Why has the report taken into account only private vehicles? You have placed 100 pages before us without any data and analysis...just because you are IIT does not mean you know everything.

— Justice Swatanter Kumar

We are not the only ones stating what we have. The Mashelkar Committee Auto Fuel Policy Report itself says the number of cars in Delhi is exaggerated. The real number is 60-70 per cent of that on government record.

— Professor Dinesh Mohan, IIT Delhi

A DAY after being criticised by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) for preparing a report that “lacked data and analysis”, IIT-Delhi scientists who authored the study came out in support of it.

The 13-page report concludes that diesel vehicles over 10 years of age form only seven per cent of the city’s total car fleet. Also, their removal will lead to a mere one per cent reduction in Delhi’s PM 2.5 (extremely fine particles that can lodge deep inside lung tissue) load. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRT&H) submitted this report to the green court late last month to press for reversal of NGT’s order to ban all diesel vehicles over 10 years of age in the Capital.

Public transport

The NGT bench hearing the ongoing air pollution matter, however, ticked off the ministry on Monday saying, “Why has the report taken into account only private vehicles? Why hasn’t it considered inter-state diesel trucks and public transport? You have placed 100 pages before us without any data and analysis...just because you are IIT does not mean you know everything,” Justice Swatanter Kumar had said.

One of the authors of the paper “Understanding Role of Transport in PM 2.5 Emissions in Delhi”, professor Dinesh Mohan, on Tuesday said, “We are not the only ones stating what we have. The government-appointed Mashelkar Committee Auto Fuel Policy Report itself says the number of cars in Delhi is exaggerated. The real number is 60-70 per cent of that on government record.”

“...The Central Pollution Control Board data saying 60 per cent of air pollution in Delhi is caused by vehicles over 10 years, which NGT is relying on, goes back to 2010. Also, the study was not done with the most modern scientific methods available. Even a report done by some scientists from the University of Birmingham, by chemical analysing Delhi’s air samples, say that the overall contribution of traffic to pollution in Delhi is 16.2-18.7 per cent. This was in November 2014,” professor Mohan said. Anamita Roychowdhury of the Air Pollution and Clean Transportation programme, Centre for Science and Environment, however, requested for a different perspective on this. She said, “One must not see this through the lens of one or 60 per cent. Burning of diesel produces a toxic cocktail of nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds. This is a class I carcinogen.”

“Also, people have a direct exposure to vehicular emissions as this source of pollution is in our immediate breathing zone. Older cars adhere to old emission standards and our current ‘Pollution Under Check’ norms are extremely lax,” Roychowdhury said.

“A senior government scientist, who did not wish to be named, said, “It is strange how they arrived at the one per cent contribution of 10-year-old diesel vehicles to pollution figure. The only two known sources of Particulate Matter 2.5 are ‘vehicles’ and ‘high temperature combustion’. There are hardly any air pollution-causing industries in Delhi. Those from other states don’t always lead to pollution here cause of varying wind direction.”
बिना डिग्री लिए ही चली गई आईआईटी इंदौर की बैच

आईआईटी इंदौर (इंडियन इंस्ट्रूट्यूट ऑफ टेक्नोलॉजी) की वर्ष 2015 में बैच पासआउट होकर चली गई, लेकिन न दीक्षांत समारोह हुआ न उन्हें डिग्री मिली। प्रबंधन का कहना है जल्द दीक्षांत समारोह की तारीख घोषित कर पास आउट छात्रों को बुलाया जाएगा। संभवतः ऐसा पहली बार हुआ जब कोई बैच बिना दीक्षांत समारोह हुए कैप्स छोड़कर चली जाए। सामान्यतः पास आउट छात्र प्लेसमेंट होने के बाद भी दीक्षांत समारोह में डिग्री लेने के बाद ही कैप्स छोड़कर जाते हैं। लेकिन समारोह में देरी के कारण उन्हें कैप्स छोड़ना पड़ा।

