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Prof Ravi Shankar from Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi was awarded on the occasion of 3rd International Conference on Green Supply Chain Management, which was organized at the London campus of Loughborough University. Green Supply Chain Management, 2016 is a premier conference, which brings together scientists, practitioners, policy-makers, NGOs and researchers to exchange ideas, provide insights, concepts, methods, tools, policies and case studies. The Award was given by Prof. Sir Mike Gregory, who was the Co-Founder and Head of the Institute of Manufacturing and Management Division at Cambridge University, UK.

An elated Prof Shankar said, “Being recognized by yet another institution of repute further strengthens our belief in our work. I am thankful to the Loughborough University for considering my work in the field to be the best in India.”

A panel consisting of senior academicians from UK, USA, Australia, Germany, France, and Brazil, recommended this award based on Prof. Shankar’s contribution to leading international journals regarding Operations and Supply Chain Management. The panel recommended Prof. Shankar for this esteemed award after finding him the best researcher in this field in India.

Prof. Hamid Allaoui and Prof. Alok Choudhary, who were the organizers of the conference, mentioned “It's a great pleasure and honor to appreciate the contribution of leading academicians of the world. The research conducted by Prof Ravi Shankar is making a greater impact all across the world. It is evident from the fact that the citations of his research are close to 10,000. A panel consisting of world leading academicians has judged the contribution of Prof. Shankar and they are very pleased to award him as the “Most Influential Researcher in India in the field of Operations and Supply Chain Management”.
The Subsidisation of Our IITs is Not a Handout to the Undeserving
http://thewire.in/54750/the-argument-that-higher-education-is-not-a-merit-good-and-the-government-ought-to-spend-on-school-education-instead-is-a-false-binary/

The argument that higher education is not a merit good and the government ought to spend on school education instead, is a false binary.

Recently, newspapers were abuzz with reports that IITs, India’s premier technology institutions, have hiked annual tuition fees from Rs. 90,000 to Rs. 2 lakh, a more-than-two-fold hike. The standing committee of the IIT council (SCIC) had proposed a fee of Rs. 3 lakh per annum. The committee had reasoned that “On an average, it costs a bit over Rs. 5 lakh a year to educate one student at an IIT,” and felt that 60% should be collected from them. This would ensure financial autonomy for the premier institutes, averred the report.

Although the government has not accepted the SCIC’s recommendations in toto, the move towards another hike, even if the quantum may not be as high as recommended, is alarming and needs to be countered with reason.

Last year on social media a message was being circulated exhorting the government to stop “subsidised education” to IIT students. The reasoning was IITians use public money to fulfil their private ambitions. They bag packages worth crores in campus placement. They hardly contribute to nation-building and therefore should not be paid for out of public funds. Such demands have not been raised only by the unaware WhatsApp users who in their fit of patriotism chose to circulate it far and wide, but also by noted economists in the past, albeit with a slightly different rationale. Their line of argument was that education at IIT is not a merit good; it does not benefit society as a whole. As it benefits only a minuscule minority, it ought to be stopped. The government should rather spend on school education which needs hard-earned public money more than IITs.

Another argument in support of a massive fee hike is that IITs provide merit-cum-means (MCM) scholarships to the deserving and needy students who then pay a very small fraction of their tuition fees (though their hostel fees and mess charges are at par with other students; though more on it, later). Another very convenient option for students is to avail an education loan which they can pay back after they get the much-talked about pay packages worth crores. In fact, the government has started an online portal for facilitating education loans. Otherwise also, education loans are never really a problem for an IIT student, because banks are assured of a timely repayment given the good placement records of IITs.

Each of these arguments ignore certain basic facts about IITs and the past circumstances and future prospects of IITians. The latest report of the SCIC is titled ‘Roadmap to Financial Autonomy of IITs,’ and aims to achieve this autonomy through this hike. But the fact is IITs enjoy substantial autonomy already despite subsidy for some of the students. A fee hike is unlikely to make IITs independent of government financing, given the huge funding required for scientific research. A better way to ensure autonomous funds could be to tie up with industry and foreign institutions for joint research. Anyhow, complete autonomy is unwarranted as public money is involved and IITs also need to address prevailing socioeconomic challenges through socially relevant research. This is the vision with which they were set up by India’s first prime minister.

