Newspaper Clips
June 16, 2011

Economic Times ND 16/06/2011 P-4

ITTs May Become Less Relevant

By: Vivek

The ITTs have completed 50 years and have helped build India. They were set up pre-Independence to acquire and develop human capital for India and have not met their objectives. In the beginning, they were given an initial role in the advancement of the IT sector but have not changed with the times and are not providing India with what it needs more. They have become largely teaching institutions, as they were set up, not transferring into research-based, innovation driven institutions, driven by the need for change for the IT sector that is now emerging. They seem unlikely and unable to change according to the need, driven by the need to make ITs more relevant and owned by an apathetic manner. They seem to be in a state of perpetual decline while there are some bright spots, but they are not enough to meet the needs of the time.

Very recently a Union Minister made a statement that as far as the world is concerned, their world class students and their world class alumni, of which there are millions, have been forever been the prime asset of India's ITT. He said that he has been better most of the times, finding that he and his ITT are largely responsible for this situation. The ITTs today enjoy substantial academic autonomy but lack adequate, appropriately trained financial and academic leadership. The IT boards and the directors are unable to take any financial decision which they need for the smooth functioning of the institution. Even for an ordinary item of the expenditure, they need to seek the finance department's approval which nullifies the autonomy of the ITT.

They are subject to unnecessary measures of the government, a perfect situation to emasculate an educational institution.

The situation in the ITTs is alarming and has opened a tunnel industry that earns more than the ITTs themselves. This has resulted in a large number of students opting for the courses they don't need or can't handle. The situation has reached a point where the students are not even interested in the courses they have opted for. This is because they are forced to attend the courses they don't need or can't handle. The situation has also resulted in a large number of students feeling dissatisfied and deciding not to go to the college they have been admitted to. This has also resulted in a large number of students feeling dissatisfied and deciding not to go to the college they have been admitted to. This is because they are forced to attend the courses they don't need or can't handle.

The ITTs are also being asked to provide a large number of students with employment opportunities. This is because they are forced to attend the courses they don't need or can't handle. The situation has also resulted in a large number of students feeling dissatisfied and deciding not to go to the college they have been admitted to. This is because they are forced to attend the courses they don't need or can't handle.

The ITTs are also being asked to provide a large number of students with employment opportunities. This is because they are forced to attend the courses they don't need or can't handle. The situation has also resulted in a large number of students feeling dissatisfied and deciding not to go to the college they have been admitted to. This is because they are forced to attend the courses they don't need or can't handle.
Indian univs’ ranking in Asia slides

At 187 Position, Only IIT-Bombay Figures In The World’s Top 200 Varsities

Heena Chiplia | TNN

Mumbai: Not a single Indian university, including the IITs, has fared well in an all-Asian varsity ranking for 2011. IIT-Bombay is the only one to figure in the world top 200, at 187, lower than the previous year’s rank of 163.

The QS Asian University rankings reveal a pathetic performance by domestically high-rated varsities in the state, with the University of Mumbai pegged the worst, though it set aside funds to better its ranking this year. A university founded merely two decades ago—The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology—has topped the charts, defying critics who claim that long-established universities have an insuperable advantage. It not only raced past its veteran neighbour, Hong Kong University, but is also the youngest among the top 100 QS World Ranking Asian Universities.

The University of Cam-

bridge got a perfect 100, topping the world chart. “We are doing better than earlier. But at other places, they are improving a lot faster than us. So, we are not static; the number of publications has gone up and research funding has also improved,” said IIT-Bombay director Devang Khakhari. About IIT-Bombay’s rank, he said they had done “slightly worse” because student strength had gone up, but faculty numbers had not increased correspondingly.

All the seven old IITs have made it to the Asian universities ranking, but their ranks have slid. “Internationalisation takes up 20% of the points. But we are not international; neither do we have international students nor do we have foreign faculty members. In terms of funds, China and Korea are higher than us. Lastly, we don’t have medicine and law. So we lose points there too. We are starting off with a handicap,” said IIT Madras director M S Ananth. “In terms of funding and opening doors for foreigners, China has taken right steps.”

Hong Kong’s continued strong showing in the Asian rankings, with four universities in the top 20 and all six in the top 50, contrasts with continuing disappointment for mainland China,” noted the analysis.

Although Peking and Tsinghua universities remain in the top 20, China has only 14 universities in the first 100, having made marginal progress since last year. The much smaller system in South Korea outperforms China. It has four institutions in the top 20, led by Seoul National University, and 16 in the top 100.

However, Richard Holmes, a frequent commentator on rankings, writing in University World News, had a different take, saying more Japanese universities were falling than rising, while Chinese and Korean varsities were on the rise. “This could be part of a permanent shift in the world balance of academic power.”
India may host world’s first Meta University by June next

Aditi Nigam
New Delhi, June 15

The world’s first Meta University, to promote multi-disciplinary learning at the higher education level, may take off in India by June 2012.