दरअसल आईआईटी इंदौर प्रबंधन नए कैप्स में दीक्षांत समारोह के लिए स्थानीय जगह तैयार कर रहा है। उसका मानना है नई जगह पर हर साल समारोह हो ताकि बार-बार जगह बदलने की दिक्कत न आए। प्रबंधन ने सिमरोल कैप्स का काम 29 फरवरी 2016 तक पूरा करने का टारगेट तय किया है। 2009 में जब आईआईटी इंदौर शुरु हुआ था, तब से अब कैप्स तैयार नहीं हो पाया। दो साल से ज्यादा समय तो सिमरोल में अर्लोट हुई सैकड़ों एक्ड जमीन अधिगृहित करने में लग गया। उसके बाद भी लगातार कोई न कोई विवाद होता रहा। तब तक आईआईटी इंदौर देवी आहिल्या यूनिवर्सिटी के आईआईटी (इंस्ट्रूट्यूट ऑफ इंजीनियरिंग एंड टेक्नोलॉजी) में चल रहा था।
Besides cuts in state funding which is a critical area of concern, the BJP-led government’s overall approach to education is destructive of autonomy, creativity and diversity.

Move towards centralisation

Besides cuts in state funding which is a critical area of concern, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government’s overall approach to education is destructive of autonomy, creativity and diversity. The manner in which the state is intervening in higher education is raising concern among both teachers and students. There are alarming proposals to change the very nature of higher education. The most disturbing is the proposal to revamp the Central Universities Act of 2009 which will require the Central universities to follow a common admission procedure and common syllabus. Even though the UGC and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government have been remarkably similar in their desire to introduce changes in the higher education system, most of the proposals cut across the board, and each has developed its own pattern of knowledge production and reproduction. For example, the University Act (1956) was in response to the need to provide for the educational needs of an emerging India and incorporates a wide college network. The founding ideas of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, on the other hand are quite different from other institutions. The impetus for the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) Act (1966) was to institutionalise the values and vision of “national integration, scientific temper, and humanism.” These Acts have shaped their curriculum, academic ethics, teaching and research. Nullifying these Acts would be a blow against diversity and pluralism as well as against minimum autonomy without which a university cannot function and flourish. It will narrow the space for innovation and creativity in India. Authority and critical thinking will be curbed.

Academic logic

The Ministry of HRD’s idea of “reforms” is an arrogant attempt to standardise higher education and research by introducing a common framework for Central universities.

The most disturbing proposal is the one to revamp the Central Universities Act of 2009 which will require the Central universities to follow a common admission procedure and common syllabus.

UPA’s major proposals got drowned in the Parliament logjam which continued till the last session of the 15th Lok Sabha. Also, there was some debate and opposition within the UPA government which could be another reason why the government is not implementing its agenda. This government is pursuing the reform agenda much more aggressively because they value heterogeneity and competition so that creativity and innovation can thrive. The fear amongst Indian intellectuals is that the new academic regime will result in a sort of academic colonialism where the new Central Universities Act will do the opposite; it aims at centralisation and homogenisation, ignoring the specificities and uniqueness of each university. Each University Act has a specific context and mandate, and each has developed its own pattern of knowledge production and reproduction. For example, the Delhi University Act (1922) was in response to the need to provide for the educational needs of an emerging India and incorporates a wide college network. The founding ideas of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, on the other hand are quite different from other institutions. The impetus for the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) Act (1966) was to institutionalise the values and vision of “national integration, scientific temper, and humanism.” These Acts have shaped their curriculum, academic ethics, teaching and research. Nullifying these Acts would be a blow against diversity and pluralism as well as against minimum autonomy without which a university cannot function and flourish. It will narrow the space for innovation and creativity in India. Authority and critical thinking will be curbed.

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RAMACHANDRA GUHA

WHEN A YEAR ago, Smriti Irani was first chosen as the Union minister for human resource development, I did not share in the general scepticism about her appointment. I thought HRD ministers in UP government, with a string of foreign degrees themselves, display a conspicuous lack of interest in their portfolio. Irani seemed energetic and articulate, perhaps keenest and interest would trump lack of formal academic qualifications.

