Newspaper Clips
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TALENT HUNT GROOMING A FACULTY

‘Home-bred’ PhDs power smaller IIMs

More Doctorates From IIMs, IITs Take To Academics As Pay Packets Rise

Avinash Nair

Harshil Lawalkar is only 27 years old and has joined the faculty at the Indian Institute of Management-Indore. Harshil, a fresh doctoral student from IIM-Ahmedabad (IIMA), is just one example from a growing tribe of young and dynamic PhD students, who have recently passed out of the top IIMs and IITs and have chosen to power the pedagogy in some of the smaller IIMs in the country. The incentives seem to be an opportunity to associate with brand IIM and to be an integral part of the growth story of these budding institutes.

A few years ago, the number of PhDs choosing to join academics was hardly 50%. There were significant numbers of students who used to opt for an opening in the industry. However, after the recession and implementation of the Sixth Pay Commission, which saw faculty salaries rise by 60%, academics has suddenly become more attractive.

The trend is very evident in the recent faculty recruitment at some of the smaller IIMs. While IIM-Indore has recruited around 20 fresh PhDs from the top three IIMs in the last one year, IIM-Shillong has roped in over 50 fresh passouts from IITs (Indian Institutes of Technology). Similarly, others like IIM-Lucknow (IIML) and IIM-Kozhikode too have recruited PhDs from the IIM talent pool.

“In the last one year, we have recruited about 22 faculty. About three-fourth of them are from the top IIMs. All of them are young and energetic,” says N Ravichandran, director; IIM-Indore. Similar is the case of IIM-Shillong. “We have recruited fresh PhDs from IITs and one faculty is in the process of completing his PhD from IITK,” says an official from the institute. This fresh crop of doctoral students passing out of the top IIMs and IITs are proving to be ideal panacea for some of these B-schools that are battling faculty crunch and are more inclined to tap “home-bred” talent.

When asked why fresh doctoral students were being tapped by the institute, Ravichandran quips, “Who else is available? Moreover, there is a talent pool of young fellows who pass out every year from the top IIMs.”

The director’s comment seems to be an extension of what Union HRD minister Kapil Sibal told the Lok Sabha last month. In his reply to the House, Sibal said that about 25% of faculty positions within the IIMs were lying vacant and the government had initiated various long-term measures to attract young people to take up teaching as a career option.

While brand IIM is proving to be an obvious attraction for the doctoral students, the IIMs in turn, have preferred to bank on the same property, as grooming home-bred talent becomes a lot easier for the institutes. “The IIM brand is an obvious attraction. But this attraction is more at IIM-Indore has to offer to the new recruits. Similarly, IIML, which recently recruited a doctoral student from IM-Ahmedabad as faculty, says, “We will prefer taking more of IIM students if we have a choice.”

Prof A Vinay Kumar, chairman of the Fellowship Programme at IIML, says, “In the recent past, our graduating students took jobs in other IIMs, including IIM-K and IIM-B. Perhaps, the students prefer the IIM work environment to start their careers.”

“There are a number of vacancies in these new IIMs. However, the fear of getting into one of the newer IIMs will almost be the same as that of getting into some of the older IIMs like IIM-A. I doubt if there is any lowering of guard as far recruiting quality faculty is concerned,” says Prof Kothy of IIMB.

When asked how the fresh doctoral candidates were making up for their lack of academic experience, Valbh Rhamotya, another fresh doctoral student from IIMA, who has been recruited by one of the smaller IIMs, says, “The time we have spent in the IIM system gives us confidence to handle MBA students. Moreover, as researchers, we come with sharp analytical skills which are a tad above the students. Our knowledge about our individual subjects gives us the required edge in the class.”

We’d love to hear from you. Reach us at clb@timesgroup.com
Economic Times, ND 09-Sep-10  p-3

Biotech authority’s mandate limited to safety & efficacy

GEAC To Be Rechristened As Environment Appraisal Panel Under The Proposed Body

Urmil Goswami
NEW DELHI

The Centre has pruned the mandate of the proposed Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India. The body will now deal only with safety and efficacy issues, leaving decisions on commercialisation of biotech products to respective administrative ministries.

The curtailed mandate appears to be on account of ‘conflict of interest’ and turf wars in the government. The environment ministry had raised issues about placing the biotech regulator under the administrative control of the department of biotechnology. It was argued that the promoter of biotechnology should not be allowed to perform the role of the regulator as well.

The compromise was hammered out between the environment ministry and department of biotechnology. As per this agreement, the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) currently housed in the environment ministry would be rechristened as the Environment Appraisal Panel under the proposed Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India. The panel will be governed by the Environment Protection Act in managing and protecting the environment. The chairman and member secretary of this panel will be nominated by the environment ministry.

The chairman of the environment appraisal panel will report directly to the BRAI chairman. In the event of a difference of opinion between the panel and the regulator, BRAI will pass a speaking order.

Similarly, the expert member on environment in the product ruling committee will be selected from a roster prepared jointly by the environment ministry and BRAI.

The proposed regulatory authority has run into trouble with the health ministry now saying that it had not been consulted. The health ministry stands to lose turf with the proposed regulator subsuming the biotechnology-related functions of the Drug Controller of India.

Though the regulatory authority will now be under the administrative ambit of the department of science and technology, concerns on the conflict of interest still persist.

Traditionally, the same minister heads departments of biotechnology and science, raising the conflict of interest issue yet again. The health ministry’s intervention could reopen the issue. It has been suggested that the regulator be parked in a neutral ministry, as in the case of the Commissioner for Railway Safety.

This office is housed in the ministry of civil aviation. The other option is to place the regulator under the Cabinet Secretariat as in the case of the National Authority, Chemical Weapons Convention.
HUMAN resource development minister Kapil Sibal took the opportunity accorded by the Literacy Day celebrations to take on his critics. Wednesday's celebrations were attended by NAC chairperson and Congress president Sonia Gandhi, who inaugurated 31 newly-constructed Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas. The human resource development minister has been under attack from a section of his party "for being in a hurry".

Mrs Gandhi's participation in the programme, coming close on the heels of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's praise, gave the minister the opportunity to clear the air. Mr Sibal invoked the late Rajiv Gandhi to explain his focus on introducing reforms in the sector.

"If people say that we are in a hurry, then I would like to state that Rajivji had said it in 1985 that this should be achieved in a few months," Mr Sibal said.
One-on-One

It is time to go the e-way

End of days for ‘chalk and talk’ ways of teaching. With the government pushing for the use of Information and Communication Technology at secondary school level, resource limitations in education system will soon be a thing of the past, says Shakila T Shamsu

What is your take on digital inclusion at the secondary education level?

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has to be integrated into academic curriculum and, presently, the government is thinking of including ICT at secondary school level. It is being targeted to cover about 120,000 secondary schools which are in the government sector. But the point remains that unless we bring in ICT into the school curriculum, we can’t achieve the advantage of better teaching-learning and skill empowerment of the learners. At a school level, ICT can be a subject and can also be integrated with subjects like mathematics, science and different languages.

The digital divide in Indian education sector is often said to be a result of economic divide. How can we overcome this challenge?

There is a digital divide within the nation that exists between Information haves and Information have-nots. However, there is a general perception that an economically resourceiful educational institution is able to integrate ICT in classroom teaching or into the education mainstream. With availability of funds, these institutions are in a position to leverage more of these ICT resources. But it is not necessarily so. The question is how to scale it up. Today, we have a lot of low-cost devices, computers that can be optimised in a manner that do not involve much investment. Most schools in our country still use ‘chalk and talk’ method in classrooms. But student will be empowered better if the teacher uses a computer which has multi-point access for the children.

Most Latin American countries that are economically poor are going for similar modes of teaching. This is a question of applying technology in a more innovative manner where we optimise it in such a way that the costs are reduced. There is a little bit of investment that needs to be done at the institutional level also. But funds are not really an issue. In government schools, the government has a policy of enabling schools with ICT.

How can technology be a catalyst for growth of students and organisations?

Technology is a great enabler. It improves the quality of any educational outcome. It also empowers an individual immensely, because in today’s world we are living in an information age. To have information at finger tips is not possible unless we harness technology. In that sense, technology is a great empowering tool for teachers, students, educational institutions and organisations, irrespective of the kind of enterprise they are involved in. Technology cuts across activities it caters to. The more technology is used, the higher are the returns, thereby one is able to invest more into an enterprise.

What are the key innovations in education that the government is stressing on?

Considering that we are in an ICT driven society, we have the National Mission in Education through ICT in higher education domain. The government has felt that educational institutions that are in the higher education domain, i.e., colleges and universities, must be provided a high speed broadband facility so that there is an exchange of knowledge and information at the base level. This takes place in two ways, one is connecting these institutions through Internet and the other is connecting the institutions within themselves for sharing of knowledge.

Next, the focus is on digitalising the content and making it available in an interactive mode and open up a platform for e-learning. The 11th plan document has talked of Wi-Fi campuses. The idea is to move towards an ideal by way of overcoming all resource limitations. The government also welcomes private sector in its participation to improve the education sector, but there cannot be a set timeline for achieving this aim. The idea is to achieve it as early as possible. At this point in time, we should be asked that we are thinking and moving in the right direction.

— As told to Rajarshi Bhattacharjee
Mumbai: Facing an acute shortage of well-qualified teachers, Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) have mooted a proposal for hiring foreign nationals as permanent faculty members.

TOI had first published an article, 'IITs seek quota for foreigners,' on December 27, 2006, following which the HRD ministry allowed the IITs to hire foreign nationals as faculty members in 2007 but only for a maximum period of five years on a contract basis.

But now, with a third of teaching positions lying vacant, the proposal to hire foreign faculty as permanent staff seems like a solution to the teacher shortage. The matter was expected to be discussed at the next IIT council meeting on Friday, IIT officials said.

The move, if accepted, would enable the premier institutes to select foreign teachers up to 10% of their faculty strength and appoint them in permanent posts.

Similarly with expansion, campuses require 1,200-1,500 more faculty members, which translates to recruiting 70 faculty members per year at each IIT. It has been extremely difficult to get quality faculty members, said sources in IITs.

"There are several very good foreign faculty members who can be pulled in. Several faculty members from Eastern Europe are willing to come and teach," said an IIT director.
IAF's digital info network set for takeoff

New Delhi: IAF is now all set to bolster its network-centric warfare capabilities with its state-of-the-art digital information grid. AFNET (air force network) slated to become operational next week. “AFNET, a fully secure and reliable network, will make IAF a true net-centric combat force. It will replace the old communication network set-up using the tropo-scatter technology of the 1990s,” said an official on Wednesday. Linking all major IAF formations and static establishments through a secure wide-area network (WAN), AFNET will accelerate the use of information technology as well as link all field units through a dedicated satellite.

The five nodes of IACCS (integrated air command and control system) being established—the first is already operational in the western sector facing Pakistan—will also ride the AFNET backbone, integrating all ground-based and airborne sensors and air defence weapons. The automated IACCS will enable quick transfer of data from low-level transportable radars, high-power static radars and medium-power radars. TNN

Web magic: Internet can help fight the blues

Washington: Internet can help teens to fight depression, say a study by an Indian-origin researcher.

Suvra Sathi of the University of Sydney and his colleagues found that interactive online mental health resources and traditional counselling can help improve the mental health of teenagers. The study assessed the effectiveness of online mental health resources (static and interactive), including tools used to assist rural and remote young people suffering from mild to moderate depression.

The study, titled “Internet Self-Help for Depression”, focused on evaluating current online mental health resources to demonstrate their effectiveness as both standalone tools and tools used in conjunction with traditional therapy. Each of these innovative online approaches to the prevention and management of mild to moderate depression are in use globally.

