high school. It is at college that they cross over to adulthood and the postgraduate phase is considered just an extension of their college experience. It is high time that we seriously consider making Calcutta University a university along with four others in the metropolis of Kolkata. This will give a huge morale boost to the university's current postgraduate faculty and members who have been completely ignored in the sudden excitement over Presidency University, Bengal Engineering and Science University and even Jadavpur University. It was indeed heartening to read in The Statesman that Calcutta University is thinking of starting five-year integrated courses in order to "pick bright students straight from schools".

The model of a university with affiliated colleges that we inherited from London became obsolete somewhere in the world a long time ago. With the Central government backing up university universities/states at a feverish pace, the model has lost its significance in India as well. Starting with a couple of Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and a limited number of Central universities till early 1990s, we now have 15 IITs, five Indian Institutes of Engineering, Science and Technology (IIST), five Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISERs) and as many as 40 Central universities. The list by no means exhaustive, with many Central research institutions functioning de facto as university universities. Well Calcutta University is large, these Central universities/Institutes offer far better pay, facilities and infrastructure than even the best Central universities. While the rest of the world is busy improving their traditional universities, we were determined to make our unis uncompetitive. It was a device way of the bureaucrats in New Delhi to keep a firm finger inserted in the education finance pie. After letting go of traditional universities decay over many years, the Union human resources development (HRD) minister Mr Kapil Sibal announced last year his intention to set up new world-class universities. Since late 1990s, we have heard disappointing comments about private engineering and medical colleges in south India that charge tuition fees and deceive students for educating well-funded students. In my long residence in the West, I do not remember any new private university being established there during this period. I, therefore, watched with horror as these private institutions mushroomed all over India on the back of our great economic liberalisation. Some time ago, the university where I taught observed a student from outside the districts could be charged higher tuition fees. This could be a much more effective education apparatus than those that are currently based on the caste-based quota system.

In the metropolitan cities, this model may face logistical challenges. Let us take the case of Kolkata as an illustration. If Calcutta University were to be made a university, there would be five such universities in the metropolis. Given its large local population, it may even need a few more. One possibility would be to group some good undergraduate colleges and combine them to the status of a university. The obvious ones that come to mind are Namgyal Institute of Buddhist Studies and Institute of Advanced Studies. The remaining existing colleges could be transformed to provide higher professional- degree programmes of immediate interest to industry and society. These programmes must be thorough, but also up-to-date and practical. Universities would then be able to concentrate on analytical and creative thinking. A dual educational system would be born that would have an absolute advantage over many other developing countries in the future.

The writer is ex-dean and professor of applied mathematics at University of Twente, The Netherlands.

Instead of daydreaming about setting up world-class seats of learning in India, the Union HRD minister would do well to revive the country's decaying traditional universities first, writes arunabha bagchi

To develop leading-edge science and technology, India must create new centres of excellence on a par with the best in the world, writes Dr Anil Kakodkar.

The unitary approach

Union and are greatly valued by employers. Developing university universities and transforming existing colleges into higher professional degree-granting institutions need not be completed in a hurry. A slow process of transition would be not only necessary, but also desirable. Finally, some of the existing staff of the general-degree colleges, those with research, vocational potential, should remain with the unitary universities. Others would continue to teach basic subjects necessary for balanced training of students pursuing higher professional disciplines. The possibilities of developing professional disciplines are vast, ranging from engineering and management science to communication and management.

There are a vast number of general degree colleges in all states in India. Students are kept busy during these years. Colleges without any clear career prospect in sight and their parents are made to pay for the privilege. They are also politically useful and follow the same path that encourages New Delhi to set up new universities all the time to stave off the spectre of unemployment. In the new scheme, these colleges would continue to offer BA/Bsc/Bcom degrees in a vast array of fields that would require the knowledge of an existing programme to be supplemented by additional courses for professional advancement in some specific areas.

This model could finally free India from the legacy of colonial education and give a new spin to a more uniform economic development. It might be desirable to have an organisation that would affiliate these colleges, set the standard for courses, prescribe appropriate textbooks, conduct examinations and confer degrees. Each district may form such an entity that would have no teaching programme of its own. The graduates of these colleges must have the same standard as those from top institutions at all universities. institutions in India at present, it is safe to presume that only a minority of these professional graduates would be interested in obtaining a degree from a university.

