New HRD plan to make IIT research hubs

Akshaya Mukul | TNN

New Delhi: The HRD ministry has set up a committee to prepare a roadmap for the implementation of IIT reforms suggested by a panel headed by Anil Kakodkar.

Kakodkar himself will head the new committee, which would consist of Ashok Jhunjhunwala of IIT-Madras, chairperson of standing committee of IITs; Devang Khakhar, director of IIT, Bombay; R K Shevgaonkar, director of IIT-Delhi and one more IIT director to be co-opted later.

A senior ministry official said, "Kakodkar committee gave a comprehensive report on a wide range of issues.

Some recommendations need legislative intervention for which the Institutes of Technology Act would have to be amended. There are academic issues that can be dealt collectively by the IITs. The implementation committee would act as an interface between the ministry and IITs."

Sources said some of the recommendations would be put in place in the next six months. Issues like change in the administrative and fee structure, IITs’ signing annual memorandum of understanding with HRD ministry and financial autonomy would need government intervention.

“The idea is to bring in the changes gradually,” one official said. Most of Kakodkar committee’s report has been accepted by the IIT Council. It had recommended that IITs should be rebranded as primary research institutes that should ramp up PhD students from less than 1,000 students to 10,000 PhD graduates by 2020-25, and the number of IITs from 15 to 20.

Kakodkar has also recommended setting up of research parks at each IIT similar to the one in IIT Madras.

The committee suggested that the government should give an outlay of Rs 1.5 lakh per student to the old IITs, and an endowment grant of Rs 50 crore for each new IIT. The government was asked to provide capital funds at Rs 20 lakh per additional student.

It was recommended that the ministry should pay the full operating cost of education along with a scholarship for all post-graduate – PhD, MS and MTech – and undergraduate students from reserved category and economically weaker sections.

Centre looks abroad in search of new IIT directors

By Ritika Chopra in New Delhi

But the document does not explicitly mention whether the advertisement will appear in the newspapers abroad or renowned international science journals. According to the current practice, the selection is confined to the Indian. Earlier, the nominations were invited from eminent Institutes and people. But after the system was challenged in the Madras High Court nearly three years ago, the IIT resolved to issue nationwide adverts. This is how the process for the IIT directors at Delhi and Roorkee were recently filled.

The "global advertising" decision may soon be put to use by the HRD ministry as IIT Kanpur director Sanjay Dhanoe is set to demit office on June 30, 2012. The IITs are internationally famous...and the Indians settled abroad also should have the opportunity to apply," renowned scientist Goverdhan Mehta said.

But there is a feeling this opportunity should be restricted only to the older IIIs. "The person coming back from another country can play a better role in heading an established IIIT. Being the director of a new IIT would include dealing with the government to acquire land and starting a lot of things from scratch. I don't know if they will be willing to do that," an IIT director said.

To ensure selection of the best-suited candidates, the council also considered the possibility of relaxing the eligibility requirement of 10 years of experience as a professor. This would be done only in the case of an "outstanding candidate."
Tech Grads Swell, Paychecks Stagnate

Growing Talent Pool is a Headache too...

The band of engineering graduates has been swelling forcing fresher salaries at IT firms to stay stagnant.

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*Enrolment figures reflect the total number of students enrolled across all years of study. Technical graduates include people with a four-year engineering degree. Three-year diploma or bachelor’s degree in computer applications. Income source: Nasscom, HCL, Wipro, TCS, WNS, Mphasis, EST, ACTE, and NASSCOM estimates based on past trends in annual enrolment intake and outturn. Source: NASSCOM*

INDIANA UNIVERSITY & SHRUTI SABHARWAL
BANGLADESH

Right in the middle of the placement season in 2019, some of the leading Tier-I engineering colleges in Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Kolkata decided not to sit for any placement tests. In 2008, when his sister passed out of the same college, she was recruited by one of the top IT services companies and was offered an annual package of Rs 3.5 lakh. Three years down the line, Rohith and other aspiring software engineers of his batch were offered the same package to be part of what they considered the most exciting industry.

India’s IT firms recruit an increasing number of fresh graduates every year and is one of the largest white-collar employers. But the offers to campus hires at most Tier-I engineering colleges have remained unchanged since the 2008-09 downturn, stagnating between Rs 3.5 and Rs 4 lakh.

While the demand for IT and IT-enabled jobs remains high, placement coordinators and students say more Indian IT firms have refused to hike fresher salaries. And the clear reason for this growing availability of good talent and a spurt in engineering colleges in the past three years.

