From K12 to IIT, campuses bank on organised players for study tours

Demand for organised players for edu-tours is fueled by increasing number of international schools

From K12 schools to even Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), educational institutions are increasingly banking on organised players like Thomas Cook and Cox & Kings for conducting study tours. So much so, that industry estimates peg the segment at a revenue of over Rs 200 crore, growing at a rate of 20 per cent per annum.

For instance, IIT Delhi collaborated with an organised player for a 10-day Europe trip. According to schools and institutes alike, organised players not only bring in a ready network of overseas service providers at various destinations but also ensure security of students.

Moreover, institutes also find services of organised players to be cost effective. "Collaborating with organised players tends to reduce co-ordination costs for us since they have their own network. We are open to collaborating with different players. However, these players need to set terms and conditions," said P Vigneswara Ilavarasan, Associate Professor at IIT Delhi, while refusing to divulge details of such tie-ups. According to Ilavarasan, IIT Delhi supports such tours partly while the rest is paid by students.

Demand for organised players for edu-tours has also been fueled by the increasing number of international schools in the country, apart from domestic schools adopting international curriculum and pedagogy that requires increased number of non-classroom experience.

Experts cite that Indians are willing to spend more and more on their child’s education even as international and premium schools are foraying even into tier 2 and 3 cities. In addition, enrolments are going up on the upwards of 14 per cent per annum.

"What this means is that unlike some schools were emphasis is on classroom alone, the international school are more balanced and experience oriented. Even Indian schools are gradually adopting this model including state board schools promoting non-classroom experiences. This provides opportunity for travel to grow at a time when there are hardly any organised player providing study tours to educational institutions," said Abraham Alapatt, President & Group Head - Marketing, Service Quality, Financial Services & Innovation, Thomas Cook (India) Ltd.

Moreover, according to Alapatt, the company has designed products and services that involve both fun and learning. "It is build around what the curriculum of the school so that it is relevant to what students are learning," Alapatt added.
Seconding Alapatt is Veena Singh, founder principal of Dehradun-based Unison World School. "The evolving curriculum and pedagogy has also made it almost mandatory for schools and educational institutions to include such experiential tours as part of their programs, thereby giving rise to need of organised players in the market," said Singh.

However, the challenge ahead is the growing cost of such tours overall for schools which could result in reluctance among students and parents for participation, say some.

"We realised that Thomas Cook's trips were more organised and children were more secure. We realised that organised players go an extra mile and ensure that children do a thorough observation on the tour. The only concern is that it keeps getting more expensive year-on-year. Our school do two domestic and one international tour every year. While a typical five-day tour to places like Paris costs Rs 1.2 lakh, a domestic five-day trip costs around Rs 30,000-40,000," said Neelu Lamba, principal of Hiranandani Foundation School.
Flipkart collaborates with IISc, IITs to build IP, gain edge over rivals

Some futuristic technologies it is exploring is in the use of drones for logistics in warehouses


Flipkart, India’s most successful start-up, is working with The Indian Institutes of Technology, Indian Institute of Science and a few foreign universities to develop technologies such as machine learning, voice recognition and drones to deliver products.

The focus of Flipkart, which has already published two papers in journals, mirrors the strategy of global firms such as Facebook and Google, to build intellectual property that helps solve bigger challenges for the company and gain an edge over rivals.

The Indian e-commerce major says it also has reached a scale that allows students and the academia to use its data and platform knowledge to work on challenges that help improve gaps, in addition to publishing research papers.
"If you look at 5 years ago, the problems professors were solving were with companies such as IBM or Microsoft. Now it is with Flipkart in online shopping and you can see the difference," says Muthuswamy Chellaiah, Director of Academic Engagement at Flipkart.

Indian start-ups have rarely focused on building research partnerships with universities as they build their business in areas such as e-commerce and travel. The focus so far has been to learn intuitively to solve problems as they emerge, often not documenting them as they move to another business challenge. This is in contrast with firms in the US, where start-ups collaborate with academics and doctoral students to solve problems, helping them publish papers that often are cited by other researchers working on similar problems.

Flipkart says it wants to bridge this gap in India, a need it says would also help it leapfrog in technology issues such as smartphone focused shopping on patchy networks, or helping its logistics team reach customers using the most optimal route at the lowest costs. Some of the futuristic technologies it is exploring and collaborating is in the use of drones for logistics in warehouses.