Unbacking state universities from the burden of affiliated colleges would make it possible to introduce a new model of management. The Secretary of the Central Council of Educational Research and Training (CCERT) has already undertaken a drive to encourage them to enroll a large number of students. This is the case with public universities in the US, which make it economically feasible for them to have a considerable number of high-quality staff while maintaining a low cost. The state universities in India are in the process of modernising their programmes and courses in various fields in the humanities and sciences. The state universities in India are in the process of modernising their programmes and courses in various fields in the humanities and sciences.
आईआईटी, रुडकी का 12वां दीक्षांत समारोह संपन्न

रुडकी (स)। केंद्रीय मानव संसाधन विज्ञान मंत्री कृष्णन सिंह ने आईआईटी रुडकी के दीक्षांत समारोह में कैरियर सुझाव अद्वितीय कहा कि उपलब्धि पाने वाले छात्रों के लिए असाधारण मौके प्रतिवर्ष में है, लेकिन इस में वहीं छात्र सफल हो सकते हैं, जो चुनिन्दा में निपटे में दे है।

केंद्रीय मानव संसाधन मंत्री आईआईटी रुडकी के दीक्षान्वयन समारोह के सम्बोधन में कहा था। इस मौके पर पदकांभित बॉयार्ड, चैफ गॉर्डन मेहता को संबोधन ने डा. आर्डरस मानव उद्योग पदक की। सन् 2012 के लिए खोजस्त राष्ट्रीय-पुरस्कार स्थानीय हेल्थ के बॉयार्ड, एन.एन. मेहता के डा. शेखदुर्ग और, गोविन्द बनर्जी पुरस्कार रुडकी के डा. रामनीरोश गोविन्द को, समर्पित प्रकाश सीमा पुरस्कार खड़कपुर डा. शानिकेंद्र देव को पदक प्रदान किए गए।

दीक्षान्वयन समारोह में 1639 छात्र-छात्राओं को खरीद-खरीद दीक्षान्वयन पदक की गई। जो गत वर्ष की हुल्ला में 303 अधिक थी। इस वर्ष का प्रशिक्षण गोल्ड मेडल बीएटीक एकाडमिस्कल के छात्र वहुमंडल को पदक प्रदान किया गया।

बीटेक ने वर्ष के छात्रों में संचालन अध्यादेश के लिए निर्देशक का श्वासन पदक बीटेक धारकों पदक द्वारा इंजीनियरिंग के सीरीज पदक को दिया।

समारोह में संबोधन के 21 छात्रों को रजत पदक, 11 छात्रों को संस्थान पदक और 52 छात्रों को विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में अन्य पुरस्कार पदक प्रदान किये गए।
Don’t cancel admissions over honest mistakes: HC

Court bats for students who make errors in forms online

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court has ruled that students should neither be deprived of their right to education on bonafide mistakes nor penalised to the extent that their admission is cancelled.

Bonafide mistakes of students while submitting entrance form online can be ignored, said the court, particularly if the students belonged to areas where proper computer and internet facilities were unavailable. And more so when they had secured a seat in the entrance exam.

Justice G S Sistani, allowing a student from a village in Haryana to join the National Institute of Technology (NIT) in Kurukshetra, has observed that bonafide mistake of the student cannot be penalised to the extent that the admission granted to him should be cancelled.

The court’s observation came while hearing a plea by Rohit Yadav who, while applying online for All India Engineer

Justice G S Sistani has observed that student’s admission granted to him should not be cancelled for inadvertent mistake

neering Entrance Examination (AIEEE) 2012 conducted by the Central Board of Secondary Education wrote the wrong date of birth mistakenly.

Yadav, after clearing the AIEEE, secured a seat in NIT. But the institute denied him admission citing discrepancy in date of birth. The court, passing the order, said: “Having regard to the facts of this case, I am of the view that on account of the bonafide mistake of the petitioner (Yadav), the petitioner cannot be penalised to the extent that the admission granted to him should be cancelled”.

The court observed that “on account of this mistake to de-
bar him would amount to travesty of justice”. “The petitioner had no intention to mislead the NIT or gain any unfair advantage. The certificate from CBSE is a genuine document. Thus the petitioner cannot be debarred,” the order stated.

Justice Sistani said students from villages who do not get continuous electricity cannot be deprived of their right to education. “The court cannot lose track of the fact that Delhi is not India. There are lakhs of students in rural areas, like the petitioner herein, who have potential. Students from rural background are not less intelligent than students from affluent background,” the court said.