India has the largest technical and scientific manpower globally and total graduate outturn—the number coming out of colleges—across sectors has doubled over the last decade enabling greater scalability for customers. The outturn of technical graduates and postgraduates increased to over 7 lakh in FY11 compared to a little over 1.5 lakh in FY10, says Nasscom in its report earlier in the year. Enrolment in technology colleges in the same period increased sharply from 12 lakh to 16 lakh.

"Being able to work for one of the top 5 IT companies is a big thing among students. The entry-level salary in most of the top companies such as Infosys, Wipro, TCS and Cognizant have remained between Rs 3.5 lakh and Rs 3.25 lakh since 2008. Even if they offer the same package in different companies are not going to witness a supply shortage and hence they are not compelled to raise salary packages," he said.

Low entry-level salary, in fact, is the biggest leverage for Indian IT firms to keep costs low. Most maintain a 60:40 ratio of freshers versus locals. Most Indian IT firms have also to retain significant amount in training freshers to get them job-ready. At Infosys for one, freshers go through an average of 3-6 months of training before becoming billable. Nasscom pegs training expenditure per employee in IT-BPO among the highest in the organized services sector.

At (Gate), which would offer annual packages of between Rs 3.1 and 3.5 lakh to campus recruits this year, salaries have gone up marginally over the past three years. Srinivas Randula, Head of HR operations, says that the entry-level salary remains stagnant because companies cannot afford to increase the cost. "It is a cost to the company. We invest on the freshers," he said.

"In fact, fresher salaries have gone up marginally, probably by 5%. Companies invest heavily on training and upgrading talent. Raising entry-level salary can have a cascading effect. Unless there’s a significant change in demand-supply, this trend is likely to continue," says  P. Thirumuruganandham, senior director at Deloitte India.

There has also been an increase in supply of good quality talent cited as major concern by IT firms for over a decade. Three years back, Amrita University in Chennai was the only place where IT firms had almost 1,000 plus offers every year. But now, there are at least six such universities across India where companies have made offers to over 1,000 students in a year. TCS at Satara University, Cognizant at VIT and Amrita University. Infosys at Amrita University and Accenture at Amity are top examples.

"In the last few years, the quality of engineering graduates passing out of premier institutions across India has gone up significantly. We believe that this is because of a variety of reasons: stronger industry-academia linkage programmes, greater student connect with their predecessors through social networks, increased number of seats in reputable institutions, increase in the number of colleges especially those run by corporate houses, and so on," Shanker Srivatsan, Chief People Officer of Cognizant said.

HR experts say Indian IT has lost the power to increase prices and total graduate outturn—the number coming out of colleges—across sectors has doubled over the last decade enabling greater scalability for customers. The outturn of technical graduates and postgraduates increased to over 7 lakh in FY11 compared to a little over 1.5 lakh in FY10, says Nasscom in its report earlier in the year. Enrolment in technology colleges in the same period increased sharply from 12 lakh to 16 lakh.
Common test for MBA admissions

‘C-MAT’ will cover over 2,500 colleges but not the IIMs

SUMEDH RAINA
NEW DELHI, NOV 23

The Government has decided to conduct a common entrance examination for admission to all colleges and institutes recognised by the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) which conducts MBA courses in the country.

The entrance examination, called Common Management Aptitude Test (C-MAT) will however not be applicable to all the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) considering their elitist status.

Sources in the Union Human Resources Development (HRD) ministry said that the moving force behind the scheme is Union Human Resources Development Minister, Kapil Sibal, who has already initiated several reforms in the crucial sphere of education.

There are close to 2,500 AICTE recognised colleges and institutes that impart training in management and the AICTE has already notified them about the ministry’s plan as majority of them are understood to have welcomed the move.

Although the ministry was keen to have the changes in the entrance examination system from the next year, a large number of institutions are believed to have indicated that it would be feasible only from the academic year of 2013 because of logistical problems.

It is felt that with this move, students clearing the C-MAT test, will be able to choose the institution of their choice. Apart from this, the system of using other means like giving capitation fees to get admission into MBA courses will stop.

It is estimated that as of now close to three lakh aspirants sit in examination to seek admission to different MBA courses and many others are compelled to go to private and unrecognised colleges who fleece them on account of their high fee structure.

Under the proposed system, the true merit of an aspirant will come to the fore and he or she will be judged on an all-India basis instead of state-level basis enabling every degree holder to compete evenly on the job market.

In the past, Sibal has been instrumental in getting a system of a common entrance for medical colleges introduced whose aim was to judge students on the basis of merit.

