Peer pressure on salaries leading to depression among IITians

M Ramya | TNN

Chennai: Big salaries offered by companies descending on IIT campuses are worrying counsellors. ‘Dream offers’, faculty members say, are stressing out those offered relatively lower salaries. Offers for IITians range from annual salaries of Rs 82 lakh to Rs 12 lakh.

Dr Alok Bajpai, consultant psychiatrist at IIT-Kanpur, said only 5% of the students got big offers, but it still created “pressure on the peer group”.

Some IIT-Madras students have sought the help of Mitr, the institute’s guidance and counselling unit. “But many don’t come to us, because they fear the first question we will ask is why they want to compare salaries,” said Mitr head Sivakumar M Srinivasan. Counsellors say parental expectations and comparisons with those who receive multiple offers is one reason why some students feel this way. Failure to meet their own aspirations also puts pressure on some.

Dr Bajpai said this affected the way school students thought about higher education.

“They want to get into IITs, without the slightest idea of what’s different about these institutions. The only consideration is the fat salaries they are likely to get once they join here,” he said. And parents choose specializations that will yield maximum returns after four years, he added.

To help students plan their career, rather than get jobs, IIT Madras is planning a series of workshops from next year. “We want to prepare students for what they will face rather than firefight. To identify those who might face difficulties in coming to terms with such situations, Mitr has trained student volunteers to spot and provide some help to these students,” said Sivakumar Srinivasan.
River pollution: House panel slams Environment Ministry

Wants social institutes in plan to clean up Ganga, Yamuna

**Tribune News Service**

**NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25**

A Parliamentary panel has criticised the Environment Ministry for its “business as usual” passing the buck approach towards the high level of pollution in the country’s rivers. The panel has asked the ministry to ensure flow in the rivers by looking beyond the engineering approach to clean up the Ganga and the Yamuna, as was being done presently, and involve social institutes in the clean-up plan apart from IITs.

“Unless the flow of the rivers is maintained at a reasonable level, no other effort is going to be successful,” the high-level committee said, advising the Centre to play a more proactive role in coordination with the state governments so that the country’s lifelines could be given a second chance. “The ministry somehow seems reluctant to undertake this challenge (of coordination with states to enhance sewage treatment facilities),” the Standing Committee on Environment and Forests said in its scathing reaction to the ministry’s replies in a report submitted to Parliament recently.

One of the key recommendations of the panel has been to shift approach from engineering to socio-centric approach and utilise services of institutes of social sciences apart from IITs as is being done in the case of both the Ganga and the Yamuna. It said unless the flow of the rivers was maintained at a reasonable level, no other effort was going to be successful.

According to experts, for a healthy river it is essential that 70 per cent of the water must flow in the river. “You must not extract more than 30 per cent from a river. This 30 per cent should be utilised for whatever it has been extracted for and should not be brought back into the river in any form. However, while in the Yamuna not even 3 per cent is flowing, in the Ganga situation is only slightly better. For an average health of a river, 50 per cent of the water must flow in the river and any volume less than that cannot be considered good whatever you do,” says Manoj Misra of the Yamuna Jiye Abhiyaan, agreeing with the panel’s observation on the flow of the two rivers.

While under the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA), a Ganga River Basin Management Plan (GRBMP) is being prepared by the Consortium of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT), the Supreme Court recently also asked the Directors of Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) in Delhi and Roorkee to explore all possible options for checking the growing pollution levels and treating Yamuna waters in Delhi. The panel, however, feels that equally important to the technical approach is that the Centre should take steps to stop encroachment and illegal commercial activities in the catchment areas of all the major rivers, including the Ganga and the Yamuna.
रोजगार बढाने के लिए लिया फैसला

आईआईएम ने घटाया सहभागिता शुल्क

कविता जोशी. नई दिल्ली

भारतीय प्रबंधन संस्थानों (आईआईएम) के छात्रों के लिए रोजगार के अवसर बढाने के लिए सहभागिता और निर्युक्त शुल्क में कटौती करने का निर्णय लिया है। इसके पीछे आईआईएम की कौशल श्रृंखला हर साल प्रसारित होती है। यह योजना में कंपनियों का अधिकार है। श्रृंखला के क्षेत्र में सहभागिता और निर्युक्त शुल्क को कटौती करने का निर्णय लिया है। इसके पीछे आईआईएम की कौशल श्रृंखला हर साल प्रसारित होती है। यह योजना में कंपनियों का अधिकार है। श्रृंखला के क्षेत्र में सहभागिता और निर्युक्त शुल्क को कटौती करने का निर्णय लिया है।