The court took note that Yadav came from a humble background, lived in a village and did not have access either to a computer or internet. “In towns, people are familiar with computer, laptop, iPads and other forms of computers, which provide them access to vast information at their fingertips. On the contrary, students from remote villages, who do not get continuous electricity, cannot be deprived of their right to education, more so when the student has secured a seat,” the court said.

IANS
COUNTDOWN TO MARS

Nasa Rover Set For Touchdown On Monday, Will Explore If Planet Can Support Life

Srinivas Laxman | TNN

Nasa's 900-kg SUV-sized Mars Science Laboratory (MSL) rover — Curiosity — is slated to land on Mars on Monday to explore whether the Red Planet had an environment to support microbes and survey it as part of the preparations for its human exploration.

The event is being billed as a path-breaking one which, if successful, promises to be as significant as the landing of humans on the Moon in 1969.

Curiosity would operate for 90 weeks (nearly two years) and is about five times larger than earlier Mars exploration rovers — Spirit and Opportunity. Scientists hope that Curiosity, equipped with a suite of 11 advanced instruments, will better succeed of the earlier explorations. It would cover nearly 570 million km distance before touching down on the Red Planet's Gale Crater and its heat shield will reach more than 2,000 degrees C as it takes off.

An on-board laboratory on Curiosity will study rocks, soil and the local geological settings to detect chemical building blocks of life and see what the Martian environment was like in the past. The nearly $2.5 billion mission carrying Curiosity was launched from the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida on November 26, 2011, on-board the powerful 58-m-tall Atlas V rocket as part of NASA's long-term robotic Mars exploration programme.

Around 60 pyrotechnic devices will be activated on the spacecraft in quick succession to ensure that it lands safely during the final five minutes of Curiosity’s flight. An instrument on-board Curiosity — the Mars descent imager or Mardi — will record a full-color video of the ground below and give space buffs an unprecedented sense of riding a spacecraft to a landing on Mars.

Indian engineer Ravi Prakash, helping Curiosity to manoeuvre complex entry, descent, and landing, said the mission is full of challenges and requires thousands of events to happen successfully in a matter of minutes.

He said the event is being called "seven minutes of terror" as it will take as much time for the spacecraft to halt on Mars after travelling from the top of the Martian atmosphere at a speed of 21,000 km per hour or five times as fast as a bullet.

"During those seven minutes, the spacecraft will be on its own, automatically deciding when to perform each one of the thousands of actions required for the landing," he said.

Prakash said the nerve-wracking part of the event would be that while Curiosity would be on the surface of Mars, they would not know if it had survived the unforgiving atmosphere of Mars for 14 minutes. "It takes 14 minutes, travelling at the speed of light, for NASA to send a signal from the Earth to the spacecraft and vice versa."

The engineers and scientists working on the mission would monitor these developments at the mission control room at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena near Los Angeles.

Prakash said millions of simulations of the landing have been performed to make sure that entry, descent and landing are properly choreographed and to find out what could cause its failure. "The mission remains difficult and success cannot be guaranteed."

But MSL deputy project scientist Ashwin Vasavada is optimistic that everything would go smoothly. "I am very confident. We have done all we can to make it successful. But it is risky. I will be nervous on the landing day." He said they have been living on Mars time for three months. A day on Mars is about 24 hours and 40 minutes.

Vasavada said they expect the first images from the rover about 50 minutes after the touchdown. "Colour Images would follow a few hours later.

Prakash said several technological firsts such as guided entry and precision landing on another planet as well as the entire descent manoeuvre to land the largest rover yet on the surface of Mars have been employed for the first time.

The new technologies are being tried especially during the critical entry, descent and landing phase. This makes the most challenging manoeuvre ever fraught with risks like never before.
Students play it safe, choose jobs over higher education

Swaroop Chatterjee, a 24-year-old who graduated in electronics engineering from a Kolkata-based institute this year, was determined to pursue further studies abroad.

However, now, he has decided to join a Bangalore-based information technology firm. "Early last year, I had decided to pursue an MS (master of science) course in the US. But looking at the environment, I thought it was too risky. I will join work later this year," he said.

Chatterjee is not alone. Instead of pursuing higher education, many of his classmates have decided to accept job offers.

With the absence of attractive scholarships for foreign institutions and multiple job offers available, the market this year, students have decided to choose a safer option.

This was observed by major recruiters, which have seen a positive impact in their joining ratios. According to industry estimates, joining ratios rose 10-15% to the quarter ended June.