“The independent and combined effectiveness of online mental health help tools being accessed by adolescents with education rates as online support groups had not been investigated in combination with face-to-face cognitive behavioral therapy. The findings have been published in Journal of Technology in Human Services, a

BRINGING BACK THE SMILEY
Soon, a machine to read people’s mind

London: Scientists who have discovered a way of translating people’s thoughts into words, say that a mind-reading machine is on the anvil.

An international team, led by Bradley Greger of Utah University, has been able to translate brain signals into speech using sensors attached to the surface of the brain for the first time.

The experimental breakthrough, which is up to 90% accurate, offers a way to communicate for paralysed patients who cannot speak and could eventually lead to being able to read anyone’s thoughts, the Daily Telegraph reported.

“We were beside ourselves with excitement when it started working. It’s just one of the moments when everything came together. We have been able to decode spoken words using only signals from the brain with a device that has promise for long-term use in paralysed patients who cannot now speak.” Greger said.

The team achieved the experimental breakthrough when it attached two button-sized grids of 16 tiny electrodes to the speech centres of the brain of an epileptic patient who had part of his skull removed for another operation to treat his condition.

Using the electrodes, the scientists recorded brain signals in a computer as the patient repeatedly read each of 10 words that might be useful to a paralysed person: yes, no, hot, cold, hungry, thirsty, hello, goodbye, more and less. #n

Enter the world of digital natives

Tech-savvy youngsters are learning things on their own by being a part of the digital world and social networking sites offer them a democratic platform to share their views and speak their minds.

Anu Bhambhari

Times change. Generations change. But, one thing that never changes is the process of learning. From reading books in the past to using technology to teach students, even teachers have been changing their methods of teaching. But, now, students don’t really depend on the teachers to enlighten them about the world. Easy availability of technology has made it possible for them to learn things on their own. Today, there is an information explosion, more so due to the rising tech-savvy Children. Today, students do not need to sit in a classroom or buy expensive books to understand the concepts.

Sharing information on the Internet, especially on social networking sites, is how they connect with each other and know what’s hot and what’s not. These days, people, mostly youngsters, make sure they have a digital ID. They are being present on not one, but all the prime social networking sites, apart from having a blog and an email ID. So influenced is this generation by the blog that it won’t be an exaggeration to call it the Facebook generation. That’s how Professor MM Pant, former Pro-Vice-Chancellor, KIITOU, and presently in the faculty of IIT Kanpur and today a world-renowned academician describes social media enthusiasts today.

He observes that if you go by the number of users registered on social networking sites like Facebook, you can tell the most populated planet is the internet. The experience of this huge chunk of population on and usage of the social media applications by these digital natives indicates a change in the way communication is changing. From cyber literacy towards ICT literacy, Sandeep Maheshwari, Founder & CEO, MyInnovation, states, “It is imperative for students today to concentrate on innovation and open themselves to learning beyond textbooks, so that they can be ahead of their competitors in the real world.”

Yet, in an age when there is an abundance of information through technology, who draws the line here? How much is enough and who knows what’s right information for the young, impressionable minds? No one, say experts.

Continued on page 12
The power of research is supreme

To achieve long term growth and leadership in a knowledge economy, it is very important to support new knowledge creation. This can be achieved by scaling up research output of all educational institutions.

Innovation in education

Time to bridge the digital divide

At a time when technology rules the roost, digital divide can be transformed into a digital opportunity by giving top priority to development of information and communication technology.

Times of India ND 09/09/2010

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Skills do make careers

Vocational education should not be considered as the last option for under performers, but as mainstream career opportunity

Roy Newey

My grand dad was a plumber, with no education, qualifications. He was just the person everybody turned to when the tap leaked, the gutter rotted and the drains backed up. And my dad wasn’t just a plumber, he was a master plumber, time served, the best operated joints in Liverpool. My big brother, he is not just a plumber, time served, he has studied and become a heating and ventilation engineer and a multi millionaire as all plumbers are three days in (UK). His education in the vocation not only helped him to be successful but also master the skill to do well for himself.

The skills agenda in India is one of mammoth proportions requiring much convergence and alignment. India with its unique demographic opportunities and economic possibilities finds itself uniquely placed compared to the other growing nations. My engagement with the Indian policy making in the so many years has demonstrated certain facts clearly: the Indian Government’s seriousness to reap the demographic dividend is evident from its ambitious 500 million skilled work force by 2022 target. An array of policy initiatives like the National Rural Livelihood Mission demonstrates the desire to address both quality and quantity. The Indian industry, on its part, has shown great leadership and taken responsibility of training youth on global benchmarks either through own initiatives or organisations.

Sadly we have nothing that large numbers in India have no access to training or education while a considerable large number have access but no quality in vocational skills. This makes it all the more important to have a system that ensures equitable balance between skills and education. As an economy trending towards services not only for domestic, but also global market entry level aptitude assessment. Vocational skills ‘master programs’ at the time of entry into an institute could ensure they do not fall into the trap of a wrong choice which they have to then pursue lifelong.

Dual degree programs which are emerging from the marriage of vocational qualification and higher education, with a modular training approach are a great solution for the Indian market.

The pedagogy of training—making it more practical and less theory—linked with industry project work will go a long way in making the candidate’s job ready. Amongst this all, another critical need which needs immediate solution is in a lack of trained teachers and trailblazers. This needs to be looked into on an urgent basis.

The UK India partnership is covering a lot of ground around these areas to ensure the quality of input is enhanced and learner benefited for life.

—The writer is International Director of AIL, Board Member of UKIBC
The education system has reached a point where industry-academia collaboration is no longer just a desirable thing, but an absolute imperative. And, it is the government that can play a key role in creating an environment for team work.

Dr Manish Gupta

Industry-academia collaboration has been a much talked-about topic for a considerable time. There have been efforts, mostly at organisational levels, to build a strong relationship between businesses and academic institutions in India. However, a truly sustainable model has so far been elusive. We have reached a point where industry-academia collaboration in this country is no longer just a desirable thing but an absolute imperative at all levels. This is needed to solve problems through disruptive innovation as well as to prepare students better for jobs.

Economic liberalisation, better use of technology, and a unique demographic dividend have spearheaded India's growth, which is expected to continue well into the next several decades. The growth has given rise to a plethora of interesting challenges that are unique to this country and solutions have to come from within. For example, the number of customers that Indian telecom companies cater to, is unheard of in other geographies, except for China. A company providing the IT infrastructure to such a telecom company, which in turn is offering services at really low prices to consumers, has to deal with challenges never seen before and develop innovative solutions.

The industry should be posing and academia should be ac-
In countries like India that are inter-connected with diversity in socio-political and economic front, education has to take a micro-focus while adopting a macro-focus. While it is necessary to align states and regions with the larger national visions, it is equally important to understand the special needs, unique strengths and discrepancies of each region. Academicians, policy makers and industry experts agree that the Indian education sector has taken significant steps particularly in the last 15 years. While India is setting sights on internationalising its education system, it is still struggling with problems of inclusiveness and quality even at the primary school level.

This is where innovation can play a major role and help produce motivated students to the wide and varied challenges in the education sector. "Innovation can be instrumental in bridging out the discrepancies and in uphill ground in the education sector. And this uphill ground is imperative if India as a nation wants to resolve the goal of knowledge economy," said Dr Atul Agrawal, chairman of board of governors, IIT Delhi. Agrawal was speaking at a forum "Trends in Education", recently organized by Education Times.

The event was presided over by the Institute of Management Technology in association with "Think Out of the Box" and supported by "Asia and Y-Teampower.com".

The seminar saw in-depth discussions on the role of innovation in education, bridging the digital divide and internationalisation of higher education. The seminar was held in the presence of the senior academics and industry leaders who have undertaken the issues of fundamental and basic research as well as incremental and advanced research. "There is urgency towards establishing world-class innovation universes that have a pronounced mandate on large-scale research initiatives. This is especially because at present, universities and high-end research facilities are mainly confined to the IITs, IIMs and AIIIS (All India Institute of Medical Sciences)."

Agrawal stressed the need for universities to create an environment where research and education will be one and the same. "The challenge we need to think out of the box is how to bridge the gap between research and teaching. We need to bring research to teaching and teaching to research," he stated.

The seminar was attended by over 100 students and faculty members from various institutions in India. The seminar was moderated by Dr Sanjay Tiwari, associate director, Information Technology, IIM Bangalore. The seminar was also attended by Dr. Arun Seth, professor, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, who spoke about the importance of innovation in education.

The seminar was part of a series of events organized by Education Times to promote innovation in education. The next event in the series will be held in February and will focus on the role of technology in education.

Times of India, ND 09/09/2010

THINK OUT OF THE BOX

At a recent forum—Innovation in Education—organised by Education Times, academicians, industry leaders and policy-makers came together to share their views on why innovation is the need of the hour.

by A Correspondent

The seminar saw in-depth discussions on the role of innovation in education, bridging the digital divide and internationalisation of higher education. The seminar was held in the presence of the senior academics and industry leaders who have undertaken the issues of fundamental and basic research as well as incremental and advanced research. "There is urgency towards establishing world-class innovation universes that have a pronounced mandate on large-scale research initiatives. This is especially because at present, universities and high-end research facilities are mainly confined to the IITs, IIMs and AIIIS (All India Institute of Medical Sciences)."

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Times of India, ND 09/09/2010

Short-staffed IITs seek foreign help

Mumbai: Facing an acute shortage of well-qualified teachers, Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) have mooted a proposal for hiring foreign nationals as permanent faculty members.

TOI had first published an article, 'IITs seek quota for foreigners', on December 27, 2006, following which the HRD ministry allowed the IITs to hire foreign nationals as faculty members in 2007 but only for a maximum period of five years on a contract basis.

But now, with a third of teaching positions lying vacant, the proposal to hire foreign faculty as permanent staff seems like a solution to the teacher shortage. The matter was expected to be discussed at the next IIT council meeting on Friday. "IITs officials said.

The move, if accepted, would enable the premier institutes to select foreign teachers up to 10% of their faculty strength and appoint them in permanent posts.

Similarly, with expansion, campuses require 1,200-1,500 more faculty members, which translates to recruiting 70 faculty members per year at each IIT. It has been extremely difficult to get qualified faculty members, said sources in IITs.

"There are several very good foreign faculty members who can be pulled in. Several faculty members from Eastern Europe are willing to come and teach," said an IIT director.
First of many? Ohio bans outsourcing

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: Unrelenting economic woes in an election season = populist measures. The state of Ohio, whose Democratic governor Ted Strickland is seeking reelection later this year, is the latest American politician to take this low road by banning outsourcing of government IT and back office projects to offshore locations.

Although Strickland's order is not India-specific and arises from a flap relating to a call centre in El Salvador, the development is expected to hurt Indian companies such as Infosys, Wipro, and Patni, which routinely win multi-million dollar state-level government contracts. Sharp reactions to Strickland's move from Infosys and India's IT lobbying group Nasscom suggested Ohio had struck India Inc where it hurt, and there is concern about whether other states will follow suit.

In the executive order issued last month, Strickland cited "pervasive service delivery problems with offshore providers, including dissatisfaction with quality of their services and that services are being provided offshore". The ban came after it was discovered that Parago Inc, a Texas-based company hired by Ohio Department of Development to monitor a rebate program for new energy-efficient appliances, used call centre workers in El Salvador.