My pessimism was misplaced. By last year, Irani is by far the most controversial cabinet minister, and with good reason. Stories of her arrogance and rudeness are legion. Her own senior officials have sought transfers to other ministries because they have found it impossible to work with her. Even more distressing has been her treatment of distinguished academicians such as the director of the IIT. She has come across as bullying and overbearing, and an interfering in decisions that lie within their domains of expertise.

Irani's lack of respect for intellectual excellence has also been manifest in some key appointments she has made. Earlier in her tenure, she appointed a certain Anil Kakodkar chairman of the Indian Council of Historical Research. Rao's name was unknown to the community of professional historians; not surprising since he has not published one peer-reviewed paper in his life while his scholarly pedigree is obscure. He was a longstanding fellow of the IIS. Since taking office, he has assured us that the Vedas are the "best evidence" for reconstructing the past, and that the Mahabharata is the "archer for the history of Bharat".

The HRD minister's anti-intellectual instincts are also manifest in another of her appointments, this to the chancellorship of the Banaras Hindu University in Allahabad. University chancellor are either those holding constitutional posts (such as governors and presidents) or senior scholars of distinction. For instance, the great sociologist Andre Beteille has been chancellor of the North-Eastern Hill University in Shillong.

The last chancellor of the Banaras Hindu University was Syeda Hameed, herself a biographer of Aazim and an eminent literary scholar. After the NDA came to power, she was replaced by Zafar Sareshwala, whose contributions to scholarship are even harder to identify than Rao's. Sareshwala is better known as a dealer in luxury cars, and as being very close to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. When his appointment was announced, one senior scholar told the Hindustan Times that "now it seems you just need the right political clout to head reputed institutions".

Over the years, the quality of university education in India has been steadily undermined by political and bureaucratic interference. This has been especially marked in universities under the control of state governments. Forty years ago, Calcutta University, Bombay University and Madras' M.S. University still had some excellent departments. This is no longer so. Solong as the CPM was in power, all major academic appointments in West Bengal were in the hands of party bosses. The Shir Sena endowed a faculty role in Mumbai, and the BJP in Gujarat. The universities were further damaged by the persistent "non-marks" policies, whereby scholars outside the state were discouraged from applying for jobs.

While state universities have visibly deteriorated, some Central universities have maintained reasonable academic standards. Delhi University has good departments of history, sociology and economics. Some of our finest film-makers are alumni of Jamia Millia Islamia's department of mass communications. Both Jawaharlal Nehru University and Hyderabad University have top quality scientists, as well as social scientists on their faculty. These departments and universities would be even better were it not for the dead hand of bureaucratic interference. For some years now, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has been quite weak on the autonomy of Central universities. A UGC chairman appointed under the UPA introduced a "points-based" promotion scheme that all universities had to adhere to. This gave more weight to organising student extracurricular activities and attending seminars than publishing papers in refereed journals.

One hoped that when Irani took office, she would work to make our best universities more autonomous in their choice of curriculum, students and faculty. For the world over, it is only when scholars are in charge of scholarship that real intellectual progress takes place. Instead, the new HRD minister has sought to further centralise an already over-centralised system of higher education.

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The Union government, through the ministry of human resource development, has been trying to create coherence in the higher education arena across the country for the last 65 years, but the fact remains that we are yet to have a clear policy and operative structure till date. While higher education continues to remain in the hands of the government, the complexity has only increased over the years as both the number of students as well as the number of colleges and universities has grown multifold. Alongside, we have also seen the mushrooming of “for profit institutions” run as a “not for profit institutions” — a phenomenon unique to India.

In March 2014, the Economist Intelligence Unit, a forecasting and advisory service from The Economist group, came out with a report entitled, ‘Higher education in the 21st century: meeting real-world demands.’ This was based on a survey sponsored by academic partnerships of 317 higher education practitioners across the world — 36 per cent respondents hailed from North America, 33 per cent from Asia-Pacific and 32 per cent from Western Europe. The majority of these (51 per cent) held teaching/faculty roles, followed by those in research (28 per cent), administrative (27 per cent) and management positions (26 per cent). Of the institutions represented, 52 per cent were public, non-profit institutions, 33 per cent were private, non-profit institutions, 12 per cent were for-profit institutions and 3 per cent comprised other groups, including institutions that had charity and public, for-profit status.