Joining ratio is the ratio of the number of job offers accepted by the candidates to the number of jobs offered to them in a year's time.

Ajay Mukherjee, executive vice-president and head (global human resources), Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), said, "Joining ratios have gone up this quarter (ended June). This clearly shows students want to join companies instead of going for higher studies. Though it is too early to give a number, an increase has been noted."

Deepak Jain, senior vice-president and global head (workforce planning and development), Wipro Technologies, said there was an uptrend in the joining ratio this year—for both engineering and BSc (bachelor of science) streams. He added a definite reason for this was over the last year, the company had conducted various engagement programmes to ensure students remained connected with Wipro after the offer was rolled out.

Placement officers at various colleges attribute the rise in joining ratios to the gloomy economy.

S. R. Pullabhotla, director (placement and training), Vellore Institute of Technology said the rise was due to the fact that other economies, including those in Europe and the US, were witnessing a slowdown.

"Big, fat scholarships are lacking in this scenario. Students do not want to take a risk by rejecting a job offer," he said.

According to industry estimates, if the current market conditions prevail, this trend would continue for the next few quarters.

Some consultants say joining ratios could rise further if students start sensing the slowdown in the economy and job market.
MENTORING SUCCESS

Two Indian entrepreneurs who provide opportunities to bright but economically disadvantaged students manage to get seed funding from a US programme, emerging among the top 20 among thousands of applicants.

Sudha Sharma

Why it matters

W

What's behind the numbers?

When Sudha Sharma, a 35-year-old engineer, decided to start Avanti in 2010, she had no idea that her idea would be so successful. Today, Avanti is one of the top 20 among thousands of applicants to the seed-funding programme. Avanti provides seed funding to Indian students and has helped them to start their own businesses.

The programme is designed to help students with a social mission, and the funding is provided to students who are from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

The programme is open to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission.

The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission.

The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission.

The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission.

The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission.

The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission.

The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission. The funding is provided to students who are enrolled in Indian universities and who have a social mission.
Asian graduates name Google 'most ideal employer'

Our Bureau

New Delhi, Aug 4

What do students fresh out of college want in a new job? A study conducted by Universum, a global employer branding research firm, finds that the preferences of students in different geographies differ vastly.

Business students in India, China and Singapore consider high future earnings as one of the most attractive features of a job, unlike those in Hong Kong and Japan. Indian students place more emphasis on employer reputation than peers in other markets.

Further, Universum named Google the ‘most ideal employer’ in Asia at the 2012 Employer Branding Awards held in Singapore, on Friday on the basis of inputs received from 37,800 business and engineering students in the continent.

The other top companies at the first annual Universum Awards Asia in terms of employer branding included Sony and Toyota.

Google received the maximum votes from both categories of students.

However, while business students nominated KPMG as the second-best employer, engineering students voted for Microsoft.

Rachele Ferri, Senior Vice-President of Talent Strategy and Employer Branding, APAC and Global Brand Advisor, Universum, said, “To win the war for talent, especially in a highly competitive region like Asia, it is important that employers understand these students’ preferences and expectations.

Otherwise, it would be like going for their campus recruitment blindfolded — they risk not communicating the right messages to the right target groups.”

aeshadatta@thehindu.co.in
JAB opts for subjective type questions for Advanced test

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Ending the uncertainty over the pattern of questions in the entrance examination for prestigious IITs, the Joint Admission Board (JAB) on Sunday decided for a Subjective Question type Advanced test.

The shortlisted 1,50,000 candidates, who also come within the stipulated 20 percentile bracket, will be eligible for this Advanced test.

The JEE-Main, the filtering tests in which around 11 lakh students are likely to appear, will be a multiple choice objective type paper. The CBSE will conduct the JEE-Main test and provide logistical support to IIT to conduct the Advanced test.

The JAB accepted "as it is" the IIT council's decision in view of the urgent need to remove uncertainties surrounding JEE-2013. The JAB meeting was called to examine IIT Council's decision of June 27. The Council had adopted the Common Entrance Test under a compromise formula for admission to undergraduate programme based on percentile ranking of students in their boards.

Sources said the number of students to be filtered for the advance exam in 2013 under the new two-tier format will be decided on the nature of the test. As per the format adopted by IIT Council, about 1.50 lakh students are to be screened for the advanced test. "The JAB decided the test pattern would be of subjective type since any changes now would affect the potential aspirants which includes those who entered class 12th in the year 2011," sources said.