The proposal, part of a concept note to promote innovation at the college and school levels, was recently submitted to the Union Human Resource Development Ministry by the National Innovation Council, headed by Mr Sam Pitroda.

“The Minister has green-lighted these proposals for immediate follow-up....Most of these require only marginal additional allocations as they can be woven into existing funding streams. Also these do not require policy changes or amendments in law and can be rolled out in academic year 2012,” a source close to the development said.

According to the concept note, the Meta University will use the platform of the already established National Knowledge Network to create a “unified sensibility that combines intellect and emotion, analytics and synthesis, the right brain and left brain – attributes that foster innovation.” The model is based on combining “collaborative learning” and “multi-disciplinary learning”. In other words, the Internet and the Web will provide the communication infrastructure, while a network of universities will offer courses in various disciplines.

The idea is to allow students and teachers to access and share teaching material, scholarly publications, research work, scientific work, virtual experiments etc, says the concept note. Also, students enrolled in a primary college or university will be able to pursue courses in other universities and colleges.

“It will be possible for an engineering student from, say, IIT Kanpur to also enrol for a course in ancient history from Jawaharlal Nehru University or a mathematics student from Indian Institute of Science can pursue a course in comparative literature from Jadavpur University,” says the note.

Sources said once the proposal is finalised, a draft memorandum of understanding will be offered to participating institutions.

In a month’s time, a mentor group comprising heads of institutions and thought-leaders in education will also be created.

Among the other proposals at the school level are scholarships for innovation, setting up of specialised centres and setting up a National Innovation Promotion Scheme on the lines of the National Service Scheme in colleges.
New Delhi: The 100% cutoff announced by Shri Ram College of Commerce for non-commerce students sparked outraged calls for educational reforms, and HRD minister Kapil Sibal acknowledged it was “irrational” and “affects the credibility of the entire education system”.

In a swift reaction, the minister called DU vice-chancellor Dinesh Singh to his office to understand the process and requested him and the college to “fix rational cutoffs for admission”. Sibal, however, said his ministry or even the DU had little say over admissions.

**Times View**

The idea of a 100% cutoff seems absurd but it is pointless to paint the college or the university as the villain of the piece. The fact that cutoffs have reached levels which would have seemed ridiculous some years ago only points to a deeper malaise, which is the severe lack of quality colleges compared to the scale of the demand for them. As long as we have a situation in which lakhs are aspiring to get quality higher education but the system can cater to only a few thousands, such absurdities will abound. The answer is to have many more good colleges. It is clearly easier said than done, but we must at least make a beginning in that direction.

Sibal asked parents and students not to worry. “We will take care of this irrationality,” he said. The minister did not elaborate on how he would do this.
Colleges should relook at cut-offs, says V-C

Mallica Joshi
mallica.joshi@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: In what could be termed only as the fall out of the ‘irrational’ cut-offs in colleges this year, DU administration could intervene and help colleges set realistic cut-offs from the coming year.

Indicating that a change can be expected, DU Vice-Chancellor Dinesh Singh said that statutes that prevent the university from interfering in setting cut-offs may be altered.

But college have not taken this reaction seriously.

“There are more than 60 colleges in the university which declare cut-offs. The university will not be able to intervene in the functioning of each one of these. If something wrong has happened it should be corrected but this is no solution. This is just a knee-jerk reaction,” said VK Kwatra, principal, Hansraj College.

“The 100% benchmark was set only by two colleges for two courses and that too for a small section of students. This is not a trend in any way. The subsequent cut-offs will show this,” Kwatra added.

Under the current university and college rules, colleges have a free hand in declaring cut-offs. This time the cut-offs have been unrealistic, especially in North Campus colleges.

College administrations maintain that they have been cautious in declaring cut-offs as they don’t have the data about the number of students seeking admission in colleges this time.

Also, the fear of having to give admission to more students than the sanctioned number of seats is plaguing most colleges.

“If the university want to intervene, they are most welcome. Since we did not have any kind of data, we declared high cut-offs so that a sea of students doesn’t descend on the college tomorrow. If the university thinks it can do a better job, they are welcome to do it,” said Bhim Sen Singh, principal, Kirori Mal College.

The vice-chancellor, meanwhile, said that he would advise all colleges to relook their cut-offs this year.

“This is not the best of situations. No student should be demoralised. We will advise colleges to be more sensitive,” said Singh.
Cutting Off Competition!

Calling SRCC move 'irrational' & 'unfortunate', Sibal asks DU V-C to take action; Congress 'hopes anomalies are set right', BJP calls the situation 'ridiculous'

OUR POLITICAL BUREAU
NEW DELHI

HRD minister Kapil Sibal has criticised the Shri Ram College of Commerce, or SRCC, for setting its cutoff for admission to the B Com (H) course at 100%. Describing it as "unfortunate" and "irrational", Sibal has asked Delhi University Vice-Chancellor Dinesh Singh to step in and remedy the situation. Sibal's concern has been echoed by political parties too.