"Everyone knows in online shopping world we're talking about drones delivering stuff and drones inside the warehouse and this is very ripe for collaboration. At the same time, we have to be realistic also, but I think there are a couple of universities here to get engaged with and we are sort of helping them get aligned in a way that this could be useful," says Chellaiah.

Flipkart's global rival Amazon is already experimenting delivery of small goods through drones in Cambridge in the UK. But it is too early to declare it as a global phenomenon as Amazon's home country the US did not clear its request to test drone delivery.

In India, regulations are still evolving on the use of drones for commercial use. The government is working on a policy specific to the commercial and personal use of drones in Indian airspace.

Flipkart says the collaboration with academics would only increase in the years to come.

"There are tonnes of problems but it goes beyond the computer science department, it goes to business schools, it goes to operations research departments. It's a very involved process - project managers involve engineers, scientists, professors, students and we are very committed to making a huge difference," says Chellaiah. "It also helps in developing a new talent pool. This kind of trains the students who we want to onboard, recruit and in the case of PhD students it's a three-year engagement."

Jharkhand Govt sign MoU with IIM-A for setting up innovation lab
http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/jharkhand-govt-sign-mou-with-iim-a-for-setting-up-innovation-lab/1/844184.html

Ranchi, Dec 27 (PTI) Jharkhand government today signed an MoU with IIM, Ahmedabad for setting up an international standard Jharkhand Innovation Lab with Chief Minister Raghubar Das saying this will give a new direction to the youth and entrepreneurs.

Jharkhand Information Technology Secretary Sunil Kumar Barnwal and IIM Ahmedabads Sailes Gandhi inked the MoU, an official release said.
The Chief Minister said this would generate job opportunities, local resources would be utilised and economic activity would increase.

Barnwal said there would be a work station in the lab, it would be WiFi and it would be functional in eight months, the release said.

Gandhi said the main centre of the innovation lab would in Ranchi and sub-centres would be opened at training centres. This lab would be connected with foreign investors, banks, corporate, industries association, foundry institution and others, the release added.
पुराने आईआईटी संस्थानों की अपेक्षा नए में बेहतर है स्टूडेंट-टीचर रेशो

दो साल में आईआईटी संस्थानों के स्टूडेंट-टीचर रेशें में कोई खास बदलाव नहीं आया। कहीं 2008 के बाद शुरू किया था। इस आईआईटी संस्थानों में पुराने आईआईटी संस्थानों के मूलभल्म बेहतर स्टूडेंट-टीचर रेश नहीं है। इस संस्थान का कारण से जल्द हल करने के लिए कोई ठोस योजना भी नहीं है।

आईआईटी, मंडी में सबसे बेहतर है स्टूडेंट-टीचर रेशो, प्रश्नों का उत्तर पता पर एक शिक्षक देश के अभिविन्य शिक्षा संस्थानों में स्टूडेंट-टीचर रेश बड़ी समय में होता है। स्टूडेंट-टीचर रेशों की अपेक्षा शिक्षकों को अभिविन्य शिक्षा संस्थानों में स्टूडेंट-टीचर रेशों में अधिक समय लगना पड़ता है। इसलिए इस रेशों को मूलभल्म बेहतर करने में काफी समय लगना पड़ता है।

वाराणसी में ज्यादा खर्च हालत

पुराने आईआईटी में आईआईटी, मंडी का स्टूडेंट-टीचर रेशों के बावजूद 22:1 है। इसके बाद आईआईटी कहांपुर में प्रतिकर्ष 19 छात्रों पर एक शिक्षक, आईआईटी दिल्ली में प्रतिकर्ष 16 छात्रों पर एक शिक्षक और आईआईटी बीबी में प्रतिकर्ष 14 छात्रों पर एक शिक्षक है। हाल ही में एक रिपोर्ट में यह बता दिया गया है कि आईआईटी संस्थानों में अपेक्षा वाराणसी संस्थानों में हालत बेहतर है। इस संस्थान में कुल 5073 शिक्षकों के भर दिखाया गया है। पुराने आईआईटी संस्थानों में स्टूडेंट-टीचर रेशें नहीं समय होता है। जब भी संस्थानों का लोकार्पण रुकने की आवश्यकता है, तो स्टूडेंट-टीचर रेशों को बेहतर किया जाता है।