The JAB also decided that students who have passed their board exam in 2012 should not be disturbed with the new format and allowed to appear as per the existing eligibility condition in 2013 also. As per the existing criteria, students are given two chances to clear the IIT-JEE.

Sources said that with time running short, the JAB took a decision not to waste any time further and consider the subjective pattern of exam. The decision also takes into account the opinion of IT students who suggested only minor changes following the Senate of IIT Delhi asking the Council of IIT to consider the opinion of the student community as it is they who would finally sit for the competitive exam.

This year the JAB is headed by Delhi IIT and it also has on board representatives of NITs, IIITs and CFTIs. After widespread resentment from within the IIT fraternity, the JAB had conveyed to the HRD Ministry about these minor changes in the modalities.

Sources in the HRD Ministry confirmed that the JAB had sent a suggestion that the main contention to give weighage to class 12 results to screen the IIT aspirants should be scrapped.
IIT ADMISSION
BODY STICKS TO
20 PERCENTILE

Vanita Srivastava
vanita.srivastava@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Despite some important suggestions by various IITs, the Joint Admission Board (JAB) of IITs that met on Sunday made no changes to its earlier resolution on the 20 percentile formula for 2013 eligibility. The resolution had been accepted by the IIT Council on June 27.

Over the last one month, the senates of different IITs had given suggestions to make the eligibility criteria more flexible especially for the students who had to appear for boards in 2012. IIT Delhi had suggested that for 2013, both 60% and 20 percentile should be considered. IIT Delhi and Kanpur had proposed that for those who had cleared the boards in 2012, the eligibility criteria should be 60%.

But the JAB is believed to have not incorporated any of the proposals. According to sources, JAB has decided to keep number of students filtered for advanced exam at 1.5 lakh.

Even for the advanced exam, the pattern and syllabus would the same as in 2012.

The IIT JEE 2013 will be a two-tier exam — main and advanced. Main exam will be a screening exam. Final rank will depend on the performance in the advanced exam.
प्रवेश परीक्षा पर आईआइटी की मुहर

जागरण संवाददाता, कानपुर: भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थानों (आईआइटी), आईटी बीचूँ एवं आईआइटी धनबाद में प्रवेश के लिए दो जून 2013 को होने वाली संयुक्त प्रवेश परीक्षा (जेएई एडवांस) का खाली दिल्ली में तय हो गया। यह भी तय हुआ कि आईआइटी सीनेट से समान्य तथ्यात्मक कराने को संयुक्त प्रवेश बोर्ड (जेएची) उपस्थित भी बनाएगा।

वर्ष 2013 से आईआइटी, एनआईटी व आईआइटी आदि सभी केंद्र सरकार पोषित इंजीनियरिंग संस्थानों में प्रवेश के लिए मानव संसाधन भंडारण से राज्यों एकल परीक्षा के प्रशासन को आंक्षिकता मंजूरी मिल को दिल्ली में आयोजित जेव की बैठक में मजबूर दे दी गई। सूत्रों के अनुसार बैठक में तय हुआ कि आईआइटी में प्रवेश के लिए चयन प्रक्रिया हिस्ट्रीभेड हो। पहले चरण में प्रारंभिक से दूसरे चरण में होने वाली जेएई एडवांस के लिए छात्रों के छात्र जाए व आईआइटी की प्रारंभिक (भौतिक, गणित व सामान्य शास्त्र सान का कृत्यांकण) का अनुसरण करने बला हो।

होगी संयुक्त प्रवेश परीक्षा: जेव की बैठक में तय किया गया कि जेएई एडवांस 2013 में आईआइटी के तत्वावधान में ही होगी। उस पर एक्सामिन एवं प्रशासनिक संस्थान का अधिकार आईआइटी के पास ही होगा।
"Varsities supported by IGNOU ex-VC earned Rs. 1,500 crore"

Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI: The two private universities, which according to the Central Bureau of Investigation were favoured by former IGNOU Vice-Chancellor Rajasekharan Pillai in granting permission to run distance learning programmes in violation of rules, have so far earned a total of over Rs.1,500 crore from these courses.