The Congress has expressed concern over the new cutoff for humanities and science students applying for commerce courses. Party spokesperson Jayanthi Natarajan said: "Some serious anomalies must be there. HRD minister has taken note of it. We hope the anomalies are set right. Certainly, it would not be correct for students to suffer unnecessarily."

The BJP described the situation as "ridiculous". Party spokesperson Nirmala Sitharaman said: "It is ridiculous. This means that students from some streams cannot get admission to certain courses. The Delhi University should look into the matter." In a bid to reassure students and parents, Sibal said: "I was sad to hear it. I want to reach out to parents and students and tell them don't worry. We will take care of this irrationality. We are on your side."

The minister took the opportunity to push forward the agenda to reform the college admission process. The ministry has already sought public feedback on the idea of a national testing system for admission to higher education or tertiary sector. A paper, 'National Test Scheme for admission into tertiary Education in India: Underlying Philosophy and Principles' — prepared by a committee headed by T Ramasami, secretary, department of science and technology — gives a broad overview of the principles that will govern the proposed system. The ministry has put up the paper for public feedback.

The committee has argued that a national testing system would help increase the spread of students who can seek admission to higher education institutions. "Majority of youth living in smaller towns and far-flung places as well as economically weaker segments of society are not able to join the competitive stream today...the present system seems to be unwittingly promoting a societal behaviour and mindset towards differentiation rather than integration," the report states.

Meanwhile, responding to the minister's intervention, DU V-C Dinesh Singh has promised the government and the students that he would look into the matter and make sure that the cutoffs are revised downwards. Singh said the varsity was looking at reforming the processes. Students who have not studied any of the papers related to the commerce stream that is accountancy, business studies, economics and maths, at the class XII level are required to have scored 100% to gain admission to the B Com (H) course at SRCC. Students who have studied any one of these subjects are required to have scored 96% to be considered for admission. In effect, science students, who have studied physics, chemistry, biology and English, will find it next to impossible to gain admission. Students from the humanities stream are anyhow not considered for admission to undergraduate courses in commerce and science streams.

"I am informed by the Delhi University Vice-Chancellor that there is only one student in the entire list who has got a 100% mark in science. He may never go to commerce. The idea is to exclude everybody in the science stream and not to allow them an opportunity. This is completely irrational," Sibal said.

Sibal said setting a high cutoff for science students for admission to commerce courses was putting a barrier to keep science students away. Sibal said: "We cannot slot children in a way that those who are in science can't go to commerce."

However, SRCC's principal Dr PC Jain was not perturbed by the HRD minister's intervention. Instead, Jain argued that cutoffs were high because students had performed exceptionally well in their school leaving examination. "The performance of students has been extraordinary this year, that's why the cutoff is so high. There is nothing unfortunate. It is fortunate that students in this country are performing so well. The criterion is an old practice that has been followed, so nothing like that it has been done deliberately to keep the non-commerce students out of SRCC," Jain explained.

Even as DU V-C reiterated Jain's rationale for a high cutoff, Singh assured that cut-off marks would be brought down subsequently. "Last year in CBSE examination, students who scored more than 95% were 200. This year there are 800. There are high scoring groups now. Therefore, colleges are being cautious in the first cut-off," Singh said.
Colleges justify 100% cut-off norm

Malica Joshi
m.alicha.josh@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Shri Ram College for Commerce (SRCC) and Lady Shri Ram College (LSR) have set impossible targets for some students in the first cut-off list this year, literally.

SRCC requires a 100% best of four percentage from non-commerce students for admission to B.Com (honours). LSR has the same requirement from commerce students who want admission in Psychology (honours).

But students who can meet this criterion do not exist, as far as those who took the CBSE and ISC exams are concerned. The best of four percentage must also include one language.

While this is English in LSR, it can be either Hindi or English in SRCC. Out of the 7,69,929 students who gave CBSE boards this year, no one scored a perfect score in either of the two languages.

At SRCC on Wednesday, a student from Chennai, whose best of four percentage was 99.25%, was the highest scorer seeking admission.

But colleges don’t think this criterion is too stringent. “The strategy is to rule out students as we have a limited number of seats and a lot of aspirants who are keen on taking admission. This (100%) percentage is just for non-commerce students,” said PC Jain, principal SRCC.

There’s a race to get into a college like LSR for status, but that is unfair. The 100% cut-off mark for psychology is to deter commerce students who consider course a secondary option,” said Ujjaini Ray, media coordinator, LSR.

Psychology is a very niche course and we do not get many commerce students as it is. Those who score such good marks in commerce take up courses such as B.Com, and Economics,” said Ujjaini Ray, media coordinator, LSR.

It is imperative that students learn to give a preference to course over college. There is a race to get into a college like LSR for the status value, but that is unfair to those genuinely interested. The 100% cut-off mark for psychology is to deter commerce students who consider course as a secondary option,” Ray added.

Even students manning help desks are sceptical about meeting anyone with a perfect score. JASJEET FLAMA/HT PHOTO