Don’t mess with IIT excellence

THE UNDERAGAGE OPTIMIST

CHETAN BHAGAT

The recent change to the JEE admission procedures affects a small percentage of Indians. However, it is a glaring example of how politicians and we as nations have scant respect for excellence.

The IITs receive disproportionate attention because they are symbols of excellence. The institutes have, over the last few decades, built an extraordinary brand for themselves in India and, to a certain extent, even abroad. It is hard to imagine they are state-owned.

Sure, the IITs are not without their flaws. They suffer from issues like lack of creativity, elitism, conservatism and excessive focus on grades. However, for the large part, the institutes are excellent. It is a middle-class Indian dream to get admission into them, which in turn opens up career opportunities and is a stamp of excellence for life.

This success has been due to the autonomy provided to the institutes, their resources and the quality of people who work there. The other big reason is a strong, almost draconian joint entrance exam (JEE) system. The college attracts and is able to filter top students who have the ability and determination to excel. On the other hand, given the desirability of the place versus the number of seats, the exam stress for students is immense.

In a bid to reduce this stress, the HRD ministry has recommended changes to the admission procedures. The changes include a common entrance exam for the IITs and the NITs, a two-paper format including the main test and the advanced test. These changes may bring some streamlining and are not harmful. However, one big change can be a threat to the IITs—giving a 50% weightage to class XII board examination scores.

These scores would be normalized and could be from any of the 42 state and national boards across the country. Thus, the core component of the JEE select on, its own JEE would be immensely diluted. What will come in place will be based on CBSE or other boards. To score well in board exams, application of concepts or analytical abilities—important indicators of student excellence—are not often required. There is sheer arbitrariness too. In my class XII science subjects, 30% of the weightage was for practicals. ‘Those who were liked by the teacher obtained full marks. Now these marks will count in the IIT selections.

Needless to say, all sorts of bizarre issues will emerge with this change. Students will fight to get high board marks as well as do well in JEE exams. The stress will not fall; it will in fact rise significantly. Coaching classes will not reduce but multiply. For now, they will prepare students for the entrance exams as well as the boards. All purported benefits of this move are non-existent. In scientific terms, it introduces a high element of randomness in the selection procedure, versus the talent of the student.

The stress can only be reduced if we have more A-grade colleges, with strict quality control. If there are thousands on a train platform and only one train, making the doors wider is not going to help. The situation you have to add more trains.

And of course, this is the harsh reality our politicians want to hide. The real difference will come if the IITs multiply or at least help create another engineering college brand. Change will come if Delhi University doubles its intake. Why can’t Delhi University open satellite campuses in Gurgaon or Noida? What is stopping the government from doing so? Why are the rules for education in the private sector so shady? Why don’t good people want to enter private education? These are the questions that need to be answered.

However, the politics of symbolism has become a lifestyle. Dalit meals, cartoons, temples, entrance exam changes, elite school quota—all are dished out so that people don’t face the real issues.

The irony is few Indians care about this violation of excellence. Many even support the move—partly believing fallacies about reducing stress and partly because we don’t think it really matters either way. More than anything, we as a society do not value talent and excellence as much. We feel someone elected to power has right to control, interfere and even murder excellence. In fact, the bigger question is this—why can’t we let the IITs run themselves? Why are we forcing things down their throat, which will hurt their brand in the long-term?

The fact is that if the minister announced a lottery to get into the IIT rather than an exam, the majority may support it. After all, most cannot get into an IIT so a lottery improves their chances. Should we do it then? The current changes are akin to a lottery element being added to the entrance exam. It may even enjoy some public support. However, over time, it will destroy the IITs and make them less excellent. And when some of the excellence that we have in India dies, it hurts.

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IIT faculty to meet PM on new JEE format

NEW DELHI, 2 JUNE: The alumni and faculty of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) have objected to the government's move to make changes in the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) and have decided to meet the Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, on the issue.

Mr Somnath Bharti president of the IIT Delhi alumni association (ITDAA) said they were likely to get an appointment with the Prime Minister early next week. He said before moving the court, they wanted to take up the matter with the PM. "Being an educationist, he can understand our problems and we trust he would look into the matter at the earliest," said Mr Bharti.

The alumni association and the faculty of the IITs have decided to file the public interest litigations (PIL) in various High Courts before 5 June to challenge the changes in the Joint Entrance Examination for IITs. The alumni raised objections over the decision to give weightage to Class 12th marks obtained by the candidate. They said that it would not only increase pressure on the students but also make them more dependent on private coaching. They demanded that the school marks should be considered only as cut-off. The association said that the Indian Science Engineering Eligibility Test (ISIET) would increase pressure on the students at both levels, Class 12th and JEE, to get into IIT. Mr Bharti said the HRD minister, Mr Kapil Sibal, did not keep his promise of not going ahead with the proposed changes if anyone of the seven IITs raises objections. Five of the seven senators have given in writing that they were against the move and the HRD ministry still went ahead with the proposal, Mr Bharti added.