►California tried earlier, P 31
Delhi is also PhD capital of the country
West Bengal Ranks Second; Maharashtra Has Highest No. Of Unis But Is 3rd On List

Hemali Chhapia | TNN

Mumbai: Delhi may be home to only a few universities (20), but that has not stopped it from emerging as the PhD capital of the country. In the last decade, from 1998 to 2007, Delhi has produced over 17% of the total doctoral theses in India. West Bengal is a distant second at 11.9%, followed by Maharashtra, which despite having the largest number of varsities in the country (96), merely contributed 8% to the PhD pool. These figures are based on a sample survey.

This is the first time in India that researchers sifted through thousands of theses lying in university library vaults to tabulate and analyze the country's body of research. The paper — researched by the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) at Bangalore — is a pointer to what thousands of doctoral fellows in the country have been exploring and producing on thickets of bound paper. In fact, it took Anitha Kurup, an associate professor at NIAS, and Jagdish Arora, director, Information and Library Network Centre, who received a grant from the Tata Consultancy Services — a year to get all the raw data in place. In their report, Trend in Higher Education — Creation and Analysis of a Database of PhDs in India, they have principally recommended that a single agency should draw up a database on PhDs, and also assimilate the profiles of doctoral fellows.

As observed in the report, two-thirds of all the PhDs have been awarded to males, and across genders, the attrition rate stands at 30%-one out of two people who register for the hallowed PhD degree, manage to reach the finishing line. Delhiites contributed the most, producing 2,891 PhDs in the field of medicine, followed by research in pure sciences.

Even in terms of the subjects chosen, there has been a noticeable shift in trends. While the largest amount of research has been carried out in pure sciences, in recent years humanities and social sciences have become the most popular discipline that is being currently explored.

There have been some other interesting changes in the pecking order. "The growth in agriculture is seen from the year 2000, when it overtook other disciplines such as engineering and technology and medicine. But the interest in the field tapered off towards the end of the period, with the numbers falling below engineering and technology in 2007," the report noted. Disciplines that have consistently recorded lower numbers are mostly professional in nature.

Speaking to TNN, Kurup said that as India competes in the information age, PhDs are markers as they contribute to knowledge. "However, I would attach a rider to my research, which is that the number of PhDs has nothing to do with the quality of work we are producing. But first, it is essential to know where our PhDs are being produced and who is bringing them out," she added.

If one were to compare the research output from local universities, Delhi again performs best in terms of PhDs produced annually in each state (294.7), followed by Haryana (312.4) and Uttar Pradesh (283.3).

Like Rajiv, I’m in no hurry on edu reforms: Sibal

Rajiv had said we need to improve quality of education and in months. Twenty-five years have elapsed and we are at the same stage. Now people say we are in a hurry. Kapil Sibal | HRD MINISTER

Gandhi paid tributes to her late husband for his “vision” that has made JNVs a success story providing quality education to children from economically and socially weak sections. "It is a matter of great satisfaction that Navodaya Vidyalayas have lived up to expectations,” she said.

At the same time, she expressed concern as to why other government schools were not as good as Navodaya Vidyalayas. She pointed out that one-fourth of the teachers are absent in these schools and while children did not take admission here, many of them, especially from the weaker sections, dropped out.

The 31 recently constructed buildings of JNVs are in states across the country — Kerala, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra.
Statesman, ND 09-Sep-10  p-1

MOVE DISCRIMINATORY, SAYS NASSCOM

US state bans outsourcing

WASHINGTON, BANGALORE, 8 SEPT: In what is feared may be a portent of things to come, the US state of Ohio has banned outsourcing of government Information Technology and back-office projects to offshore destinations like India, a move that comes on the heels of the steep hike in visa fees that has hit Indian IT firms and IT professionals.

Running behind in opinion polls ahead of gubernatorial elections in November, Ohio Governor Ted Strickland, of the Democratic Party, who until recently was going out of his way to woo Indian companies, issued the executive order banning outsourcing last week, arguing that this undermines economic development and has unacceptable business consequences for his state.

"Outsourcing jobs does not reflect Ohio values," Mr Strickland said in a statement after he signed the executive order.

Reacting to the order, the Indian IT sector, which gets 60 per cent of its export revenue from the US, termed the move as discriminatory and said it amounts to a trade barrier. The move, which comes ahead of US President Barack Obama’s visit to India in November, follows a controversial legislation that increased H-1B and L-1 visa fees, hitting India’s over US$ 50 billion IT industry.

The Indian industry will take up the issue with its US counterparts and seek the government’s support to flag it with the American authorities. "Nasscom is leading a delegation to the USA later this month and will be taking this up with relevant officials in the US," the apex body of the IT and ITES industry said in New Delhi. "Ohio’s ban on outsourcing can only be viewed as counter-productive to the US government thrust on reducing public deficit... It only reinforces our stand on discrimination," it said.

Nasscom said it would not be surprised if more such "electoral rhetoric" follows in the run-up to the November elections to the US Congress and Ohio Governorship.

While some individual Indian IT leaders preferred to wait and watch on the Ohio government’s move, arguing that the Indian IT industry’s dependence on US government business was limited, as a leading IT professional put it, more than the quantum of damage, it is the posturing which worries the industry which believes that it is purely political in nature.

The fear is that other states in the USA could take a cue from Ohio and follow suit, a move which could be detrimental to Indian software sector in general.

Of equal concern is that fact after the recent economic crisis, a large number of Indian software companies had begun to woo US government agencies for business believing that these would prove longer lasting. The idea was that it would be better than depending fully on the private sector for business in the USA.

In 2007, TCS, India’s largest IT company, said it would build its North American Delivery Centre in Milford, an Ohio city, after Mr Strickland offered about US$ 19 million in tax credits and other incentives. TCS now has some 400 employees working here.

Signalling an apparent change of heart, Mr Strickland said Ohioans have been among the hardest hit by more than a decade of unfair trade agreements and the trickle-down economic policies that promoted off-shore jobs at the expense of Ohioans who work for a living.

USA reacts on N-liability Bill

WASHINGTON, 8 SEPT: The USA says it will look to India to see what "changes" can be made to the Nuclear Liability Bill just passed by Parliament in the wake of concerns over making suppliers of equipment also liable in the event of a nuclear accident. "We continue our discussions with the Indian government on this issue," state department spokesman Mr PJ Crowley said in the first reaction by the Obama administration to some controversial provisions in the Bill. (see page 5)
Govt hints at lapses in CVC findings, wants re-test

statesman news service

NEW DELHI, 8 SEPT: While rejecting the findings of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) which claimed sub-standard quality of material being used in some of the Commonwealth Games projects, Delhi government has requested the anti-corruption watchdog to carry out a "re-check", indicating lapses in its procedure to lift samples.

Reacting to the CVC report, PWD principal secretary, Mr KK Sharma, said his department had conducted a series of "standard tests" in renowned institutions to check the quality of construction of five major projects but did not find anything wrong in them.

"Now we have requested the CVC to take the samples again and conduct re-test as our tests showed that there was nothing wrong in the quality of construction," said Mr Sharma.

An assessment report prepared by CVC’s Chief Technical Examination Wing in July found large-scale procedural violations, including corruption in 16 different projects being carried out by various government departments.

Six of the projects out of the 16 mentioned by the CVC were implemented by the PWD where the watchdog found sub-standard quality of work.

"We carried out the tests in renowned institutions and the test report did not indicate any compromise with quality of material or overall standard," said Mr Sharma, adding that he has directed his officials to prepare a detailed report which will be submitted to the CVC.

"The findings of the various tests done by us have already been sent to the CVC. Now it is up to them to decide on the issue," he said.

Meanwhile, top government official said any enquiry by the CVC's Technical Examination Wing is preliminary in nature and no detailed probe has been carried out by it so far.

"In all our projects, third party certification is a must and institutions like IIT, Delhi and IIT, Roorkee are carrying out third party quality checking. So, there is little room for any compromise on quality," said PWD chief engineer, Mr AK Sinha.
Google’s crown jewels: Indian trio

MIKE SWIFT
SAN JOSE

Sept. 8: Like few other people, Google’s Ben Gomes knows what interests the world.

Gomes is a software engineer in charge of improving what you see on Google. From one of the most important but little-known offices in the Googlesphere in Mountain View, Gomes is responsible for shaping the automatic suggestions users get as they begin their search query, and the few lines of text and links they get back, which Google calls “the snippet.” He sees the digital torrent of Google’s 1 billion daily search queries.

The interaction between user and search engine defines what Google is all about and company co-founder Larry Page and Sergey Brin have put Gomes in charge of improving that dialogue.

“I think of Ben as our diplomat,” said Marissa Mayer, Google’s vice president of search products and user experience. “It’s Google’s, search. There’s a lot of live personalities, so there’s a lot of opinions, and Ben is the reasonable one that can help build the bridges. When we look back, there was a point where Larry and Sergey really felt like we needed a named a search guy. And there was only one natural choice: what Lisa has back in 2002 — and that was Ben.”

Despite the wave of Google products like Gmail, Google Calendar, and Google Maps, Google’s touchscreen remains search, which according to estimates by the research firm IDC accounted for 72.5 percent of Google’s $6.8 billion in revenue in the second quarter. The history of Google search can be told through the evolution of technical features like the snippet, but it is also the story of the dogged behind-the-scenes work of engineers like Gomes, who is little known outside the Google community.

Gomes shares an office with four other engineers, including one he has known since they were 13-year-old friends in Bangalore, India — Krishna Bharat, the creator of Google Trends, and Pratap Saha, the creator of Google Insights.

In Bangalore, Gomes and Bharat were similarly turned toward science and math by one teacher at their high school chemistry teacher. As teenagers in the 1990s, they competed to teach themselves programming on a ZX Spectrum, a boxy little British computer similar in appearance to a Commodore 64.

“We were trying to write code without any programming information, just trying to guess,” said Gomes, now 41. “Trying to teach himself electronics as a seventh-grader, the only book Gomes could find was a college-level textbook. “I started at that book for three weeks, hoping that somehow I would understand something there. But it was way beyond me.”

Growing up in Bangalore, Google’s main access to information was the two books a month he and his mother, a school teacher, could each borrow from the British Council library.

He was the first in his family to attend college. When Gomes talks about his passion for working on products that can open the world’s store of knowledge, it’s easy to see the echo of a kid growing up in a poor nation, trying to teach himself computer programming without a manual — or a Google to explain it.

Because of Google’s tremendous growth since 2002, the title “search guru” is no longer relevant to how the company manages search. What Google does now is oversee what computer scientists call “UI,” or user interface. In refining snippets and tracking user habits, Gomes and the teams of search engineers oversee what could be the world’s largest psychology experiment.

For a large share of its traffic, Google is constantly experimenting with small parts of how it displays search results to see whether those tweaks improve people’s experience. To speed users to their results a few milliseconds faster, for example, Google does lab studies to track how users’ eyes travel on a page, so it can place information in the best spot on the page.

That part of it, he says, is the brain works, and how the conscious and subconscious parts fit together, and help us build a better product. I find it really fascinating,” said Gomes, whose doctoral thesis was on modeling computer-to-mouse human interactions.

Google’s trademarked PageRank system, first developed by Page and Brin at Stanford, generally gets the credit for making Google a search juggernaut. PageRank’s innovation was to index and rank search results based on the number of links to other sites that linked to a website. But Gomes says there’s another half of Google search that has been given too little credit. That process is based on a long-existing concept in computer science called “Keyword In Context,” which automatically creates a few lines of text that shows users the context of the keyword they Googled.

“Every other search engine at the time you gave the first two lines on the page. What Google did was it showed you the lines on the page that were relevant to your query,” Gomes said. “And you might think this is a small change, but it is so much harder to do.”