Moving on to the argument that subsidy to IITians is not warranted, because they get fat pay packages: the fact is there are sixteen IITs in the country. Every IIT has a different placement scenario, with top pay packages mostly coming from older IITs. Further, a majority of the students get much smaller offers and news reports about the maximum packages distort the reality. This is primarily the reason why IITs decided to keep pay packages secret in the last placement season.
Indian pastures

Furthermore, the argument that IITians do not contribute to nation-building because they leave the country for greener pastures is not wholly true. The names of Manohar Parrikar, D. Subbarao, Raghuram Rajan, Ashok Khemka, YC Deveshwar, Nandan Nilekani, and many more debunk this argument. IITians are instrumental in the task of nation-building in various fields, be it administration, business, technology, education, and now even politics. In fact most of the professors at IITs are IITians themselves. Raghuram Rajan said in a recent talk, that he was unable to afford a blazer in his school days. It is anybody’s guess if he could have afforded post graduation at IIT and doctorate in finance from a foreign university if IITs were “financially autonomous” in his time, given the fact that he would have had to borrow from the bank and would have been caught in the vicious repayment routine immediately after passing out.

The argument that higher education is not a merit good and the government ought to spend on school education instead, is a false binary. It is a concocted ‘either-or’ dilemma, which is more psychological than logical. This argument is reminiscent of a similar argument given by British Raj while explaining its financial constraints and consequent helplessness in deciding between mass school education and higher education. IITs are not given grants by snatching them away from the dilapidated schools in India. It is equally undesirable that bright students are unable to afford education at IITs after their school education, because government could spend only on schools. The government ought to look after the needs of both the sectors. Technical education is as much a merit good as research by ISRO, TIFR and other research institutes. Just like the money spent on these organisations is justified on the basis of socioeconomic impact of their innovations, same criteria need to be applied to IITs.

Scholarship benefits

Let’s come to the provision of scholarships and loans. The fact is, only a fraction of students are able to avail merit-cum-means (MCM) scholarship in IITs, either those who have faced abject poverty or those who are able to fudge their parental income (mostly self-employed people) given the fact that the ceiling for parental income to come under the MCM net is extremely low. At present, it is Rs. 4.5 lakh per annum and is available to only 25% of the students. If IIT’s fees are to be hiked, then the income ceiling for MCM should be hiked to at least Rs. 10 lakh per annum and the limit of 25% should be removed. Most of the salaried parents, including the government employees would easily breach this ceiling and thus become ineligible for availing the scholarship provision. It means those who earn Rs. 4.5 lakh per annum will have to pay 2 lakh out of this for their ward’s education, and manage their household and other expenses within the leftover of 2.5 lakh. According to one survey, 97 percent of working Indians earn less than Rs. 17 lakh per annum. True, IITs provide good scholarships to SC/ST students, but many other students who are financially constrained are not so successful at availing the scholarships. Further, there are many essential expenses in a college which are not covered by MCM – food, computer, hostel accommodation, books, technical equipment needed for an engineering education, etc. These add up to cast a substantial burden on the students. A lower middle-class family would face the double whammy of high tuition fee and exclusion from public social security net, despite the fact that its disposable income would be only slightly more than Rs. 2 lakh per year.

Education loans in India are one of the most exploitative categories of loans. It hits the borrower on multiple fronts. The rate of interest charged is higher than even home loans, because of the fact that there is no collateral in case of education loans. It is more secure for the banks to lend for buying a car or a property, but less important to help out a needy student. The rate of interest may be as high as 15 %. The net result is that the student ends up paying more than double of what she actually used during her studies. Increasing the fees will only push the students to borrow more, and thus pay back even more. The pernicious effect of loan continues many years after graduation. The student is forced to find employment by the end of her studies. The psychological pressure this indebtedness, at the start of one’s career, creates is tremendous. She cannot even think of going for higher education. The dream of establishing India as research and innovation hub will
be put paid to, if graduates from the best technological institutions are forced to run after hefty pay packages instead of going for higher education.

Similarly, India’s start-up mission will cater only to the relatively well-heeled IIT graduates, since most of the other graduates will not be able to take the risks associated with a start-up, as they will have to pay their loans back.