The agency registered a case against the former IGNOU Vice-Chancellor about a week ago accusing him of having misused his position to grant approval without any authority to the two universities -- Punjab Technical University and Sikkim Manipal University -- to run two distance education courses. Subsequent searches at his residence in Thiruvanthapuram led to seizure of documents revealing huge investments made allegedly by Prof. Pillai. “We have questioned Prof. Pillai, who was also holding the post of Distance Education Council chairman, to ascertain how he granted permission to the two universities to run the courses. Investigations are also under way to find out if he had received any illegal gratification in lieu of the favour extended to the universities. Documents are also being collected from the universities for verification,” said a CBI official, adding that the courses could not be run in the distance education mode.

The former Vice-Chancellor had in 2007 given provisional approval to the two universities to run the courses, following which it was regularised. It is suspected that the permission was granted through manipulations, despite certain deficiencies highlighted by the Expert Committee.

The agency has so far found that Sikkim Manipal University had recorded an earning of over Rs. 300 crore and Punjab Technical University earned nearly Rs.1,200 crore through enrolments in the courses under scrutiny.
No major changes in CAT format: Panel

THREE MONTHS TO GO The most challenging of management tests will continue to be divided into two sections of 30 queries each.

Shaswati Das  
shaswati.das@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Management aspirants across the country are gearing up to brave the most challenging of entrance tests, the Common Admission Test, which this year is spread over three weeks, from October 11 to November 6.

The committee in charge of conducting CAT has promised that there would be no “significant changes” in the format. Last year, the test threw up several surprises with a new structure and fewer sections.

“There are no significant changes this year. Over the past three years, we have been reviewing and improving the processes to provide a smooth experience for candidates. This year, our focus remains on conducting the test in a fair and secure manner,” SSS Kumar, the convener of CAT 2012, said.

The paper last year had been divided into two sections — quantitative ability and data interpretation, and verbal ability and logical reasoning.

This, the committee members said, had been done to test an examinee’s capability to juggle both sections with equal dexterity.

“Earlier, examinees felt at quantitative and data interpretation would quickly finish and move to the next sections and get stuck. By dividing the paper into two sections, we get a fair idea of the examinees who are good at both as they have no option but to spend the same 70 minutes on each part,” Janaki Raman Moorthy, convener of last year’s CAT, said.

Aspirants can get CAT 2012 vouchers at select Axis Bank outlets. While registration will continue till September 17, results of this year’s test will be announced on January 9.

The online test has been bogged down by glitches since its introduction in 2009. Last year, when 2.05 lakh aspirants appeared for the test, there were hardly any glitches that were reported.

Institutes such as the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIIFT) will conduct its entrance test on November 25. While the last date of sale of forms is August 20, the last date for online registrations is September 3.
Closer to encounter

As the latest rover arrives on Mars to assess its hospitality, astronomers are learning more about possibly habitable worlds beyond the solar system.

EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL LIFE

I
t was on July 31st, 1990, that the Viking 2 lander touched down on Mars. The mission was a success. The rover, Viking 1, began its journey across the surface of the Red Planet. The data it collected provided a wealth of information about the planet's geology, climate, and potential for life. Viking 2, along with its companion, Viking 1, confirmed that Mars was once a wet, warm planet, possibly harboring a variety of life forms.

MARS-TURNED-life

On August 6th, the Mars Science Laboratory (MSL) rover, Curiosity, landed on Mars. The rover's mission is to search for past microbial life on the planet. Curiosity has already made significant discoveries, including the presence of water and organic compounds, which are key to the potential for life.

CUBIST ROVER, DYNAMIC

Curiosity is a 900,000-camera rover that can travel up to 10 kilometers per hour. It is equipped with a suite of scientific instruments, including a high-resolution camera, a chemical spectrometer, and a chemical analyzer, which allow it to collect and analyze samples from the surface. The rover is also equipped with a robotic arm, which can manipulate samples and deliver them to the rover's instruments for analysis.

SPHERE-SIZED SPACE

The Mars Science Laboratory is a spectacular example of human ingenuity. The rover's design is based on a sphere, which allows it to rotate and spin in any direction. This maneuverability is essential for navigating the rough terrain of Mars. The rover is also equipped with a suite of scientific instruments, including a high-resolution camera, a chemical spectrometer, and a chemical analyzer, which allow it to collect and analyze samples from the surface. The rover is also equipped with a robotic arm, which can manipulate samples and deliver them to the rover's instruments for analysis.

THE FUTURE OF MARS EXPLORATION

The exploration of Mars is just beginning. The Mars Science Laboratory is the first of many missions planned for the future. The goal is to establish a permanent human presence on Mars, which could involve the establishment of a Mars city, the mining of Martian resources, and the use of Mars as a test bed for technologies that could be used on other planets.