As the report pointed out, the world of higher education is changing quickly and dramatically. In the US and the UK, tuition and fees are increasing while public funding for educational institutions is decreasing. Enrolment is also declining as sceptical students weigh the price of a degree against their odds of employment after graduation.

In the developing world, on the other hand, an expanding global middle class and growing young adult populations are increasing the demand for higher education, especially in key areas of research and vocational study. But as technology expands its access worldwide, online institutions, open-source classrooms and virtual campuses will compete with traditional structures. Higher education may well move from the current producer-driven business model to one that is increasingly shaped by student and consumer demands.

To investigate the ramifications of these changes and identify the steps that institutions are taking to flourish and remain relevant in a new climate, the survey came up with the following findings:

Institutions are courting new student populations:
Global visibility has become a top priority for colleges and universities, with expansion abroad a key goal for many. As many as 33 per cent of the higher education institutions polled say they are increasing the enrolment of international students, targeting a rapidly growing global middle class.

Creative financing needed to balance shrinking budgets:
Fifty-one percent of survey respondents say that reduced government subsidies negatively affected their institutions’ financial standing. 40 per cent cite the shrinking availability of research grants. Especially in the US and the UK, sustainability will depend on rigorous cost-cutting in tandem with finding new sources of revenue. Raising tuition is also a common strategy, but doing so can have negative ramifications for students and schools.

Online learning is the new frontier: Today’s institutions of higher learning have high hopes for technology-based delivery of instruction. Massive open online courses (MOOCs) have both supporters and detractors, but 61 per cent of respondents say that they believe online and distance courses will have the greatest effect on how higher education is delivered in the next five years. One in four respondents expects online and hybrid courses to attract more students and bring more revenue to their colleges or universities, and digital programmatic advertising may allow students to lower their costs as well.

Today, a profound disconnect separates the needs of students and the models of higher education that prevailed in the 20th century. In addition, mobile connectivity has brought in virtual proximity to far-off places that shrinks physical distance: students can take classes wherever they have access to the Internet.

Student preferences are not the only factor challenging conventional models of post-secondary education. Fee structure is also creating financial pressure on foreign universities, hence the desire to expand to China, India and other parts of southeast Asia. The move is altering the playing field. Deployed properly in the right circumstances, online learning can help colleges and universities stay relevant in an increasingly technology-based world, expand their markets globally and streamline business models without building new classrooms and dormitories.

Moving forward, sustaining robust higher education institutions in developed nations as well as developing nations will require a new outlook: fresh sources of revenue, improved cost management, innovative means of delivering higher education and an increased understanding of students’ new needs. A changing landscape will require higher education institutions in India to adapt to stay competitive and to fulfill the mission — social transformation — for which they were founded.

(The writer is a former chairman of UGC and former VC of University of Pune)
SURVIVAL CONCERNS

Independent business schools take issue with IIM degree plan

Over 300 institutions fear that if IIMs offer degree courses, the PGDM they offer will have no takers

By Prashant K. Nanda
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NEW DELHI

Scores of independent management institutes, including XLRI Jamshedpur, Birla Institute of Management Technology (Bimtech) Greater Noida and Management Development Institute (MDI) Gurgaon, are considering joining forces to demand from the government the power to grant degrees.

Some of these institutes also plan to seek deemed university status from the human resource development (HRD) ministry. This is because an institute can offer degree only if it is empowered by law, affiliated to a university or is itself a university.

The reason for their agitation is the proposed Indian Institutes of Management (IIM) Bill, which will allow IIMs to award degrees instead of the post-graduate diplomas in management (PGDM) that they currently offer. Like the IIMs, over 300 independent institutes too award a PGDM and they now fear that their survival will be threatened by the new development.

"It's a survival and identity issue for us," said Harivansh Chaturvedi, director of Bimtech.

"For years, we have been offering PGDM as have the IIMs. But with the circumstances changing, it will pose a huge question in front of us and may affect our standing in the market," he said, adding that dozens of B-schools were assembling in New Delhi on Wednesday to deliberate and prepare a road map for way forward.