Not only does Google have to find the most relevant Web pages from a query, but it must then search within those pages and automatically build a custom snippet that shows how the keyword occurred on the page. Gomes and Bharat were involved in two of the first three patents assigned to Google. But they share the modesty of office, indistinguishable from surrounding offices, with other senior Google search engineers — Matt Cutts, who heads Google’s anti-spam efforts; Amit Singhal, whorecently served as head of Google’s research in New York; and Ben, who remains in charge of the algorithm — Google’s crown jewels.

Singhal, one of the engineers involved in the 2,000-person work force who carves the title Google Fellow, scoffed at the suggestion that it is one of the most important roles at Google, but it would be hard to find a more crucial role in the Google game.

It doesn’t look different from any other Silicon Valley office — a little cluttered, photos of kids and relatives, a small telescope that points toward the world’s best engineers and scientists in Google’s courtyard below.

“I’m always honored to be in that office,” said Cutts, a native of Kentucky. “The guy who invented Google News is right behind me and can ask him questions, and Amit basically leads all the search ranking efforts, and Ben is all the front end and the UI and the things that people actually see, and I just sort of like, ‘Wow.’” — Matt Cutts, who shares an office with the trio.

The four engineers, who describe themselves as psychiatrists, say they share an office because it’s better for brainstorming — and because it avoids some of the catty debates about each other’s projects. That, they said, is a problem for Bharat and Gomes found that way from Bangalore to Silicon Valley separately.

After earning his doctorate in University of California, Berkeley, Gomes was working at an online shopping site for a few years before joining Google in 1999, trying to make its Java software run faster. Bharat tracked down his boyhood friend and told him about a startup he’d joined in Mountain View. “That,” Bharat believed would become the world’s top search engine.

Google, who lives in Palo Alto, California, hasn’t completely abandoned India and California outdoor lifestyle of running and rock climbing, “I don’t sleep much,” he said. Instead, he’s a lover of reading, and he writes and debuting politics, and he believes writing is not an art that can be taught. That’s different from creating art. “You need something coming alive in front of you, and it is really an art of“ creating things,” said Gomes of programming. “People working on computers are actually creating in a certain way, and I don’t think that captures that joy of creation.”

This summer, Gomes’ girlfriend surprised him with a gift she’d found on eBay — a ZX Spectrum. “It was,” he said, “the most awesome present.”
Oracle offered
Hurd $1m pay

New York, Sept. 8: Oracle Corp. offered its new president, Mark Hurd, former head of Hewlett-Packard Co, a salary of $950,000 and a bonus of up to $10 million for fiscal 2011, plus stock options.

Oracle, the world’s No. 3 software maker, named Hurd co-president on Monday, a month after he stepped down from HP following a scandal involving expense reports and a female contractor.

On Tuesday, HP sued Hurd, asking a California court to block him from taking a job with a rival to whom he could reveal HP trade secrets. Oracle and HP compete in the server computer market.

As well as the salary and bonus, Hurd's offer letter, filed with regulators on Wednesday, said he would be granted an option to purchase 10 million Oracle common shares after the first board meeting following his hire date.

In addition, Hurd can buy 5 million Oracle common shares each year for the next five years, according to the filing.

Hurd on Monday was also named an Oracle director. The filing said the company expects he will be nominated to stand for election to the board at the annual shareholder meeting on October 6.

At Oracle, the 53-year-old Hurd will be responsible for sales and marketing, consulting and Oracle’s global business units, according to a document Oracle filed with regulators.Oracle acquired Sun Microsystems last year, putting it in competition with HP in the server market. — Agencies
FOREIGN NATIONALS MAY JOIN AS IIT PERMANENT FACULTY SOON

The IIT's may soon be employing foreign nationals as permanent faculty members in an effort to overcome shortage of quality teachers. Sources stated that the proposal was likely to come up for discussion at the IIT council meeting scheduled to take place on Friday. The proposal aims to enable the premier engineering and technology institutes to appoint foreign teachers on permanent positions, up to 10 per cent of the faculty strength.

In 2007, the IITs had been granted permission to hire foreign nationals as faculty members, but only for a maximum period of 5 years on a contract basis.

As reported by this paper earlier this week, the IITs face a massive shortage of faculty with IIT Kharagpur having the maximum vacancies at 299, followed by IIT-

Bombay with 222, IIT-Roorkee with 194, IIT-Madras with 138 and IIT-Delhi with 78. While there are 69 vacancies in IIT-Kanpur, 65 in IIT-Guwahati and 48 in IIT-Ropad.

The proposal points out that the United States varsities have benefited by attracting faculty from across the globe. It was also felt that the presence of foreign faculty would expose graduating students to globally distinguished professors and help reduce brain drain.

Appointment of foreign faculty could also give a boost to IITs' plan to enrol foreign students for the post-graduate programme. IITs have already requested the Union HRD ministry to enrol foreign students to the extent of 25 per cent of the total student strength.

The HRD ministry had recently permitted IITs to hire persons of Indian origin (PIOs) as permanent faculty after an initial vetting process. The IIT council meeting could also finalise plans to set up 'centre of studies' devoted to a foreign country with a view to develop expertise on countries of strategic importance.

The recommendations of the Prof. Acharya Committee on streamlining and rationalising JEE examinations and the prospects of a two-tier examination process will also be discussed at the meeting.
Indian IT cries foul after Ohio order

Yashwant Rai/HT Correspondents
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WASHINGTON/NEW DELHI/BANGALORE: The country’s software industry has slammed as discriminatory a decision by the US state of Ohio to ban offshoring of information technology projects.

The National Association of Software and Services Companies (Nasscom) termed the move as “electoral rhetoric” while industry watchers linked it to Congressional elections due in November.

“It is imperative that the focus on free trade remains strong,” Nasscom said, adding the Ohio ban reinforced the industry’s stand against discrimination.

The Ohio government’s decision comes shortly after the US Senate last month approved a hefty rise in IT-related visa fees. US accounts for 61 per cent of India’s $37 billion (nearly Rs 1.74 lakh crore) IT exports.

The ban came after a firm was found to have used call centres in the Dominican Republic and El Salvador.

“Outsourcing jobs don’t reflect Ohio values,” Governor Ted Strickland had said while issuing the August 6 order.

There was no word on whether any company funded by Ohio was offshoring to India.

We are concerned with the recent news from U.S. about banning offshore outsourcing by Ohio State.

Kris Gopalakrishnan
CEO & MD, Infosys

OBAMANOMICS? THE TIMING IS CRITICAL

The order comes at a time when Indian info-tech majors are looking to US government contracts to boost profits.

What is offshoring?
The practice of relocating business processes from one country to another. In this case the term refers to Indians working in India on a US government IT project.

What is the Ohio offshoring issue all about?
The Ohio state of the US banned outsourcing government IT projects to offshore destinations. Governor Ted Strickland passed the executive order citing service delivery problems and dissatisfaction with quality of services provided by such companies.

How can it impact Indian

infotech companies?
Traditionally, outsourcing contracts Indian IT majors have come from the banking, finance, telecom and retail sectors in the US. In the wake of the recession, they expect a major chunk of revenue to come from government IT spends. If other states follow suit it could affect Indian IT majors’ earnings.

What is the US government’s IT spending?
The US federal government budgets an IT spending of around $86 billion in non-military areas including health, security, treasury, transport, energy and commerce.
Indian Express, ND 09/09/2010 p-1

Govt, industry not interested, so IIM-A scraps policy course

ANUBHAV VERMA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 8

IIM Ahmedabad's post-graduate programme in public management & policy (PGP-PMP) has been discontinued for the year — perhaps for longer.

Launched three years ago amid high expectations, PGP-PMP was envisaged as a rigorous one-year programme aimed at drawing policymakers from the government and emerging leaders of industry to the classroom for some genuine brainstorming.

However, the government sponsored officials who were either mediocre or not senior enough to be in the thick of high-level policymaking, and the response from the private sector was lukewarm at best — with the result that the prestigious programme has been scrapped for the academic year 2010-11.

Theoretically, the programme could be revived after a review, but the chances of that, sources said, were slim.

"The government did not send many officials in the first place, and the ones they did sponsor were not the kind of students that we expected. IIM Ahmedabad was looking at attracting senior IAS officers who were actively involved in policymaking and governance decisions, what we got instead were largely officials from PSUs, and officials who were not really in positions where they could influence policy," said a top IIM-A official.

This, the official said, defeated the purpose of the course. "The private sector also didn't respond as we expected," the official added. "Finally, a survey was done, and after discussing PGP-PMP with all stakeholders, we decided to discontinue the programme for this academic year."

Officials said that the programme was now under "comprehensive review" to see if it could be "redesigned".

Government-sponsored candidates for PGP-PMP were charged a course fee of Rs 2.5 lakh. For private sector candidates, the fees were at least Rs 5 lakh more — deemed steep, especially at a time of financial slowdown. Incidentally, despite a long follow-up process, IIM-A has not received the fees for five government candidates, and has now decided not to award them their diplomas.
Another NIT director suspended

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPT 8

THE HRD Ministry has suspended National Institutes of Technology (NIT) Tiruchirapalli Director M Chidambaram on allegations of misconduct and defiance of the decisions of the Board of Governors. Prof M Chidambaram has been asked to return to IIT Madras where he was a faculty member before being appointed NIT Director.

Incidentally, he is the second NIT Director to be suspended in a little over a month. NIT Warangal director Y V Rao was suspended last month following a series of charges ranging from discrepancies in admissions to inadequate civil work construction at the campus.

The suspension orders follow inquiry reports on charges against the NIT Directors submitted to the ministry. HRD ministry sources said that there were charges of administrative misconduct against the NIT Tiruchirapalli Director.

“I have not even been told what the charges are. I was just sent an online letter saying I stand suspended. The Board of Governors has been against me for a while ... The BoG also works on very casteist lines and have cast all kinds of aspersions against me. I intend to go to court to challenge my suspension,” Prof Chidambaram told The Indian Express over telephone.
The University Grants Commission (UGC) on Wednesday issued another public notice against the Indian Institute of Planning & Management (IIPM) saying that it is "not a university within the meaning of Section 2(f) of the University Grants Commission Act, 1956".

It added that as per Section 22 of the University Grants Commission Act, 1956, IIPM does not have the right of conferring degrees as specified by the commission under Section 22(3) of the UGC. It has also clarified that IIPM is neither entitled to award MBA/BBA/BCA degree nor it is recognised by UGC.

"The public and students are also hereby informed that the universities established either by a Central Act or a State Act or an Institution deemed to the university under Section 3 of the University Grants Commission Act can confer or grant only those degrees which are specified by the University Grants Commission under Section 22(3) of the Act," the UGC said in its public notice.

Last week, the Delhi HC admitted a PIL challenging the legality of the IIPM "franchising" education by way of conferring degrees through a foreign university.
IT INDUSTRY

Ohio offshoring ban unlikely to have a significant impact

BY LISON JOSEPH & SUKHARII AGARWAL
MUMBAI/NEW DELHI

The latest round of political rhetoric in the US against outsourcing, including a ban by Ohio on sending work abroad, is unlikely to have a significant impact on Indian industry, say analysts.

Industry observers say the latest rhetoric is fuelled by high unemployment rate in the US—at 9.6%—and impending mid-term elections in November in that country.

Only around 723,000 new jobs have been created this year in the US, Bloomberg reported, whereas 8.4 million jobs were lost during the recession that began in 2007.

Computer World reported on 7 September that Ohio has banned offshoring, or sending work to places outside the US.