In summary, the Mars Science Laboratory is a remarkable achievement. It is a testament to human ingenuity, and it is sure to be a source of inspiration for future generations of explorers.
Microsoft’s B’lore lab draws talent from all over

Rhik Kundu / TNN

Bangalore: Humanities student Katherine Sydenham, an American researcher of French origin, was recently introduced to coding, courtesy her stint with Microsoft Research Lab India.

The 27-year-old PhD student from the University of Michigan, School of Information, is a summer intern at the company’s research facility in Bangalore, where over 60 graduate, postgraduate and research students from eight countries are currently doing their internship.

“I am doing an ethnographic study of technology evangelists (for proprietary software and free/open source software) and religious evangelists to look at similarities and differences in the way groups approach. The study will help me find out advocacy efforts put in by groups for their products and/or belief system,” said Sydenham. She is working on her thesis, ‘Technology in developing countries’, gathering valuable inputs from the internship course.

“I have a background in religious studies and am interested in how individuals, who do not consider themselves ‘tech-savvy’ or capable of learning about computers, are included or excluded from conversations about technology, especially software,” she added.

Another 27-year-old PhD student from the University of Austin, department of computer science, Vacha Dave, is working on detecting and defeating click fraud. “The experience has been great,” she said.

Microsoft Research Lab has 35 researchers and 10 developers who mentor interns on areas like algorithms and modeling, cryptography and complexity, machine learning and optimization, mobility, networks, and systems, multilingual systems, programming languages and tools, security and privacy, technology for emerging markets, vision and media. The lab takes interns for a period of two to six months. “Getting fresh blood is an integral part of research. We are exposed to new ideas that the interns bring with them,” said Sriram Rajmani, AMD, Microsoft Research-Bangalore.

HT, New Delhi

INDIAN STUDENTS IN VISA SCAM NET

NEW DELHI: In a repeat of the TriValley case, 400 Indian students in the US are staring at an uncertain future after the CEO of their university was arrested for visa fraud.

Most of the Indians at Herguan University in Sunnyvale, California are from Andhra Pradesh — as was the case at Tri-Valley University. Herguan hasn’t yet been declared illegal but it is unclear if students will be allowed to continue there. It is also unclear if any of the Indians are on fake visas. NEW DELHI: Around 400 Indian students in the US are staring at an uncertain future after the CEO of their university was arrested for visa fraud.

Jerry Wang, CEO of Herguan University in Sunnyvale, California, was arrested Thursday and has since been charged with 15 counts of visa fraud, Indian officials confirmed. Homeland Security officials also raided a building that houses both Herguan and the University of East-West Medicine, another school headed by Wang.

Initial court documents suggest Wang faked letters from three accredited universities, claiming they recognised academic credits earned at the unaccredited Herguan.

He then sent these letters to the US immigration department to facilitate visas for students. Investigators are trying to find out how much he charged students.
Most of the Indians at Herguan are from Andhra Pradesh—as was the case at Tri Valley University, also in Sunnyvale, that was shut down last January after its CEO was similarly arrested for visa fraud.

Herguan hasn’t yet been declared illegal, but it is unclear if students will be allowed to continue there or if they’ll have to move to another school.

Most good universities are unlikely to welcome students from a tainted institute. It is also unclear if any of the Indians at Herguan are on fake visas. If they are, they could face criminal charges themselves.

Several of the 2,000-odd Indians at Tri Valley were initially charged with criminal conspiracy. The charges were later dropped and most had to return to India.

**Mint ND 06/08/2012**

**PETER VARGHESE/AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER**

**We want more Indian students in universities, not vocational training**

BY ELIZABETH ROCHE & PRASHANT K. NANDA

**NEW ZEALAND**

To get highly skilled Indian workers, Australia is planning to encourage postgraduate and doctoral students. The focus is on what it needs to do to boost labour gaps, especially in medicine, engineering and accountancy, and cut down its focus on vocational education, a favourite with the majority of Indians.

Australian High Commissioner Peter Varghese said in an interview that his nation has no problem in giving residency to highly skilled workers. Edited excerpts:

**Australia has emerged as one of the top education destinations for Indian students. How has this happened?**

Of the 100 universities in the world, we have four in Australasia, and of the top 500 universities in the world, we have 19. Across the board our university sector is a high-quality sector. The internationalization of education in Australia is also very strong. We have an average 25% of our university students international students.