Most advanced nations have a well-functioning, government-sponsored higher education system. This “subsidised” technical education has played an important role in making countries such as Germany and Japan what they are today. Technological advancement is a necessary prerequisite for national progress. This advancement can be ensured only if talent from all socio-economic strata is allowed to realise their potential in this field. The move to increase the fee at IITs would make the best technical education out of bounds for the substantial talent pool amongst the financially weak, thus jeopardising technological progress. Only the well-heeled will be able to join IITs. Those among financially weak who do decide to join IITs and borrow for their education, will have to settle for a salaried job after undergraduate study and pay loans thereafter, even if they show great academic potential. Short-term concerns about financial autonomy and fiscal consolidation may result in long-term technological enslavement, industrial backwardness and high unemployment, apart from the patently unjust phenomenon of making IITs and further post-graduate studies out of bounds for the poor. It is high time we realise that by subsidising higher technical education, we are not giving out a dole to the undeserving, but securing our own future as a nation.

Abhay Sharma is 2011 batch civil servant and a graduate from IIT-Delhi.

UGC releases list of MOOCs courses; PM Modi to launch ‘SWAYAM’ in August


MEERUT: The University Grants Commission (UGC) released a list of over 2,000 Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) on Thursday. The courses will be hosted via Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM) - an information technology platform - to provide high quality education on various subjects from school level–class IX-XII to under graduate and post graduate students– covering all disciplines. This has come a month after HRD ministry was mulling to launch its MOOC platform 'Swayam' that will host over 2,000 courses for up to 3 crore students across the country on August 15.

"The University Grants Commission has been asked by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India to upload the list of MOOCs which are proposed to be launched in August, 2016. The same has been uploaded on UGC website i.e. www.ugc.ac.in. It is pertinent to mention here that the UGC has also notified UGC (Credit Framework for Online Learning Courses through SWAYAM) Regulation, 2016 in the Gazette of India on July 19, 2016 wherein credit transfer for online courses under SWAYAM platform of Government of India has been defined. The regulations are also available on UGC website," read the circular issued by Jaspal S. Sandhu, secretary, UGC to all the vice-chancellors of the universities under UGC.

Earlier in June, Microsoft was selected as the technical partner for SWAYAM platform aims to launch online courses for over three crore students this year. The technology giant will deploy a team of dedicated people to set up the state-of-the-art application for which Microsoft and All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) signed a deal of Rs 38 crore. Microsoft will be running the app for three years after which it will be taken over by AICTE.

The circular further instructed the vice chancellors to take appropriate action for introduction of MOOCs. “You are requested to kindly peruse the list of MOOCs Courses and UGC regulations from UGC website and take appropriate action
for introduction of MOOCs courses through SWAYAM platform for the benefit of the students of your university and affiliated colleges after approval of the various academic bodies of your University," read the circular instructing the VCs.

The 2,000 courses include Forensics Science, Making of Modern India, Environmental Chemistry, Vedic Language and Literature and many more.

**IIT Hyderabad is full this year**

http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Hyderabad/iit-hyderabad-is-full-this-year/article8914045.ece

*73 seats go vacant in 22 IITs, compared to 341 vacancies last year*

The Indian Institute of Technology-Hyderabad (IIT-H) was able to fill all 240 seats this year, perhaps for the first time after it was established in 2008. Last year, 13 seats went vacant after the final round of counselling.

This is good news for the institute that has almost shifted to its new campus in Kandi from the temporary campus in Ordnance Factory in Eddumailaram, from where it started its operation. It was not just the low rankers, but even top rankers preferred IIT-Hyderabad. Officials revealed that 19 students in the top 1,000 ranks chose Hyderabad. In fact, the Hyderabad campus was ranked seventh in the IIT rankings list released by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, and was the top one among the new IITs.

Several factors seem to have contributed to the institute gaining reputation among the applicants. Hyderabad as a destination attracted them and so did the proven research. The new campus with best of facilities and connectivity, and quality young faculty recruited has also caught their attention. On an average, each faculty member guides three Ph.D scholars.

IIT-Hyderabad director U.B. Desai recently told *The Hindu* that the institute has grown in reputation focussing on research. He said nearly 80 per cent of faculty have sponsored projects taking up research, and that too in emerging areas like 5G, digital fabrication, biotechnology, and core chemical engineering. It has become a sort of culture.

Prof. Desai also felt that ranks don’t matter in an IIT environment except the top 100, as most students with lower ranks are also good students and they can make a mark given the right environment.