दो साल पहले भी ऐसी ही स्थिति

गैरमूलम बात है कि दो साल पहले इस अध्ययन के अंतर्गत प्रश्नों को नहीं उत्तर दिए जा रहे थे क्योंकि संस्थानों का अंतर्गत प्रश्नों को संस्थान की 9 प्रतिशत में बढ़ गया है। 2014 में आईआईटी, बीबी में प्रतिकर्ष 14 छात्रों पर एक शिक्षक, आईआईटी, दिल्ली में 18 छात्रों और आईआईटी बीबी में प्रतिकर्ष 21 छात्रों पर एक ही शिक्षक थे। आईआईटी, खड़गपुर में प्रतिकर्ष 18 छात्रों के लिए एक शिक्षक था।

योजनाओं को अमल में लाने में लगेगा समय

आईआईटी संस्थानों के अनुसार बेहतर फैक्टरी की कमी से संस्थान में जल्दी शिक्षकों की भर्ती नहीं है। कुछ इस समस्या के बावजूद इसका लाभ देखा जा सकता है। इस समय संस्थानों में फैक्टरी छात्रों की संख्या की बढ़ति का भागीदार है। इस वातावरण में समस्या तो पहले समय में अभियंता का शिक्षक को अमल में लाना होगा। जो योजनाओं का शांती रखता है, उनके प्रतिकृत अथवा इस समय लगेगा।

लेख के अंत में यह बताया जाता है कि इस समय संस्थान का अभियंता संस्थान का अभियंता अभियंता संस्थान का अभियंता संस्थान का अभियंता संस्थान का अभियंता संस्थान का अभियंता संस्थान का अभियंता संस्थान का अभियंता संस्थान का अभियंता संस्थान का अभियंता संस्थान का अभियंता संस्थान का अभियंता संस्थान का अभियंता संस्थान का अभियंता संस्थान का अभियंता संस्थान का अभियंता संस्थान का अभियंता संस्थान का अभियंता संस्थान का अभियंता
At pre-Budget Niti meet, talk of tax cuts

Mahendra Singh
New Delhi: The post-demobilisation Budget is likely to be citizen-friendly and will contain measures to push economic growth.

The central message that emanated from an interaction between PM Narendra Modi and a group of economists organised by the Niti Aayog on Tuesday.

The consultations saw the PM reiterate that while people in general were not tax evaders, they did want money to be better utilised and accounted for.

"Tax simplification figured quite a lot, on direct taxation, corporate and personal income tax, reducing exemptions, bringing down the tax rates. Aligning tax systems to make India competitive with international destinations," Niti Aayog vice-chairman Arvind Panagariya said.

Push to consumption, P 27

Budget may offer sops to boost consumption, growth

A source said the Modi government's third budget may offer incentives and packages to boost consumption and accelerate economic growth, a concern after reports that demonetisation had suppressed demand and reduced discretionary spending.

Continued from P1

In a meeting, Panagariya said that focusing on three key points—agriculture, jobs, and budget-related issues.

In the meeting, there was a discussion on strategies to boost consumption by focusing on agriculture and expand the digital payment revolution to include the agriculture sector.

Hindustan Times ND 28.12.2016 P-20

Expansion, faculty hiring big challenges for PGDM institutes

The battle on who will regulate postgraduate diploma in management (PGDM) institutions has affected the institutions drastically.

According to Dr Harivansh Chaturvedi, alternate president, EPFL and director, RBIMTRCH, Greater Noida the legal tussle is one of the reasons for the closing down of more than 260 B-schools in the last three years.

"It is due to lack of vision among promoters, wrong location, poor faculty and lack of linkage with the industry." Another major reason is "inaccess supply of MBA seats created by the AICTE Council for Technical Education between 2008 and 2012, Dr Chaturvedi adds.

Getting annual extension by the Supreme Court creates uncertainty for these institutions, say experts.

As Dr Balak Dholakia, former director, IIM Ahmedabad, says, "Institutions have not been able to take strategic decisions such as expansion and infrastructure. B-schools which have to apply for international accreditation such as Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACS&B) and European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS) cannot do so as it is a costly proposition.

As a result, the PGDM institutions are suffering as they are not affiliated to any university. There are a number of B-schools that have not had their convocation in the last three years. Dholakia wonders about the future of such institutions.

Faculty recruitment is another challenge as a large portion of faculty in these
For private B-schools, the battle for autonomy is likely to drag on

FUTURE TENSE

Management institutions offering postgraduate diplomas worried about absence of a dedicated regulator

Hindustan Times ND 28.12.2016 P-20

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