सहभागिता शुल्क प्रायः स्थानिक

मानव संसाधन विकास के क्षेत्र में अनुसार वर्तमान में कुछ ऐसे आईआईएम भी हैं जो सहभागिता शुल्क के नाम पर कोई धारावाहिक घोषणा नहीं कर रहे हैं। आईआईएम राजस्थान, आईआईएम बंगाल, आईआईएम केरल, आईआईएम उत्तर प्रदेश, आईआईएम काशी, आईआईएम हुजूरपुर, आईआईएम श्रीवस्तु, आईआईएम उदयपुर इत्यादि कंपनियों में और आईआईएम उदयपुर इस सूची में शामिल है।

कंपनियों की तारीख बढ़ी

इसके जरिए तीन आईआईएम को व्यापा फैलाया जा रहा है। इनमें आईआईएम टॉटल, आईआईएम आजमाबाद और आईआईएम राजस्थान को लिए है। यहां रूजगार देने वाली कंपनियों में मस्तिष्क: वर्ष 2011 में 92, 143, 110 की तुलना में सेंसेक्स वर्ष 2012 में 138, 151, 135 तक की उछल हुई है।

आईआईएम में रोजगार के लिए में आईआईएम छात्र, बांग्लादेश, चीन, ताइवान, फ्रांस में मेक्सिको, अमेरिका जैसे कंपनियों को दिया गया है।

आजमाबाद का विशेष निर्णय

इस में बिहार में विस्तार 13 आईआईएम देश में से इस मामले पर आईआईएम आजमाबाद ने विभिन्न विषयों पर लेटे हुए साल के दौरान सहभागिता शुल्क को समाप्त कर दिया और विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में भी फैला हुआ है।

इसमें कलेक्टर एक क्षेत्र में 1 लाख 50 हजार रुपये प्रति घंटा, कलेक्टर दो क्षेत्र में 1 लाख 80 हजार रुपये, चार क्षेत्र में प्रति घंटा 25 हजार रुपये का प्राप्ति कर रहे हैं।
IIMs trump Harvard, Stanford in GMAT score

Garima Prasher | TNN

Bangalore: It is students from IIM-Bangalore, not from Harvard or Stanford or even MIT, who excel at GMAT, the entrance test for the creme de la creme of B-schools across the world.

According to the QS Global 200 Business Schools report, Indian MBA candidates are the world’s most academically distinguished, with students of the IIM-B scoring the highest average of 780. IIM-B students are ahead of leading institutions like Stanford in the US and INSEAD in Europe.

While the average GMAT score of Stanford is 730, INSEAD lies at 704.

Second to IIM-B students in GMAT score are their counterparts from IIM-Ahmedabad with 767.

The survey says, “IIM-Ahmedabad is notable for the extraordinarily high average GMAT scores of its students, with its figure of 767 exceeded only by fellow Indian institution, IIM-Bangalore (780). This places the two ahead of any North American or European school for the academic quality of their student intake. The fact that students enrolled at both schools have an average of just two years of professional experience underlines the tendency for academically gifted students to move quickly on to the MBA qualification at the outset of their careers, rather than using it to up-skill at mid career, as is more common in Europe and North America.”

IIM-B also appears in the survey as one of the emerging global business schools across the world, overtaking Melbourne Business School. The colleges were also judged on different subjects under their programme. In corporate social responsibility, IIM-B ranked 21 among the top 50 business colleges across the globe, whereas IIM-A grabbed 19th rank.

When it comes to emphasis on start-ups and small businesses to kick-start private sector growth (entrepreneurship), IIM-B ranked 25 and IIM-A ranked 17.

QS is an online and offline meeting place for aspiring managers, B-schools and businesses for career and educational-related decisions.
Pioneer ND
26/12/2012

P-13

t Engineering
through

correspondence

The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) would soon allow more technical courses including engineering through correspondence, Human Resource Development Minister MM Pallam Raju said.

After a meeting with AICTE Chairman SS Mantha and other officials, Raju told reporters that a new accreditation body for technical education, Indian Board of Accreditation (IBA), will also be constituted soon.

Students are presently allowed to pursue management (MBA) and computer application (BCA, MCA) programmes through correspondence. But the AICTE does not allow engineering courses through this mode.

The AICTE chairman said that based on recommendations of several committees, the council has decided to allow more technical courses through correspondence. However, "there will be strict conditions of eligibility".