The Economic Times reported on Wednesday that Ohio has banned outsourcing of government IT and back-office projects to locations such as India.

Analysts say business from the US public sector for Indian IT companies is insignificant. The stock markets also brushed aside any fears.

The Bombay Stock Exchange's sectoral index of IT companies, BSE IT, gained 0.57% on Wednesday to close at 5,650 points, faring slightly better than the benchmark Sensex's 0.12% rise to 18,666.71 points.

Tata Consultancy Services Ltd, Wipro Ltd, and HCL Technologies Ltd did not offer any comment on the issue.

The country's second largest IT exporter, Infosys Technologies Ltd, said the latest commentary from Ohio was a cause of concern, but ruled out any impact on its business.

"Infosys' initiative in the public services sector is focused on creating a domestic delivery centre in the US; hence this should not be affected," chief executive Kris Gopalakrishnan said in a statement on Wednesday.

Infosys' shares gained 0.56% on the Bombay Stock Exchange to close at Rs 2,872.05.

Mid-size IT firms Mint spoke with, including NIIT Technologies Ltd, Intelenet Global Solutions Ltd and Zensar Technologies Ltd, too, said the Ohio ban was unlikely to have any material financial impact.

"Public sector business from the US constitutes an insignificant portion of Indian IT companies' revenue from the US," said Nitin Padmanabhan, an analyst with Indiabulls Securities Ltd. "The fact that companies such as Infosys has set up dedicated US subsidiary to serve that segment means there is scope for deeper penetration."

Nasscom, an industry lobby, said the latest rhetoric in the US against outsourcing should be viewed in the light of unemployment and the coming elections.

"Ohio's ban on outsourcing can only be viewed as counterproductive to the US government's thrust on reducing public deficit and possibly lead to an increased tax burden on its citizens," Nasscom said in a statement on Wednesday.

It added that as international trade is a federal subject, it is evaluating the legality of a state government passing such a Bill.

Nasscom will take up the matter with relevant officials in the US when it leads an industry delegation to that country later in September, it said.

The industry body is also seeking support from commerce minister Anand Sharma, who will be visiting the US around the same time, to address the issue with his counterparts.

"Whether or not this (rhetoric) will impact any specific company will depend on what actual legislation is passed," said Sid Pai, managing director at the Indian arm of multinational outsourcing advisory TPI. "That said, Indian firms have reached a stage where they seriously need to consider truly globalizing and creating more employment in the countries that purchase services from them."

A lobbyist, who did not want to be identified, said India's IT industry should explore multiple channels for mobilizing support in the US.

The lobbyist, who has helped India's IT industry counter protectionist rhetoric in the US in the past, said pressure can be put on large US firms such as International Business Machines Corp. (IBM), Accenture Plc. and Boeing Co., which get big business from India.

"They understand that counter measures by Indian government or state governments could mean significant business loss for them in India."

IBM employs at least 100,000 people in India and gets more than $1 billion ($4,670 crore) in revenue from India. Accenture has nearly 50% of its global headcount based in India. Boeing recently won an order for 30 aircraft from India's SpiceJet Ltd, worth $2.7 billion.

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Despite talent shortage, India to remain competitive: Infy

CHENNAI, SEPT 8

DESPITE a shortage of talent in the Information Technology sector in India, the country would remain competitive at least for the next five to 10 years, a top official of Infosys said here today.

"Globally there is shortage of IT talent... it is there even in the United States and also in India. But India will continue to be competitive for at least the next five to 10 years," Infosys CEO and managing director Kris Gopalakrishnan told reporters here.

Stating that salaries offered would be the same for one employed locally in an offshoring site to one who shifts base from India, he said there would be additional charges by means of visa transportation and family transportation.

Asked whether the US market was passing stringent laws to restrict Indian companies setting up offshore facilities in US he said the market is one of the most open in the world, a reason why most Indian companies have maximum percentage of business coming from there.

"I dont want to say the United States is unfair and we are fair. It could be vice versa, there are several instances that our own policies are not fair. But both of us (US and India) have to work together to increasing bilateral trade so that there is benefit to all participants", he said.

The Infosys CEO said India has to put across its views on how the two nations can go together. "We want bilateral trade to grow and India has certain strengths, particularly on IT services... we can take it up through industry bodies like CII, Ficci and Nasscom," he added.

Vice-chairman of Cognizant Technology Solutions Lakshmi Narayanan said they were not concerned about stringent norms from the United States. He was reacting to media reports that Ohio state has banned offshoring of software services to countries like India.

"This is not something new and has been happening in the past also. But from industry perspective, from our company's perspective, we are not unduly concerned about it. We believe that the talent required for doing jobs in the private and government sectors is something we have to focus".

However, Narayanan said this was a passing phase after the global recession. "Once they move to the growing state, investments will start coming in and then things will come back to normal", he said. — PTI

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Mint ND 09/09/2010 P-10

EDUCATION

IITs plan to appoint foreign faculty

New Delhi: Facing shortage of teaching staff in the wake of capacity augmentation, Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) have proposed to appoint foreign nationals to its faculty positions.

The move, if accepted, could enable the prestigious Institutes to appoint foreign teachers on permanent positions, which could be up to 10% of the faculty strength, said IIT officials.

The proposal is expected to be deliberated at the next IIT Council meeting on Friday.

IITs have contended that the presence of foreign faculty on IIT campuses will benefit graduating students in the globalized world, besides lending a true international flavour in the campuses and reducing brain drain.

Appointment of foreign faculty could also give a boost to IITs' plan to enrol foreign students for the postgraduate programme. IITs have already requested the ministry of human resource development to enrol foreign students to the extent of 25% of the total student strength. PTI
INDIA'S IT industry reacted with anger and concern on Wednesday to a move by the US state of Ohio to ban all outsourcing of government projects. The $5 billion (₹25,300 crore) IT sector gets more than 65 per cent of its revenues directly from outsourcing.

The fear is that Ohio governor Ted Strickland's popular move may spread to other states, with less than two months to go before the US presidential election. Ohio state government officials now face a backlash on the basis of a controversial move to restrict the number of H-1B and L-1 visas and doubling their cost. This was also part of a broader push to cull the Indian community in the state, which is the largest in the region.

The move was opposed by several groups, including the Ohio Indian Americans, who said it would be a setback for the state's economy and its ability to compete globally.

"Our community is a valuable asset to the state," said Ravi Srinivasan, a community leader. "This ban will have a negative impact on our ability to attract talent and grow our businesses."
50% online consumers bank on social media sites

ONLINE SHOPPING
IN THE NEXT SIX MONTHS, INDIANS ARE MOST LIKELY TO BUY (PERCENTAGE OF ONLINE CONSUMERS)

Books
Airline ticket/reservations
TV, camera
Travel/online reservations
Event tickets
Clothing/accessories/shoes
Computer hardware
Software
Music downloads
Videodv/dig Leighs (not downloaded)
Software (not downloaded)

(These include not just India should be in the range of 15-20 per cent of the total US revenues of these firms, said Avaracav Rishav, a partner with Deloitte. The advisory firm's research firm said that it is hard to say whether the Indian IT service providers, as they do not have any significant experience in the government sector in the US. But if other states follow suit, which seems likely, this will impact US IT service firms like IBM, Accenture, HP, and others.)

While Indian companies are concerned about the ban, many have a different strategy in place to attract the US public services, including increasing overseas presence. "We are concerned with the recent news from the US about banishing offshore outsourcing by the US government and federal departments. Infosys' initiative in the public services sector is focused on creating a domestic delivery centre in the US, and there is no intention of re-locating any of its operations to India," said Praveen Gopalakrishnan, CEO and MD, Infosys. For this, the company is increasing hiring. In 2011-12, Infosys plans to hire 10,000 people in the US.

The aim is to develop local capability and recruit graduates locally and some of the overseas work in the US from that centre. The centre will be used to start a new US office in the US government and federal departments. The company's initiative in the public services sector is focused on creating a domestic delivery centre in the US, and there is no intention of re-locating any of its operations to India," said Praveen Gopalakrishnan, CEO and MD, Infosys. For this, the company is increasing hiring. In 2011-12, Infosys plans to hire 10,000 people in the US.

Unlike its global counterparts, for TCS, the banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) segment contributes over 40 per cent of its revenue, majority of which comes from the US market, and the government segment has been of low prominence. The situation is similar for Infosys and Wipro. Rather Indian IT service providers have been focusing more on the private sector.

"We have some business with the US government, rather in this is our new focus area. We think such comments and actions are protectionism in nature and they do not fit into the globalized world," said Suhas Viswanath, Joint CEO of Wipro.

Agrawal, chassis and Multi Mission and CEO of Zaver Technologies. "Most of us do not have a significant presence in the US government segment or the public sector business, which is more driven by the fact that jobs need to be created in the US."

Many more politicians are taking a protectionist stand, but this won’t really impact the offshore industry to a great extent. That said, Indian firms have reached a stage where they seriously need to consider truly globalising and creating more employment in countries that purchase services from them. Besides a small state like Ohio making an impact on a national level seems unlikely. This may change over time."

According to a recent report in The Economic Times, the US government’s decision to transfer $100 billion in spending from foreign contractors to US firms will have a significant impact on the Indian IT services sector. The move comes in response to growing concerns about the security of the US government’s information technology systems. The new policy will require all government contracts over $100 million to be awarded to US companies, with the hope of creating jobs and reducing the risk of cyber attacks.

The Indian IT services sector has been among the top beneficiaries of US government contracts in recent years, with many Indian companies holding major contracts with the US government. However, the new policy could potentially affect the revenue growth of many Indian companies, as they may now need to compete with US companies for these contracts.

The Indian government has also been encouraging its companies to look for opportunities in the US market, with policies aimed at helping them establish a presence there. However, the new US government policy could make it more difficult for Indian companies to compete in the US market, and could lead to a contraction in the Indian IT services sector. The impact of the new policy will depend on how Indian companies respond to it, and how they are able to adapt to the new market conditions.

The report also notes that the Indian IT services sector has been facing challenges in recent years, with lower growth rates and increased competition. The new US government policy could potentially add to these challenges, as Indian companies may need to divert resources to meet the new requirements.

However, the report also notes that the Indian IT services sector has a strong track record of delivering high-quality services to the US government, and has the potential to continue to do so in the future. The sector has a large pool of skilled professionals, and a strong focus on innovation and research and development. The new US government policy could potentially provide new opportunities for Indian companies to showcase their capabilities and win contracts in the US market.

The Indian government has also been encouraging its companies to look for opportunities in the US market, with policies aimed at helping them establish a presence there. However, the new US government policy could make it more difficult for Indian companies to compete in the US market, and could lead to a contraction in the Indian IT services sector. The impact of the new policy will depend on how Indian companies respond to it, and how they are able to adapt to the new market conditions.

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BRICI may house 1.2 bn Net users by 2015

VANITA KUMKI-KHANDEKAAR
New Delhi, 8 September

The Chinese spend more on the Internet than the Brazilians. China has a higher PC penetration than India, but there are more Indians surfing the Internet than Brazilians. The cost of broadband internet access in the interior of Russia to 2.3 times that of large cities, pulling down usage.

These, among other nuggets, is what a report released this week by The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) says. 'The Internet's New Billion: Digital Consumers in Brazil, Russia, India, China and Indonesia' (BRICI), tracks Internet growth and usage in these countries.