National Duniya ND 03/06/2012

कॉमन इंजीनियरिंग टेस्ट 2014 के बाद हो

नई दिल्ली (प्रेंट)।आईआईटी कानपुर के प्राक्षार्थियों ने कहा है कि कॉमन इंजीनियरिंग टेस्ट सौनी नए प्रारूप के तहत इंजीनियरिंग की प्रवेश परीक्षा 2014 के बाद ती जानी जायेगी प्राक्षार्थियों की राय है कि जो छात्र संयुक्त इंजीनियरिंग प्रवेश परीक्षा 2013 की तैयारी कर रहे हैं उन्हें उसे नए प्रारूप में परीक्षा देना उचित नहीं होगा।आईआईटी कॉलेज द्वारा नए प्रारूप में परीक्षा लिए जाने का निर्णय लिया गया है। जिसे प्राक्षार्थियों ने बहसे संगत हरी मानी है। प्राक्षार्थियों के संग ने एक बायेण में कहा कि प्रारूप के नारे में विभाजन से जनकारी अभी हाल ही कलात्मक में खाली की मिलना संभव नहीं है। प्रारूप के बारे में अभी प्रारंभिक प्रवेश परीक्षा भी शुरू हो गई है। ऐसे में नए प्रारूप के साथ परीक्षा वर्तन के अभाव का केवल उद्धवत्ता होगी। गत 28 मई को मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्री कपिल सिंह की अयोध्या में लूं आईआईटी, एनआईटी और 

■ नए प्रारूप से प्रवेश परीक्षा का आईआईटी कानपुर के 

प्राक्षार्थियों ने किया विरोध

आईआईटी कॉलेज की बैठक में कॉमन इंजीनियरिंग टेस्ट को हरी झंडी दी गई थी। संघ की राय है कि मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय द्वारा नए प्रारूप में परीक्षा लिए जाने की योग्यता एक तरह से आईआईटी कॉलेज का एक पश्चिम निर्णय है। यह निर्णय एक तरह से आईआईटी कानपुर संगठन का सलाह के विरोध है और प्रवेश परीक्षा की नियमावली निर्माण करने के उनके अधिकार के विरोध भी है। संघ के अनुसार इंजीनियरिंग प्रवेश परीक्षा संगठन की संरचना और उसके माध्यम से आईआईटी कॉलेज का निर्णय सही मानने में खराब नहीं बदला।
COMMON TEST IS BREACH OF TRUST: IIT-K FEDERATION

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 2

Terming the IIT Council's decision to hold the engineering entrance test under a new format is a "breach of trust", IIT-Kanpur faculty federation on Saturday said any new system should not be introduced before 2014.

In a statement issued on Saturday, the Federation said, "The examination announced by the HRD ministry is a unilateral decision of IIT Council against the advice and decisions of IIT-Kanpur Senate, which has the prerogative of deciding its admission criteria". The proposal to hold the common test under the new format was cleared at a meeting of the Councils of IITs and NITs on May 28.
II'Tians together to take on Centre’s JEE decision

Vanita Srivastava
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NEW DELHI: II'Tians on Saturday constituted a group that would fight for the autonomy of the institutions, and force the government to roll back its decision to change the JEE pattern next year.

The group — called II'Tians for IIT’s autonomy — is likely to file a PIL in the high court on Monday. The group has also sought time from the PMO to submit a memorandum.

“This is the banner under which we will fight against the government’s decision,” SC advocate Somnath Bharti, resident of the Delhi IIT Alumni Association, said.

The government’s decision poses a threat to the very autonomy of the IITs, he added.

The Institutes of Technology Act and the Statutes of IIT categorically state that the senate holds conclusive authority over the mode of admission and the admission process to IITs.

“Five of the seven Indian Institute of Technology senators had rejected the government’s plan to change the pattern of the exam from 2013. Despite this, it went ahead and changed the pattern. Is this not against the IIT Act?” said a group member.

Meanwhile, at the convocation ceremony of the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, only half the usual number of senators participated. A bare minimum were present to ensure that students are not affected, a faculty member said.
Survey puts four of 8 IIMs among nation’s best B-schools

HT Correspondent

INDORE: Four out of eight IIMs including Indian Institute of Management - Indore ranked among the top eight B-schools in the country, according to a survey conducted by Business Standard in association with IMRB International (Indian Market Research Bureau), a leading market research agency in the country.