Mantha said: "Nearly all courses except medicine and architecture would be allowed through correspondence."

He, however, added that the final decision in this regard would be taken later. The proposal is likely to be finalised by February next year.

Mantha added that an entrance test would be organised for graduate level courses, while Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) scores might be considered for entrance to postgraduate courses.
Tough to ascertain India’s preparedness, says NASA expert

Vanita Srivastava
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NEW DELHI: A senior NASA scientist of Indian origin feels it is difficult to speak on the preparedness of India’s ISRO on its Mars Mission scheduled for November 2013 because all the vital information on the mission is not available yet.

"Yes, there would be a launch but it is difficult to conclude anything at this stage because of the lack of information," Dr Kumar Krishen said. A scientist of Indian origin, Krishen has been working at NASA, Houston, USA, for more than 37 years. As a senior scientist, he plays a pivotal role in transfer of technology from NASA to US companies.

During his private visit to India, he gave his opinion on space exploration and technology.

The Mars Orbiter Mission is targeted for launch in November 2013 to study the surface and atmosphere of the planet.

According to sources, ISRO is integrating subsystems on the Mars Orbiter Structure that was given to it by the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd a few months ago. ISRO will build the spacecraft on this structure with subsystems and payloads. Till March 2013, the focus will be on integration of subsystems and after that the payloads on which the scientific experiments are done will get integrated, an ISRO official said.

On human space missions, Krishen said that international collaboration and partnerships among different nations was essential.

"This partnership will help ISRO in training Indian manpower, developing instruments, extra vehicular activity astronaut suits, and infrastructure to get the latest technology for successful missions."

Maintaining that private sector participation must be bolstered in human missions to space, he said by involving the private sector, the technology becomes available to the commercial sector.
Challenges of virtual learning

Knowledge on online classes rely heavily on self-motivation, self-discipline, and ability for effective written communication

NN Prabhulal

Virtual education has become in existence. Virtual education has been in existence in some form or the other for sometime throughout the globe including India and is becoming increasingly popular.

Virtual education has been in existence for sometime throughout the globe including India and is becoming increasingly popular.

Online classes are less expensive compared to regular college or university programs. The internet and other global information infrastructures provide a major challenge to higher education such as the extent to which education should become "virtual," the actual cost and value of such innovation and its reliability to its stakeholders (e.g., students) are now discussed worldwide.

Online universities have gained a lot of interest over the past 12 years. The prospect of a "Virtual Campus" in which students communicate, study, and work together with each other and teachers from different countries, brings a lot of challenges and opportunities for higher education institutions. Bringing a virtual campus to life and making it a functional requires a minimum of administrative support, strategic planning, technical solutions, teacher and student motivation, educational vision and online content. There are different ways for universities and, for countries, to implement their e-learning strategies in universities. If we want to open up public universities to new providers and forms of learning, the fundamental challenge is to ensure both quality and academic integrity. And virtual education gives an opportunity for a new approach that puts effectiveness and student outcomes at its centre.

Virtual education refers to institutions in a learning environment where teacher and student are separated by time or space, or both. The teacher provides course content through the use of methods such as course management applications, multimedia resources, the Internet, and videoconferencing. Students receive the content and communicate with the teacher via the same technology.

Virtual education is a term describing online education using the Internet. This term is used in K-12 schools, often to refer to cyber schools, and in higher education, where so-called virtual universities have been established. A virtual course is taught by a single professor, who in all cases, or at least a significant portion of the course, are virtual courses.

Whether in synchronous (i.e., real-time) or asynchronous (i.e., self-paced) formats, virtual courses (or online courses) are delivered on the Internet. "Virtual" is used here to characterize the fact that the course is not taught in a classroom face-to-face but through the Internet and written communications.

Both the asynchronous and synchronous methods rely heavily on self-motivation, self-discipline, and ability for effective written communication.

Instruction modes

Many virtual study programs are mainly text-based, using PowerPoint techniques. Any attempt to personalize the educational experience is essential in that students respond to personal attention and feedback. Today a wide spectrum of instruction modes is available, including the following:

Virtual Classroom: Live teacher instruction and feedback online that enables real-time voice interaction, whiteboard sharing, and brainstorm sessions to enhance a student's learning experience. This provides students an opportunity to interact with the teacher as well as classmates by oral and written communications.

Video-based courses are like face-to-face classroom courses with a lecturer speaking and PowerPoint slides or online examples used for illustration. Students watch the video by means of a computer or in-person.