Currently 65% of the world's population in BRICI countries but accounts for just about one-third of the total Internet users. Thanks to macro-economic factors, this number will double in the next five years to 1.2 billion, predicts the report. It, however, doesn't manage to move beyond the obvious. Much of what the report says that Indians use the net, large and small, for job hunting and e-mail or that Brazilians use it for search - is stuff that is available on most research about the net. The value addition, if any, comes from two things:

One, the comparisons with the US and Japan. The Americans and Japanese use the net primarily to read news, watch video or play games. That explains why Internet advertising is mammoth in those markets and why both newspapers and TV are losing audiences. The US clearly is the leader when it comes to using the net for all its possibilities. E-commerce and mobile banking usage are the highest in the US (see chart). Finally enough, social networking is not as popular in the US as it is in the BRICI countries, especially Indonesia.

The other value addition is from the nuggets on the dynamics of these markets. For instance, in Brazil, a highly urbanised country, access costs are very high - about $27 a month, compared to $5-15 in most markets including India. So, lower income earners in the cities or villages, go to neighbourboard or local area network (local area network) houses to surf. These are what we know as Internet cafes. They have 10-20 PCs and charge rates as low as $1 an hour. That is how the net is spreading in India, too.

THE BORN IDENTITY

There are significant disparities in infant mortality rates across the urban-rural divide and the states

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Source: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare

There has been considerable progress since 2005 on improving access to healthcare, especially in rural areas

There are essentially three important factors to consider to improve mortality: improving access to healthcare for mothers and infants, maternal care at birth, and nutrition. One positive point to note is that there has been considerable progress since 2005 on improving access to healthcare, especially in rural areas. The recent National Health Mission strategy adopted in 2005 is helping to reduce the difference. However, changes have been slow. In the coming years, it is expected that the picture will improve, but little changed expect positive in the future.

Indian States Development Scorecard is a weekly feature by IndiaStatesWatch that focuses on the progress in India and the states on parameters of economic, social and political parameters. For comments please contact vanita@hindustantimes.com.
Paying the banker

Delink PSU pay from IAS and monetise all perks

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor Duvvuri Subbarao has once again spoken the difficult truth. This time on the issue of the pay and compensation given to executives of public sector banks. Coming, as these views do, not just from the governor of the central bank but someone who belongs to the hallowed Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and one who has been Union finance secretary, they must be taken seriously. The governor is right to draw attention to the fact that in a highly competitive market for talent, public sector banks, indeed most public sector firms, are constrained from offering better pay to talented executives because of governmental restraints. The starting point of this problem is the unwritten rule that guides all government and public sector compensation that no chief executive officer of a firm or head of a government-funded institution should get a salary higher than that of his equivalent in the IAS hierarchy. Thus, a bank chairman or a university vice-chancellor, or indeed the director of an Indian Institute of Management (IIM) or Technology (IIT) is not allowed to draw pay in excess of that of a secretary to the Government of India. The pay of an IAS officer also defines the bar for other government services, including the defence services.

To overcome this barrier, most PSUs and other services have given themselves perks that enable their institutions to compensate them in other ways—housing, company car, entertainment allowances, and such like. Thus, the perks of a public sector chief or senior defence staff may more than compensate them, compared to the pay and perks of their equivalents in the IAS. Thus, one simple way in which this entire issue of public sector pay can be handled is to monetise the compensation of both civil servants (Lutyens Delhi housing, for example) and public sector executives, and estimate what may be dubbed “cost to taxpayer” — CTT — and bring out the real attractiveness of the jobs concerned. A public sector bank chief who gets company housing, fully furnished and with peons and security guards thrown in, in a plush south Mumbai locality would have much less to complain, looking at the pay package of a private sector executive who may have to pay for all that.

Governor Subbarao was right to draw attention to the threat of the flight of talent from the public sector, indeed even from the civil services, to the private sector. The government cannot respond to this challenge purely monetarily, because it does not have the fiscal means to do so. One way in which it can be helpful is, in fact, to respect public sector autonomy. Nothing irritates a senior PSU executive, a university vice-chancellor or even an army general more than being bossed around by a joint secretary in the ministry concerned, in the name of Parliament and public accountability. Greater managerial autonomy, and the dignity associated with it, is itself a perk, and one that cannot be monetised. But no administrative system can be run based on the presumption of good behaviour of those in authority. There is, then, no alternative to curbing that authority. One way in which this can be done, without reducing the element of accountability to Parliament and government, is to, in fact, offer better financial compensation. In short, more money for less power!
TCS bags Rs 2,000 cr government orders

Will double staff to 7,500 for domestic projects

S RONENDRA SINGH
New Delhi

TATA Consultancy Services (TCS) on Wednesday said it had bagged government orders worth Rs 2,000 crore to be completed by 2012. This is in addition to Rs 750 crore order, which the company bagged earlier this year. The present orders deal with developing citizens’ service delivery portals and e-governance infrastructure across states.

These services, to be done through public private partnerships (PPP), include registration of caste, birth, marriage, domiciliary certificates and purchase of long distance bus, train and airline tickets.

They would also be useful for rendering diverse services like advising on crop information and remote distance telemedicine in tier II and III cities. These centres would act as a one-stop-shop for different services of various government departments, particularly for people who are deprived of such services in rural areas, vice-president and head government industry solutions unit, TCS, Tanmoy Chakrabarty, said.

To materialise these orders, the company would double head count from 3,500 to 7,000, Chakrabarty told Financial Chronicle.

He said while some of these projects are under the national e-governance plan (NeGP), the company on its part is initiating various programmes by talking to different state governments. TCS has outbid companies such as Mastek and NIC for many projects, he added.

The company is also planning to bid for central government’s GST programme for providing and maintaining the software. To generate long-term businesses in the IT PPPs, the company has proposed eight to ten years long projects for various state government programmes. “We are focused on governance issues and challenges,” Chakrabarty said.

TCS/BSE Rs 876.80 ▲
NSE Rs 876.60 ▲
ronendrasingh
@mydigitalfc.com
Ohio outsourcing ban to backfire

Repeated setbacks worry industry; IT firms say private sector projects won't be hit

RAVI MENON & SAIYAJI YVAKKUMAR
Bangalore & Chennai

AFTER Obama’s protestations on jobs being “Bangalored”, Senator Schumer’s Borders Security Bill, and visa fee hikes, the news of the Ohio state government’s proposed ban on outsourcing of government IT projects has apparently sent shudders down the collective spines of the National Association of Software and Service Companies (Nasscom) as well as Indian IT majors. But, not everybody tracking the sector is worried.

Chief executive officer of India’s second largest software firm, Infosys, Kris Gopalakrishnan, on Wednesday expressed concern about the ban on offshore outsourcing by the Ohio state government. “Infosys’ initiative in the public services sector is focused on creating a domestic delivery centre in the US. Hence, this should not be affected,” he said.

S Mahalingam, CFO of TCS, which is the only Indian company to operate in Ohio where it employs about 400 people, said, “we will have to see the long-term impact of the move. But it is too early to predict the impact and industry associations would take up the issue.”

The ban was proposed last month by Ohio governor Ted Strickland on the plea of service delivery problems with offshore providers, and quality issues.

There have been concerns that Ohio companies will lose the ban after governor Strickland recently objected to Parago, a Texas company that administers Ohio’s $11 million appliance rebate programme, offshore to Puerto Rico. The move is expected to result in job loss for the state.

“This is an understandable move given that the US unemployment rate is high and there is pressure on the industry and government to create more jobs locally. We are in constant talk with the government industry associations for a solution. We need to take a global perspective and we are trying to increase local recruitments,” Gopalakrishnan said. He also ruled out that the ban would spread to private sector projects and said Indian IT companies exposure to government projects is minimal.

Wipro has invested in expanding its US presence through partnerships with states like Georgia where the company has built a development centre in Atlanta. “We have also been focussing our investment and efforts in developing solutions for the government segment to help government become more efficient and effective. Some of these moves and announcements seem counter-productive to the government’s efforts to reduce deficit,” said a Wipro statement.

A Cognizant Technologies spokesperson said that the company does not have government business in the US on its radar. Lakshmi Narayan, vice-chairman of Cognizant added, “Our offshoring has happened in the past also. We are not unduly concerned and this is a passing phase. We will always look at hiring good talent in India and abroad. Unlike that other states in US will follow suit if value can be demonstrated then customers will pay for it.”

The unemployment rate in Ohio is higher than the US national average of 10.5 per cent. Besides, mid-term elections due in November could be another reason, said Avinash Vashistha, CEO of IT outsourcing advisory Tholons. “The Ohio ban happened over a month ago, but nobody really raised the issue to me when I was in the US during this period. I doubt if such a move will be replicated by other states in the US,” he said.

Indian companies still do not garner a significant share of the $100 billion in tech spending absorbed by government and public sector projects in the US, according to industry insiders. Government outsourcing to India is still “not substantial” and only a fraction of the total government tech spend comes to Indian companies, they said. Since Indian companies have not been doing too many government projects, the impact of such a ban would not be significant, said Vashistha.

“This is a populist move with an eye on the mid-term elections in November. Besides, who can enforce such a ban? The private sector in the US is fiercely independent when it comes to outsourcing

and will not follow state-led mandates. Hence, the ban will have no material effect on Ohio being covered from a political perspective,” said former Microsoft veteran Krishnan Thyagarajan, who is now managing director at Quest Software India.

The Ohio ban noted that while the US public sector represents only a small fraction of the overall demand for offshore services, it does represent a future focus area. Calling the Ohio ban “counter-productive”, Nasscom cautioned that the move could possibly lead to an increased tax burden on US citizens.

The nodal body of India’s IT industry is studying the legality of the bill being passed by the Ohio state. Nasscom will lead a delegation to the US later this month and will be talking this up with relevant officials in the US. “The proposed ban on outsourcing of government IT projects comes at a time when the November elections to the United State Congress and Ohio governorship are drawing nearer. More such electoral rhetoric that can be expected in the next few months,” Nasscom said.

The $100 billion Indian IT outsourcing industry, which has struggled to maintain operating margins caused by pricing and demand pressures from existing clients, has viewed the US government sector as a risk mitigator of choice. In June this year, Infosys had incorporated a government-focused US subsidiary, Infosys Public Services, backed by Eric Packer.

The US still accounts for about 60 per cent of the revenues generated by the Indian IT industry. About 90 per cent of the receivables of Indian companies are in US dollars.

However, the anti-outsourcing brigade has grown attuned to its opposition to jobs being sent out of the US; they have seriously joined issue against outsourcing to India post-December 2007, when Wiprosubsidiary Infoscope

ing Health Care Services, signed a “multiple-year contract worth $407 million to provide medical services to the state of Missouri’s healthcare programme.

Nasscom has said that it will seek support from minister for industry and commerce Anand Sharma, who is visiting the US this month, to address the proposed Ohio ban and broader issues of protectionism with his counterparts.

sanjayviswanath@mydigitalin.com
GSLV-MkIII liquid stage clears test

Our Bureau
Bangalore, Sept. 8

Indian Space Research Organisation on Wednesday said its heavy-lift launcher programme GSLV-MkIII moved further ahead after a successful static testing of the liquid core stage.

An earlier test in March had to be aborted 50 seconds earlier after a leak was noticed.

ISRO said it was satisfied with its performance. The launcher, under development for the next 10 years, is slated to be ready for a first flight in 2012.

"Today’s successful test of (the liquid second stage) L110 for its full flight duration of 201 seconds is a major milestone in the Earth storable liquid rocket programme and a significant step forward in the development of GSLV-MkIII launch vehicle," a release said.

L110 was tested at the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre test facility at Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu, at 3.50 p.m.