Apart from IIM Indore, three other IIMs include Indian Institute of Management - Ahmedabad, Bangalore and Kolkata have also featured in the top eight management institutes list. Other four institutes which made into the Super League 1 category include Management Development Institute, Gurgaon, National Institute of Industrial Engineering, Mumbai, Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar and XLRI, Jamshedpur.

The survey does not aim to rank the institutes, but puts them in 14 hierarchical categories including Super League 1, Super League 2, A1 through A8, and B1 through E4.

From over 2,400 business schools in the country less than 200 schools made it to the final list. India’s management education fraternity has delivered its judgment on the country’s top business schools. The scores have been allotted on two broad parameters -- audit scores and perception scores. The final score is a weighted aggregate which has been used to put the institutes in one of the 14 categories that have been worked out.

The audit module is comprehensive – it takes into account a range of elements such as intellectual capital, infrastructure, admissions and placements, industry interface, governance and the scale of operations, each of which can be measured objectively.

The perception scores take into account the viewpoint of the industry and the alumni. This makes the survey of B-schools totally objective, unbiased and transparent, and helps benchmark the management institutes in addition to providing authentic information to all the stakeholders.

SUPER LEAGUE 1

- IIM, Ahmedabad
- IIM, Bangalore
- IIM, Kolkata
- IIM, Indore
- Management Development Institute, Gurgaon
- National Institute of Industrial Engineering, Mumbai
- Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar
- XLRI, Jamshedpur

SUPER LEAGUE 2

- Great Lakes Institute of Management, Chennai
- IIM, Kozhikode
- Institute of Management Nirma University, Ahmedabad
- Institute of Management Technology, Ghaziabad & Nagpur
- International Management Institute, New Delhi
- Jamnalal Bajaj Institute of Management Studies, Mumbai
- KJ Somaiya Institute of Mgmt Studies & Research, Mumbai
- SP Jain Institute of Management & Research, Mumbai
- SVKM's Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies, Mumbai
UGC to let only top 500 foreign univs enter India

Move To Secure Students From Fake Varsities

Himanshi Dhawan | TNN

New Delhi: In an attempt to rein in fly-by-night operators who have set up shops in India, the Universities Grants Commission (UGC) has made its approval mandatory for all collaborations between foreign and Indian educational institutions. The new regulations approved by the UGC on Saturday give existing institutions six months to get approval.

The UGC has also laid down dual criteria to ensure that quality academic institutions are allowed to run joint degree or twinning courses. Only those foreign institutions will be allowed to collaborate who figure in the top 500 of the Times Higher Education World University Ranking or the Shanghai Jiaotong ranking.

The Indian varsities should have received the highest accreditation grade from the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) to be eligible for a tie-up with a foreign institution.

"We would like only quality academic institutions to establish programmes here to protect students' interests. We will issue a public notice and also put up a list on our website detailing approved institutions so that students are not duped," Prof Ved Prakash, UGC acting chairman, said.

The degrees will be awarded by the Indian universities for their acceptability in India. Institutes failing to abide by the guidelines would be penalized. The UGC is empowered to stop grants in case of public institutions while it can recommend to the Centre withdrawal of recognition in case of deemed universities.

The guidelines came at a time when the Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations Bill) 2010 has been pending before Parliament for the past two years. There has been growing concern in recent years that fake foreign varsities were duping students. Now, over 600 foreign education institutions operate in the country.

The UGC put its plan to allow foreign universities to set up campuses on hold after a large number of members felt that there was need for greater deliberations. "It was felt that there was need for more detailed deliberations with statutory councils from different areas of study, including technical, medical, law and architecture," said Prakash.

A UGC member said that several members questioned the need to allow foreign varsities to function as "deemed universities". Considering the overwhelming view, the decision was deferred.
एआईसीटीई का 324 तकनीकी संस्थानों का नोटिस

किस संस्थान से कितने संस्थानों में मिली खातिर

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■ दिल्ली के 21 दिल्ली के पारा संस्थान आभिमन
■ कहीं जीवन की कमी, कहीं मानदंडों के अनुपालन कार्य नहीं
■ फरीदाबाद के गार संस्थानों के श्री नोटिस

कार्यालय में जानवर दबाने के प्रति दिया गया है। नेटिस के बाद संस्थान संगठनों में खातिर में पहुंचा है। प्रतिक्रियाओं के मुकाम अनुसार संस्थान संगठनों के साथ संस्थान में पहुंचा गया। कमिया को दूर करने में जुटे हैं।

प्रोफेसर व महाकात प्रोफेसरों को भारी कमी

तकनीकी शिक्षा परिषद ने एआईसीटीई संस्थानों के लिये जानकारी दी है।

नियम के साथ इन संस्थानों में कार्यक्रम विकास की तुलना की गई, जो अविलबल संस्थानों में दूर करने, प्रोफेसर व सहायक प्रोफेसरों को दूर करने में जुटे हैं।