Audio-based courses are similar but not as effective, making it a sound track. The course materials are extended through audio means.

Web-based courses are similar to audio-based courses but with the added advantage of a video component.

Creating an ideal learning environment is very important. Students need to be able to participate in a learning environment. Teachers will act as guides and resources, but it is up to the students to collaborate, discuss, review ideas, and present conclusions.

Implications

A paradigm shift, from a student-centered to a whole-centered system of learning, has particular implications for the process of teaching. One implication is a commitment to creating an ideal learning environment. Teachers need to be able to participate in a learning environment. Teachers will act as guides and resources, but it is up to the students to collaborate, discuss, review ideas, and present conclusions.

Virtual learning relies heavily on self-motivation, self-discipline, and ability for effective written communication. One can learn from anywhere at any time from the comfort of home. However, some students may not have the necessary skills or motivation to succeed in virtual learning. It is important for educators to provide support and resources to help students overcome these challenges.
Do aliens exist? We may find it out in 12 years

UFO Expert Says World's Largest Radio Telescope Will Have Confirmation By 2024

London: Humans could make contact with alien life within 12 years, with the aid of the world's largest radio telescope, a leading UFO expert has claimed. One of the key questions whether extraterrestrial life exists, could be answered by 2024, with the development of a supersized 1.3 billion pounds radio telescope, the Daily Express reported. The development of the Square Kilometer Array (SKA) telescope will unleash "new and exciting possibilities", according to former UK Ministry of Defence UFO project leader Nick Pope.

"I will be controversial and give you an exact year of when I believe first confirmation of contact will be made — and that is 2024, the year in which if everything goes according to plan, the Square Kilometre Array will be fully operational," Pope, who studied UFO sightings at the MoD for 21 years, said.

The SKA, to be started in 2016, is set to be the world's largest radio telescope and will answer some of the fundamental unanswered questions of our universe. Made up of thousands of radio wave receptors covering 4,001 square km of the Earth's surface in the Australian outback, scientists have claimed it will provide alternative views of the universe than those seen with optical telescopes.

Scientists leading its development have suggested the SKA will be 100 times more sensitive, and will survey the sky 10,000 times faster, than any other telescope. "It will give astronomers insight into the formation and evolution of the first stars and galaxies after the Big Bang, the role of cosmic magnetism, the nature of gravity and possibly even life beyond," a spokesman for the SKA said.

"If there is a civilization within 100 lightyears this telescope could find it. We are now beginning to have the technology whether it's the SKA or maybe other telescopes that are being developed that will allow these possibilities. We are searching all the time for a shadow earth," Pope added. Recent research suggested that nearly 10% of the population has seen a UFO, and more than 6 million people in the UK. "When I was investigating UFOs, I investigated 2,500 reports each year, 10 per cent is an absolutely astonishing figure," Pope added.  

Reusable rockets to become a reality soon

A private space travel company in US claims to have successfully launched its prototype rocket, in a major step towards producing a reusable space vehicle and slashing the cost of journey. California based SpaceX's Grasshopper reusable rocket took a giant leap for commercial space flight last week when it rose 331 feet and landed safely back on Earth. The latest launch by the company is a major step towards producing a reusable space vehicle, the 'Daily Mail' reported.  

Rare supercomet to outshine Moon in '13

A rare supercomet is rushing towards the Sun from the outer solar system and at its peak it may outshine the Moon in November. 2013, astronomers claim. First spotted in September, the comet is known as C/2013 S1 (ISON). New Scientist reported. Its closest approach to the Sun will be in November.
‘Environment changes spurred human evolution’

Washington: A series of rapid environmental changes in East Africa roughly two-million years ago may have driven the human evolution, say researchers. “The landscape early humans were inhabiting transitioned rapidly between a closed woodland and an open grassland about five to six times during a period of 200,000 years,” said researcher Clayton Magill, from the Penn State University.

DRIVING FORCE? “These changes happened very abruptly, with each transition occurring over hundreds to just a few thousand years,” Magill said in a statement.

According to co-researcher Katherine Freeman, the current leading hypothesis suggests that evolutionary changes among humans during the period the team investigated were related to a long, steady environmental change or even one big change in climate. “There is a view this time in Africa was the ‘Great Drying’, when the environment slowly dried out over three million years. But our data show that it was not a grand progression towards dry; the environment was highly variable,” she said. According to Magill, many anthropologists believe that variability of experience can trigger cognitive development.