The MkIII programme, taken up at a cost of nearly Rs 2,500 crore, is meant to double the GSLV’s satellite lifting capacity to four tonnes. It uses two solid fuel add-on boosters (S200), which cleared the test in January this year; the L-110 liquid stage and the crucial cryogenic upper stage C-25.

ISRO said L110 is one of the heaviest Earth storable liquid stages ever developed by ISRO.

It has two high-pressure Vikas engines. Nearly 500 health parameters were monitored during the test and initial data indicate normal performance.

Ohio ban on offshoring is discriminatory: Nasscom

Our Bureau
New Delhi, Sept. 8

The National Association of Software and Services Companies (Nasscom) on Wednesday termed as discriminatory Ohio State's decision to prohibit outsourcing of government IT projects to offshore destinations.

Nasscom argued that at a time when Governments globally were beginning to see the benefits of leveraging IT in public services, a ban such as this would prove to be "counter-productive" for the US and could lead to an increased tax burden for citizens.

"Ohio State's proposed ban on outsourcing of government IT projects comes at a time when the November elections to the US Congress and Ohio governorship are drawing nearer. While the public sector represents a small fraction in the overall demand for offshore services, it does represent a future focus area," a statement issued by Nasscom said. Last month, the Ohio Governor, Mr Ted Strickland, issued an executive order prohibiting the expenditure of public funds for "services provided offshore".

Mr Strickland had stated that "Outsourcing jobs does not reflect Ohio values. We must do everything within our power to prevent outsourcing jobs because it undermines our economic development objectives, slows our recovery and deprives Ohioans and other Americans of employment opportunities."

The move - which comes ahead of US President Mr Barack Obama's India visit later this year - does not bode well for the Indian IT industry that is still reeling under the impact of US' move to hike H-1B and L-1 visa fee.

"It is imperative that the focus on free trade remains strong, but instances such as Senator Schumer's Border Security Bill (that led to a visa fee hike) and the Ohio State ban on outsourcing only reinforce our stand on discrimination," Nasscom said.

The apex software body is leading a delegation to the US later this month and will be taking up these issues with the US authorities, the statement added.

Our Bangalore bureau reports: Wipro, in a statement said: "We believe in the fundamental strength of the US economy and have invested in expanding our presence there through partnerships with States such as Georgia where we have built a development centre in Atlanta. We have also been focusing our investments and efforts in developing solutions for the government segment to help government become more effective and efficient. These moves and announcements seem counterproductive to Government's effort to reduce deficit."

mounita@thehindu.co.in
No major reversal in onsite-offshore recruitment mix: Infosys CEO

'Protectionist barriers may happen in all parts of the world'

he told newsmen on the sidelines of Connect2010. "Indian companies are already increasing local recruitment everywhere," he said. "Manufacturing by and large happens mostly in China because of economics and that is what I see in IT in future also. If trade is happening and economics drive these decisions and then I think India should continue to be a global hub," he said.

ONID'S BAN ON OUTSOURCING
Mr S. Mahalingam, Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer, Tata Consultancy Services, too agreed with Mr Gopalakrishnan. On media reports that the Ohio State in the US plans to ban offshoring of software services to countries such as India, Mr Gopalakrishnan said when employment goes down it puts pressure on every body, including government and politicians. This is raising protectionist barriers and it will happen in many different ways and in different parts of the world, he said.

For the Indian IT industry, Indian companies have maximum percentage of business coming from the US. Certain changes in the policies are based on external environment and that will happen anywhere. "I do not want to say that US is unfair or we are fair. There are several instances where our own policies are not fair. All of us have to work together towards increasing trade so that there is benefit to all the participants. That is what sustains and that is what we need to look at and that is how I see happening," he said.

US MARKET
Some of the US companies have a list of things the Indian Government need to do. "We will have our own list for the US government. These are things we will raise through proper forums through industry associations. So this is how trade negotiations happen," he said.

Mr Lakshmi Narayanan, Vice-Chairman, Cognizant Technology Solutions, reacting to media reports said "this is not something new and this has been happening in the past also. From the industry perspective and from the company perspective, we are not unduly concerned about it."

"We believe that talent that is required for doing jobs both in the private sector and in the government sector is something we have to focus. This is a passing phase as they go through the phase of coming out of recession," he said.
SAP looking at volume growth; targets mid-size cos

Swetha Kannan
Bangalore, Sept. 8

Having reached a critical mass of 100 “referenceable” clients for its cloud-based ERP solution targeted at mid-sized companies, SAP is now hungry for “significant” volume growth.

In 2008, SAP realised that the middle enterprise market, with its unique requirements and challenges, needed a specific tailor-made ERP (enterprise resource planning) solution and “slice and dice” of on-premise products meant for large enterprises would not work with this segment as deployment is longer, complex and expensive with significant upfront costs. The company thus came up with the ‘Business ByDesign’ SaaS (software as a service) module in six countries (the US, the UK, India, China, Germany and France) that allows users to pay on a monthly subscription basis. ‘Business ByDesign’ promises a robust solution set that is cheaper, faster and easy to deploy and use.

For the last two years, SAP was building the ‘Business ByDesign’ product and acquiring customers. Today, it has around 100 clients on board globally, including four in India.

“The product is now mar-

ket-ready with 100 referenceable clients and we are looking at significant volumes (in terms of number of clients) in the coming months across verticals,” says Mr Rohit Madhur, Director - Business ByDesign, SAP India.

In India, SAP is especially looking at professional services – a hitherto untapped sector. This includes companies providing IT infrastructure, business analytics, consulting, market research services. “We will later on look at conventional trading and manufacturing companies as well.”

Business ByDesign targets mid-sized companies with headcount of 25 - 400 people and turnover of Rs 10 - 400 crore. SAP is looking to evolve a partner ecosystem consisting of resellers, implementers and system integrators to build the product in India. Cost is a big consideration in the mid market, which has “some money to spare but does not want to put all its money into IT,” says Mr Madhur. “These companies are looking at IT as an enabler to build efficiency.” The complete suite of Business by Design solutions (finance management, customer relationship management, project management and HR) has been competitively priced at Rs 5,610 for monthly subscription, he adds. Besides, the end-to-end solution set, SAP also offers individual starter packs for CRM, ERP and professional services for Rs 3,350.

UPDATION
Walldorf (Germany)-headquartered SAP promises to update Business by Design every six months based on criteria such as functionality, technology and user experience. Its latest update (version 2.5) offers several flexible features to users – such as multi-tenancy, wherein several users can share a single hardware instance, which brings down costs. The other encouraging feature is deployment time reduces drastically, says Mr Madhur. “While on-premise models take 6-12 months to deploy, the cloud-based model takes only 4-12 weeks, depending on the complexity.”
Sonia calls for education with technical inputs  

The concept of Navodaya Vidyalayas was introduced by the late Rajiv Gandhi

The National Advisory Council Chairperson Sonia Gandhi on Wednesday voiced concern over the high dropout rate and the absence of teachers in village schools.

She noted that “one fourth of the teachers in village schools remain absent and said the dropout rate, particularly amongst the minority and poor, was high.

Speaking at a function after inaugurating 31 Navodaya Vidyalayas in various parts of the country, Gandhi said, “Everyone has a right to education and it was not limited to a few.”

These recently constructed buildings of NVs are in States across the country, in Kerala, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Orissa, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra.

She said the Right to Education Bill (RTE) would address all issues pertaining to education in the country.

“The UPA government under Manmohan Singh is giving scholarships... awareness about these has to be spread,” she said, hoping that the Right to Education Bill will be able to achieve this.

In her speech, Gandhi, who is also the Chairperson of the UPA, recalled that the concept of Navodaya Vidyalayas was introduced by the late Rajiv Gandhi.

“I can say that students studying here are on the right track. Rajiv Gandhi was concerned about the poor, backward and their children.

He felt the country would not progress unless one works for their upliftment,” she said.

Speaking on the occasion, Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Kapil Sibal, stated that the late Rajiv Gandhi considered providing quality education for deprived children his foremost duty.

It was in this context that the government decided to open a JNV in every district of the country as part of the National Policy on Education, 1986.

Today there are 593 NVs in the country in which 2 lakh children are studying, he added.

The Minister stated that to encourage children showing aptitude in sports, culture and in vocational streams, special Navodaya Vidyalayas are proposed to be opened. He pointed out that already Navodaya Vidyalayas are considered par with the better schools of the country and alumni of these schools are excelling in professions.

Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas are fully residential co-educational institutions providing education from Class VI to XII and affiliated to CBSE.

At least 75 per cent seats in a Jawahar Vidyalaya are filled by candidates from rural areas. Reservation of seats for children belonging to SCs and STs is provided in proportion to their population in the concerned district.

One third of total seats are filled by girls. Out of over two lakh students in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas, 77.84% are from rural areas. 36.67% are girls and 41.61 per cent belong to SC/ST categories.
Ohio outsourcing ban is trade barrier: India Inc

The Indian IT sector, which gets 60 per cent of its export revenue from the US, today said the move by the state of Ohio to ban outsourcing by government departments to offshore locations like India is discriminatory and amounts to a trade barrier.

Through an executive order last month, Ohio Governor Ted Strickland prohibited the expenditure of public funds for services provided offshore.

The move comes ahead of the impending visit of US President Barack Obama to India in November. It also follows a controversial legislation (border security law) increasing H-1B and L1 visa fees, hitting India’s over USD 50 billion IT industry.

The Indian industry will take up the issue with its US counterparts and seek government support to flag it with the American authorities.

“Nasscom is leading a delegation to the US later this month and will be taking this up with relevant officials in the US,” the apex body of the IT and ITES industry said here.

Nasscom said it would also seek support from Commerce and Industry Minister Anand Sharma, who is visiting the US later this month. Sharma is likely to take up the matter with the US Trade Representative and other senior officials.

It said since international trade is a federal subject in the US, Nasscom is studying the legality of such an order by a state government.

“Ohio’s ban on outsourcing can only be viewed as counter-productive to the US government’s thrust on reducing public deficit... It only reinforces our stand on discrimination,” it said.

Nasscom said it would not be surprised if more such “electoral rhetoric” follows in the run-up to the November elections to the US Congress and Ohio Governorship.

Infosys Technologies, the country’s second largest software exporter, said, “We are concerned... About banning offshore outsourcing by Ohio State government departments.”

Ganesh Natarajan, the chairman of the CII national committee on IT and the CEO of Zensar Technologies, said that while the Ohio development would not have much of a financial impact on IT firms, the issue would be taken up with the US trade mission visiting India this month. Indian IT firms earn most of their revenue from the private sector in the US.

Despite these irritants, the US would remain the major market for Indian IT firms, he said.

Assocham said the Ohio ban amounts to a trade barrier and the move would be against the US’s interest.

However, the stock market shrugged off the developments, with shares of TCS, Infosys and Wipro moving up on Wednesday.
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IITs face faculty crunch, moot full-time foreign teachers

New Delhi: Facing a massive shortage of well-qualified teachers, the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) have mooted a proposal for hiring foreign nationals as permanent faculty members.

With one-third teaching positions lying vacant, the proposal as a solution to meet the unprecedented staff crunch is expected to be deliberated at the next IIT council meeting here on Friday. IIT officials said on Wednesday.

The move, if accepted, would enable the premier engineering and technology institutes to appoint foreign teachers on permanent positions, up to 10 per cent of the faculty strength.

In 2007, the IITs had been granted permission to hire foreign nationals as faculty members, but only for a maximum period of five years on contract basis.

IIT-Kharagpur leads the pack with 299 vacancies followed by IIT-Bombay with 222, IIT-Roorkee with 194, IIT-Madras with 138 and IIT-Delhi with 78. Others are not far behind either.