J.K. Das, director at Fore School of Management in New Delhi, said with the HRD ministry bringing in legislation to allow IIMs to grant degrees, PGDM schools would be at a disadvantage.

"The equivalence with IIMs and the anchoring benefits will go if the IIM Bill gets enacted and we remain where we are today," Das argued.

He said the move would have wider implications and might affect students in the future. "If not now, maybe in a couple of years, parents will question the relevance of sending children to institutes which offer a diploma and not degree, while paying the same fees and spending the same two years on the course," Das said.

He added that PGDM schools were of the view that the government should give them the power to grant degrees—either through legislation or by amending the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) Act. "If they are ready to give deemed university status, that is also fine," said Das.

Chaturvedi put the onus on the HRD ministry. "HRD ministry can pass a Bill for this purpose."

He suggested a way out: while the top 50 or 100 PGDM schools could be allowed to award degrees, the rest could be directed to obtain university affiliation.

"A final road map will be prepared on Wednesday, following which all B-schools will try to meet HRD ministry officials," said Chaturvedi, adding that there was also the view that a management council be established for regulating B-schools instead of AICTE.

An HRD ministry official, on condition of anonymity, said while the institutes' argument had merit, the good ones should not worry about survival.

The IIM Bill is currently before the cabinet and would be taken to Parliament once it was cleared, he added.
IIM-B ranked 48 on FT’s top 50 executive education schools list

IIM-B debuted at the 57th position in the FT Customized Executive Education Rankings 2015

BS REPORTER
Ahmedabad, 19 May

The Financial Times (FT) Executive Education 2015 Top 50 Rankings saw the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore (IIM-B) at the 48th position.

IIM-B was the only Indian B-school to feature in the top-50 for executive education.

In separate rankings by FT for open and customised executive education programmes, IIM-B retained the 53rd position. It debuted at the 57th position in the FT Customized Executive Education Rankings 2015.

IIM-B was the only B-school from India to be ranked in the open executive education rankings. In the customised rankings, it was followed by IIM-Ahmedabad, which debuted at the 83rd position.

Executive education offers non-degree programmes to corporations and working professionals which are either “customised” according to the requirement for the organisation or “open” to all professionals.

Shyamal Roy, chairperson (executive education) at IIM-B, said: “IIM-B’s position in the Financial Times 2015 rankings reflects our efforts towards achieving academic excellence and positions us as the forefront of imparting world-class business education in India. It encourages us to continue our commitment to design and offer MBA programmes that will cater to the emerging global requirements.”

The FT 2015 rankings are based on the satisfaction of the participants and clients, the diversity of participants and faculty and the schools’ international exposure. Participating schools are marked on various parameters, from preparation to facilities, which accounts for 80 per cent of the ranking.

Commenting on the rankings, Ishwar Murthy, dean-faculty of IIM-B, said, “Our current position in the FT ranking is really the result of two factors: The quality of our faculty, and a process of continuous improvement in the delivery of our executive education programmes. In particular, the latter involved a lot of hard work and planning. I am confident that with the path that we have embarked on, we will do even better in the years to come.”
Decline in Indian students worries UK

THE decline in Indian students choosing to study at UK universities has been flagged up as a worrying trend as a new study said that international students coming here contribute nearly 2.3 billion pounds to the British economy every year.

The report by the business lobby London First and the PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) consultancy quantified the economic costs and benefits of non-EU students from countries like India and called on the UK government to improve the immigration system in their favour.

Nicola Dandridge, chief executive of representative body Universities UK, said that Indian students, the second-largest foreign students group after the Chinese, were being put off by an unwelcome visa regime.

"A number of worrying signs remain – not least a drop in those taking STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) courses and the continued decline in Indian students, following a remarkable 49 per cent drop between 2010 and 2012," she said.

"If the UK wants to fulfill its potential in this growth area, it must present a welcoming climate for genuine international students and ensure that visa and immigration rules are consistent and properly communicated," she added.

"The government will pursue further reforms to tackle abuse while continuing to attract the brightest and the best to our world-class universities," said UK immigration minister James Brokenshire.