The institute now has 1,900 students and 160 faculty with the ratio working out to be 12:1.

**Vacant seats**

Interestingly, the number of vacant seats in IITs this year has drastically come down from 341 to 73, and among these, 38 seats went vacant in IIT BHU, Varanasi. This year, 9,660 seats were on offer in 22 IITs, and the vacancy percentage stood at 0.76 compared to 3.75 per cent last year.

The drastic reduction is being attributed to six rounds of counselling, compared to three rounds last year. Another factor is said to be enhanced intake in sought-after courses like computer science and electronics.

Kanduru V. Krishna, chairman of JEE Advanced-2016, said that multiple rounds definitely helped in fewer vacancies despite seats being increased. He said the results were declared early thus helping them to conduct several rounds of admissions.
IIT Kharagpur Director Dr. Partha Pratim Chakrabarti wins ACCS-CDAC Foundation Award for 2016
http://www.indiaprwire.com/pressrelease/education/20160728418887.htm

ACCS, the Advanced Computing and Communications Society, today announced the name of Prof. Partha Pratim Chakrabarti, of the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur as the winner of the prestigious ACCS-CDAC Foundation award for 2016. The award recognizes his seminal contributions in Artificial Intelligence methods for automated reasoning and his stewardship of various national initiatives in driving the industry-academia collaborative research.

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The ACCS-CDAC Foundation Award carries a cash prize of Rs. 100,000/-, along with a citation and a plaque. This will be presented at the inaugural session of the annual Advanced Computing and Communications Conference (ADCOM 2016) at PES University, Bangalore on 8th September 2016.

"Dr. Chakrabarti's contributions to AI methods for heuristic search has been applied to solve some of the core design and verification problems in VLSI and embedded systems," said ACCS President Dr. Saragur Srinidhi.

"The ACCS-CDAC Award highlights the essential role of computing and communications in the technology-driven world," noted Prof. Rajat Moona, Director General of CDAC. "Dr. Chakrabarti’s work in automated reasoning has solved complex reasoning problems of discrete, event-driven and hybrid systems in polynomial time", he added.

The Award instituted in 2004, by the Advanced Computing and Communications Society and the Center for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC), fosters the development and dissemination of the theory and applications of Computing and Communications sciences. ACCS-CDAC Award is given to individuals with outstanding contributions and accomplishments that have had a significant and demonstrable effect on the practice of computing and communications.

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R. Prasad

INDIAN: A study carried out by a team of researchers from IIT Madras and IIT Bombay has found a decrease in spatial variability of mean monsoon rainfall over major river basins in India.

While there is a statistically significant decrease in the monsoon rainfall over major water surplus river basins, there is no statistically significant increase in monsoon rainfall over major water deficit river basins. The results were published on July 29 in the journal PROS ONE.

"Major surplus basins such as Mahanadi, Godavari, Brahmani and West Flow River-I are witnessing significant decrease in rainfall. Other surplus basins also exhibited decrease in rainfall but they are not statistically significant," says Prof. Subimal Ghosh from the Department of Civil Engineering, IIT Bombay.

More than 10% of the decrease in water yield in recent periods in major surplus basins has been more than 10 per cent in the case of Mahanadi and West Flow River-I. In the case of other surplus basins, the decrease has been within 10 per cent.

Though water yields in major deficit river basins such as Indus, Ganga and East Flow River-II have increased during the period 1976-2000 compared with the previous 25 years (1953-1975), the trend is not statistically significant, says Prof. Sachita S. Ganote, the corresponding author of the paper from the Department of Civil Engineering, IIT Madras.

Ganga, which is a major water deficit basin, has seen significant increase in rainfall, while Yamuna, Krishna and Ganges river basins exhibit a decrease.

"There has been an increase in extreme rainfall events in India but this does not play a significant role in water availability as the surplus water gets wasted," he added.

"Stable distribution of rainfall during the entire monsoon period is what is most desirable," says Prof. Gunthe.

Challenges to interlinking

As a previous study had pointed out, the latest study has found that the amount of summer monsoon rainfall over Indian river basins does not support the paradigm "wet gets wetter and dry gets drier".

The changes in rainfall patterns over major river basins in India raise concerns regarding the suitability and viability of interlinking major river water basins.