Is there a particular category of students that you are looking to attract to Australia? We would like to focus the education relationship to Indians coming to Australia much more on the university and higher education sector. If you look at the profile of the Indian students in Australia at the moment, it’s dominated by vocational education. I am not in any way suggesting that is inappropriate. But what we would like to see is widely a strategy, Indian students coming to Australia to focus on the university sector, and that the vocational skills training is done more and more in India. And I think that makes sense for both countries. We want to see more collaborative research work done between Australian and Indian universities; we would like to see more Indian students come to Australia for postgraduate work. We want to get away from the language of numbers and more talk about an education partnership. On the vocational side, I think it’s really finding the right model that works for India. In Australia we have a high-expense, low-volume model. India needs the opposite—high-volume, low-cost model.

**Why are you not focusing on numbers when your country gets sizeable revenue from education?**

What I am talking about is finding a model that better meets India’s requirements. India wants to upscale 500 million people. You are not going to upscale 500 million people by sending them off to Australia. The best way of doing that is to do more vocational training in India. I am not saying that education as a services export is not important to Australia. Clearly, it is. It is the third-largest source of export revenue. But my view is you cannot treat education simply as a commodity. It is more than a trade in services. You need to design a strategy that meets the needs of the country that you are focusing on. And that is why the vocational training focus in India and the higher education focus in Australia make better sense.

Is the change in strategy in the vocational training sector due to the attacks on Indian students in 2009-10? I wouldn’t see the changes as being driven by the unfortunate events in 2009-10. What’s happening here is a much bigger story. We are shifting the migration programme from a supply-driven model to a demand-driven model, and that means what we are going to do is work on identifying our skills gap in Australia and then go after people who have those skills rather than people self-nominating on the basis of that, maybe out of date very soon.

So there is a bigger shift in policy settings here, which is then reflected in the way it translated into how an education pathway and a labour market pathway come together. Partly what we saw in 2009 and in 2010 was a complete failure of an education and labour market pathway. What we want to do is to separate the two more clearly not to hermetically seal them.

We want to make it clear that if you choose to come to Australia to study then that is your primary objective and that your primary objective isn’t a backdoor means to the labour market.

Which are the areas where you would like to see Indian students come to study?

The areas where we will need are healthcare, age care, accountancy, information technology, medical sciences, engineering. Bear in mind, we are going through an infrastructure mining project boom, so all of the skills that you need to bring that half trillion dollars of pipeline investment in the resources and mining sector to fruition are the skills that we are going to have a shortfall in. Therefore, the type of education that we are going to have a shortfall in is not there.

Do you think Australian institutes are capable of providing the skills to Indians knowing that the focus of both the countries is different?

I don’t think we will be a problem in terms of the skills that are required because the skills you would require are the skills of the modern economy. The issue is how you scale up... the issue is how do you deliver the skills in such a large scale. And it’s going to require a very different model than what we do in Australia.

Just to take the Australian model and transplant, in my view is unrealistic. I don’t think we are going to set up 50-odd 100% Australian-owned and operated vocational education systems in India. What we will probably do is to find joint ventures between Australian and India with the Indian vocational training institutions would draw on Australian course, quality control, train the trainer programs... there are many permutations and combinations.

India has started opening up its higher education space. Is it in skill education, can we see some Australian universities setting up a campus here?

Some of our universities have campuses in other countries—in Southeast Asia and Africa. They have a mixed experience. They have to make a judgment on whether they want to come to India. I don’t get a sense from talking to our university chancellors that they are going to rush into anything. My feeling is that they are watching the development of the Indian policy carefully.

When you came to India, it was a difficult time following attack on Indian students. Do you think Australia has been able to move beyond that image of unsafe student destination for India? The Indian students are getting a very focused period of negative publicity. That’s going to leave a certain legacy. I don’t see it as an immutable legacy, I see it as a disarming legacy. That’s going to be reflected what I see as a rehabilitation in applications from India. On the tourist side there is very strong growth.

In 2012—two years or so after the peak of this very bad publicity for us—India has seen a 4% in terms of permanent migrant, No. 2 in temporary skill market, India coming in No. 2 in terms of international students. We think what we went through is a very unfortunate phase in relationship. What I am keen to do is to convey a better sense of contemporary Australia... particularly on issues of race and multiculturalism. elizabeth.r@liveinvest.com