A SUMMER OF FINANCE AT IIMs

Slowdown casts a shadow on summer placements at B-schools, but the scenario isn’t all bleak

Shruti Sahu

S ummer placements at B-schools this season haven’t been as bright as last year, but offers from the finance sector added a silver lining.

"The offiers, compared to last year, were less but recruiters from the finance sector made their presence felt," says Saiyad Mahurkar, placement head, IM-Sambalpur. "But we are happy about the interest that we have received from recruiters, even though it reached lower than last year," Mahurkar adds.

The summer placement process at premier B-schools for students of the first-year post graduate programme comprised four rounds. These included clusters of international investment banks, global strategy consulting, private equity, venture capital, investment management firms, marketing, financial services, advising, FMCG, business development and strategy, and general management.

M S Swaminathan Research Foundation visited the IMC-Calcutta campus, apart from IIM-PGP, which offered a student an internship at the chief investment officer’s desk. While IIMB made the maximum number of offers (13), UBS followed with 12. Other major finance recruiters at IIM-C included Barclays Capital, Credit Suisse, Goldman Sachs, Nomura, Bank of America, Merrill Lynch, Morgan Stanley, HSBC, Goldman Sachs, Citigroup, and French investment bank BNP Paribas. Investment banks Erna Capital and Opus are also on the radar of IIM-Mohali.

"With the current slowdown, it was a very tight market," says Swarup Jha, executive director of Human Resource Development, IIM-C.

IM-Lucknow saw its most successful Day Zero in its history with 14 offers. The placement process started in the first week of May.

"We had a very good response from the recruiters," says Ravi Parikh, director placement, IIM-Lucknow. "Merrill Lynch, Barclays Capital, Citibank (India), Deutsche Bank (India), Goldman Sachs, IFC, HSBC, Morgan Stanley, Nomura, Rothschild and Standard Chartered (Financial Markets) were among the recruiters. In addition, Indian investment banks represented by Ashmore Capital, Edelweiss Capital and ICICI Securities among others also participated.

Apart from finance, consulting firms were also major recruiters at the campus. "Consulting is the next best thing after finance," says Mr. Parikh. The placement process was completed in a record six days for its largest ever batch of 434 students with 533 offers. This year, more private equity and venture capital companies made offers to students, says Parikh.

A student member of the placement committee, S K Banerjee, says, "India is not the only place where the slowdown is visible. To stay competitive we had to adopt an approach where we could attract the best talent, and what helped was the increase in the number of offers from elsewhere."
Cesspool of mess: From deemed to doomed universities

By Ambrose Philip SJ

On November 2, 2011, the Supreme Court declared the University of Delhi as a deemed university under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956. The university was placed under the category of "deemed universities," which are governed by the UGC, a government body, and are subject to its regulations. The Supreme Court’s decision was based on the argument that the university, which was previously a state university, had been declared as a deemed university by the Delhi High Court. The court’s decision was seen as a victory for the university, which had been facing financial and administrative challenges.

The Supreme Court’s decision had a significant impact on the university, as it gained more autonomy and control over its academic and administrative policies. However, the decision also raised concerns among some stakeholders about the quality of education and the standards of deemed universities. The Supreme Court’s decision was seen as a positive step towards improving the quality of education in deemed universities and ensuring that they meet the standards set by the UGC.

Money and influence

A major concern was the role of money and influence in the decision-making process of the Supreme Court. It was argued that the decision was influenced by financial and political interests rather than academic merit. The Supreme Court’s decision was seen as a victory for those who had invested in or had a financial interest in the university. However, the decision was criticized by some who argued that it would lead to a decrease in the quality of education.

The Supreme Court’s decision was also seen as a victory for the government, which had been seeking to increase its control over higher education. The decision was seen as a step towards the government’s goal of controlling the education system and ensuring that it serves the interests of the nation.

Conclusion

The Supreme Court’s decision to declare the University of Delhi as a deemed university was a significant event in the history of higher education in India. The decision had a significant impact on the university, as it gained more autonomy and control over its academic and administrative policies. However, the decision also raised concerns about the quality of education and the standards of deemed universities. The Supreme Court’s decision was seen as a positive step towards improving the quality of education in deemed universities and ensuring that they meet the standards set by the UGC.

University authorities need to be more accountable and transparent in their decision-making processes. The government should ensure that deemed universities are held to the same standards as other universities and that they are not allowed to operate outside these standards. The court’s decision was seen as a victory for the government, which had been seeking to increase its control over higher education. The decision was seen as a step towards the government’s goal of controlling the education system and ensuring that it serves the interests of the nation.

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