The water demand in a surplus basin first needs to be assessed and then met under decreasing water availability scenarios before transferring water to deficit basins. Hence, planning for inter-basin water transfer [in order to supply water from surplus to deficit river basins] necessitates an immediate reassessment with a systematic approach," they write.
Search panel set up for IIM directors
New Delhi, July 28
The HRD Ministry has constituted a search-cum-selection committee to recommend names for selection of Directors of six new IIMs in Amritsar, Sirmour, Bodh Gaya, Sambalpur, Nagpur and Visakhapatnam. In written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for HRD Mahendra Nath Pandey today said for appointment of Directors of IIMs in Ranchi, Raipur, Bangalore and Rohtak, the search-cum-selection committee has already recommended a panel of names. For IIMs in Tiruchy, Udaipur and Kozhikode, an advertisement has been issued for recruitment to the post. The Minister said that for appointment of Directors of six IITs in Tirupati, Palakkad, Bhilai, Dharwad, Jammu and Goa, an advertisement had been issued and applications received.  

Business Line ND 29.07.2016  P-02

7th Indian Management Conclave to debate on what B-schools can learn from corporate winners
Chennai, July 28
The 7th Indian Management Conclave will be held on August 5 and 6 at IIM Ahmedabad (IIMA). Organised by MBBUnivers.com in association with Businessline, the theme of the conclave is 'institutional leadership in management education.'

The conclave will debate how management schools can take a leaf out of successful organisations in the spheres of business, technology, higher education and public service and work towards establishing their institutions as leaders.

Business schools, says Amit Agnihotri, convenor of the IMC and founder, MBBUnivers.com, can claim leadership by excelling in academics or in industry engagement or by creating a positive impact on society.

A galaxy of academicians from top B-schools will gather to debate these topics at IIMA over two days. While Ashish Nanda, Director, IIMA, will deliver the inaugural address, the keynote address will be given by Jitendra Singh, Chair Professor, former Dean, IIM Udaipur and campus director, The Wharton School.

The special address will be given by Harish Bhat, Member, Group Executive Council, Tata Sons, and a distinguished alumnus of IIMA of the 1987 batch.

Director of IIM Indore Rishikesh K Krishnam and Director of IIM Udaipur Janat Shah will also participate in the conclave as also top faculty from SPJIMR, IIM Indore, IIM Calcutta, and IIM Ahmedabad.

The conclave will debate how management schools can take a leaf out of successful organisations in the spheres of business, technology, higher education and public service and work towards establishing their institutions as leaders.

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IIM-B to host National Entrepreneurship Summit
Bengaluru, July 28
Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIM-B) will host the ninth edition of the National Annual Entrepreneurship Summit, Eximius 2016, on August 6 and 7 on its campus.

IIM-B's Entrepreneurship and Innovation Cell will organise Eximius 2016 in association with NS Raghavan Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning (NSRCEL). Celebrating the spirit of entrepreneurship, the summit—themed 'The Time Is Now'—aims to encourage start-ups and students from across the country to think big and take the plunge.

The two-day event will feature over 150 start-ups, and is expected to get a footfall of over 5,000 individuals from across the country, participating in over 30 events.

Eximius 2016 will host eminent speakers, including P Chidambaram (former Finance Minister), Duchvuri Subbarao (former RBI Governor), Jacob Crasta (member, Prime Minister’s SME Council), Dr P Ramamurthysamy (Chairman, Aravind Eye Care), Dr Devdutt Pattanaik (author), Shraddha Sharma (co-founder and Chief Editor, YourStory), Sujayath Ali (co-founder and CEO, Voonik), Kunal Kapoor (actor and co-founder, Ketto), Mukesh Singh (co-founder and CEO, ZopNow), Piyush Mishra (actor) and Anshu Gupta (founder, Goonj).

Hands-on exposure
The summit will host events that will give hands-on exposure to participants on various aspects of starting and running a business, said IIM-B. Some flagship events include Bootcamp, Fast Forward, The Other Incentive, The Game of Clicks, Wipro Earthian Sustainability Quiz, Bootcamp Kiosk and workshops.

There will also be an array of events that will challenge participants to solve a range of problems faced by start-ups and entrepreneurs in domains such as marketing, operations, finance, sustainability and fund-raising.

Eximius 2016 will also have many online and on-the-spot events such as quizzes and simulated games.