There are 69 vacancies in IIT-Kanpur, 65 in IIT-Guwahati and 48 in IIT-Ropad. In fact, the situation is the same in all the 15 IITs in the country.

IITs have contended that the presence of foreign faculty on their campuses would expose graduating students to globally distinguished professors, besides lending a true international flavour in the campuses and reducing brain drain.

Appointment of foreign faculty could also give a boost to IITs' plan to enrol foreign students for the post-graduate programme. PTI
The logic behind Honorary Doctorates

When the university is funded by the government, the dictum, "he who pays calls the tune" operates

The recent news amid the notoriety of the Doctoral Degree (honoris causa) to the doyen Shri V. V. Raman has brought forth several issues regarding the procedures that have been imposed on universities. Any university is an academic citadel that promotes and recognizes intellect. Yet, when the university is supported and funded by the government, the rather unpleasant situation of "he who pays calls the tune" appears to operate. Academic freedom and autonomy are confronted by ethos and control.

The recognition of outstanding persons by honouring them with doctorate degrees has been practised by universities the world over. Recognition of this kind is not simply through the ceremony where the "diplomas" are offered to the honourees. No money is offered as honours, nor any job offer. It is just an academic recognition. The honours are being to any part of the world.

Also, here was the first rub. An official from the Ministry of Human Resource Development in Delhi asked whether Anand is an Indian or a Spaniard. How does the citizenship matter in academic recognition? After all, the India Gandhi prize or the Padma Awards are open to all. It would appear that the question raised was irrelevant to the issue, but it defaced the matter.

One might raise the bogey of "security" and hence the name needs "vetting" by the government. But is this a defensible argument? The award need not mean that the university agrees with all that the honouree says or practices. If my memory is not wrong, I recall years ago an Indian state University honouring the Late Mr. Yasser Arafat. Voting and "censure" of this type might also be regarded as not being in the right way.

PRAISEWORTHY: Both Anand and the University of Hyderabad have displayed admirable grace over the situation. - FILE PHOTO

The second issue is about the clearance from the President of India, who happens to be the "Visitor" of the University of Hyderabad, which wished to honour Anand. One needs to ask: Why should the President of India be involved at all in this? What is the academic value in such a move? Does this mean the President of the state be the equivalent of the state university? This is not simply an administrative arrangement, which needs no academic value.

Does this arrangement also mean that the university people faculty or officers need to think twice or more before criticizing them? Other countries, notably the U.S., have many state universities with state funding and the head of state has no official connection - yet they thrive intellectually and administratively. We need to revisit the practices of Visitations and Chancellors of central and state-supported universities in India. The third point is who should be given such honorary doctorates? The business of a university is to enhance and recognize scholarship and intellect. Universities and colleges cater more to the brain than brown. Hence perhaps the justification to honour Anand - the master of a game where brain and only brain matters. Note that this is different from honouring, say, Tendulkar. But then one may ask, if brain work is the sole factor, why not honour makers of the cash game Contract Bridge?

Of course, on this score, very few politicians would be eligible for the honour. Yet we note that many of them are so honoured, some even like to have the triple prefix Dr. Dr. Dr. before their names. One suspects an element of sympathy and "cool pro quo" in the university that does so.

Now, for the fourth point. The business of a university is to promote knowledge, spur creativity and to recognise and honour those who have brought new perspectives, values and thus enhanced humanity through their thoughts.

Thus, in honouring an individual with a D. Litt or D. Sc (honoris causa), the university honours itself. It seeks nothing from the honouree, perhaps except to hope that he/she appreciates and is proud of the honour so conferred on him/her. I believe the latter is as important or the former. Further, while it is not necessary or demand

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D. BALASUBRAMANIAN

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A new part-time course in mathematical finance

The Mathematical Sciences Foundation, a registered non-profit educational society is taking admissions for its part-time programme in mathematical finance.

The course is suitable for under-graduate students, particularly those majoring in mathematics, economics or commerce as well as those taking the actuarial examinations, MBA students and employees in the finance or banking sectors.

The course will be helpful for careers in insurance companies, financial firms and the banking sector in areas such as investor education and counselling, project choice, portfolio management, and risk analysis.

A key feature of the programme is exposure to combined uses of mathematics, statistics and computer science in the financial services industry. Scholarships will be given to deserving students.

Classes will be held in the evenings from mid-September to March 2011 with breaks during the Commonwealth Games and the winter examinations of Delhi University.

Full details are available on the website www.mathscifound.org.

The Aligarh Muslim University is organising an all-India essay writing competition on the topic: “Sir Syed’s Vision of Empowerment through Character Building and Modern Education.”

A first prize of Rs.25,000 will be given away in addition to second and third prizes of Rs.15,000 and Rs.10,000. State level winners will be awarded consolation prizes of Rs.5,000.

Students can refer to information regarding the life and achievements of the AMU founder Sir Syed Ahmed Khan on the university website www.amu.ac.in. The last date for submission of entries is September 25. Prizes will be given away in October.

Faridabad-based Manav Rachna International University is drawing students from countries such as Afghanistan, Iran, Nigeria, South Korea and Syria for some of its Ph.D., M. Tech, B. Tech and B. Tech courses.

The university has also entered into tie-ups with educational institutes in Finland, Canada, the United Kingdom and New Zealand.

Jaipuria Institute of Management in Noida organised a seminar this past week on “Entrepreneurship: Finding Hidden Opportunities”. Youth entrepreneurs of companies and management students participated in the seminar.

The purpose of the seminar was to provide a platform for students to gain practical knowledge regarding entrepreneurship.

The event was characterised by brainstorming for new solutions as well as articulation of ideas by students and entrepreneurs.

The seminar projected entrepreneurship as a rewarding career choice and the spotlight was also on emerging trends, markets and opportunities.

The ‘Bhavishya Jyoti Scholarship Test’ will be conducted across the country on September 19 by information technology trainer, NIIT across the country. This year is also the 20th anniversary of the scholarship which rewards fee-waivers to meritorious students and graduates wishing to pursue careers in diverse industries that require IT skills.

The scholarships will be awarded for NIIT’s flagship programme, GNIIT and a few other courses.

NIIT will offer scholarships to students based on their performance in a competitive written test, followed by a personal interview. Application forms for the test are available at NIIT education centres across the country. Students can also log on to www.niit.com/bjs2010 for more details. The last date for receipt of applications is September 18.

Urvashi Sarkar
Sonia expresses concern at high dropout rate

Aarti Dhar

NEW DELHI: National Advisory Council chairperson Sonia Gandhi expressed concern on Wednesday at the absence of “one-fourth of the teachers” from village schools and the high dropout rate, especially among the minority and the poor.

Speaking at a function after inaugurating 31 Navodaya Vidyalayas in various parts of the country to mark the 25 years of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, she said: "Everyone has a right to education, and it is not limited to a few." The Right to Education Bill, she said, would address all issues pertaining to education.

Recalling that the concept was introduced by the former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Ms. Gandhi said: "I can say that the students studying here are on the right track. Rajiv Gandhi was concerned about the poor...and their children. He felt that the country would not progress till their uplift."

It was because of Rajiv Gandhi’s vision, that 600 such schools were set up, and more than two lakh students were enrolled in them. "They get good education, and it [the school] also helps in the development of their personality," she said. The education provided in these schools was on a par with the best schools in the country.

However, the resolve should be to work in a better way and to achieve a better educational system, she said. Children should be given such education that would help them keep pace with the changes and developments.

Union HRD Minister Kapil Sibal presents a portrait of Rajiv Gandhi to National Advisory Council Chairperson Sonia Gandhi at the inauguration of newly constructed buildings of 31 Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas in New Delhi on Wednesday. — PHOTO: SHANKER CHAKRAVARTY

Taking on his critics who had accused him of rushing through the Educational Tribunal Bill that was stalled in the Rajya Sabha in the monsoon session of Parliament, Union Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal said Rajiv Gandhi had wanted the task of imparting quality education achieved in a few months. "If people say that we are in a hurry, I would like to state that Rajivji had said in 1985 that this should be achieved in a few months."

In its report, the Parliamentary Standing Committee had said the Educational Tribunal Bill was drafted in “haste,” while senior Congress MP Keshav Rao opposed the bill in the Rajya Sabha, saying it was being passed in a “hurry.”

Mr. Sibal said that providing quality education was reduced towards encouraging mediocrity, and this trend must be changed.

“One of the concepts which got lost in our drive for mass education has been that of excellence. Everything is reduced to mediocrity, maybe even lower than that. This must be changed.”

Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas are residential co-educational institutions, providing educating from Std. VI to Std. XII. At least 75 per cent of the seats are filled with candidates from rural areas. Reservation for children of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes is provided in proportion to their population in the district concerned.
BRAI Bill leaves biotech commercialisation in limbo

Priscilla Jebaraj

NEW DELHI: The Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India (BRAI) will only deal with the safety and efficacy aspects of biotech products, leaving the controversial commercialisation aspect hanging in the air, according to the latest version of the BRAI Bill, 2010.

The Bill, which was supposed to be introduced in the last session of Parliament, is back in limbo after objections by the Health Ministry. However, the latest version of the Bill has incorporated the changes demanded by the Environment Ministry.

One of the major amendments includes a clarification that since the BRAI Bill will only handle safety and efficacy, "any decision on commercialisation will have to be taken by competent authorities under relevant laws," according to Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh.

"There is no clarity on which authorities would be competent or which laws would be relevant," he admits. "In the case of GM [or genetically-modified] foods, it may still be with the Ministry of Environment and Forests," he says. "Or it could be Health, Agriculture or the DST [Department of Science and Technology]," he added, leaving the door open for a further turf war.

Neutral regulatory body mooted

Mr. Ramesh feels that decision can be taken later, while the Bill itself should be passed into law in the next session of Parliament.

Originally, the BRAI was supposed to come under the control of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT).

Mr. Ramesh suggested that in order to avoid conflicts of interest, a regulatory body should come under a Ministry unrelated to biotechnology promotion, or under the Cabinet Secretariat. However, he has accepted the compromise of the Department of Science and Technology as the nodal Ministry.

In a deal worked out between DBT and the Environment Ministry on Independence Day, just before the Cabinet considered the Bill, the Ministry agreed to give up control of the current body responsible for GM food clearances, the Genetic Engineering Approvals Committee. Its role will now be taken over by the Environment Appraisal Panel, whose decisions can be reversed by its parent body, the BRAI.

However, in return, the Environment Ministry has wrested the right to appoint the chairman and member secretary of the Panel.
Nasscom terms U.S. move discriminatory

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Terming the outsourcing ban threat by the State of Ohio in the U.S. as "discriminatory", the Indian information technology industry on Wednesday said any such move was against the policy of open markets and hampers promotion of free trade. The IT industry has decided to register its opposition with the U.S. administration besides seeking help from the Indian government to take the matter with the American government.

"Ohio State's proposed ban on outsourcing of government IT projects comes at a time when the November elections to the U.S. Congress and Ohio governorship are drawing nearer. There is more such electoral rhetoric that can be expected in the next few months," the National Association of Software and Service Companies (Nasscom) said in a statement. Through an executive order last month, Ohio Governor Ted Strickland prohibited the expenditure of public funds for services provided offshore. Pointing out that globally, governments were beginning to see the benefits that could be reaped out of employing IT in public services, Nasscom said India too was opening up not only in IT, but also other areas, representing a growth market for global and domestic companies. "Ohio's ban on outsourcing can only be viewed as counterproductive to the U.S. government's thrust on reducing public deficit and possibly lead to an increased tax burden on its citizens," it said.

It was imperative that the focus on free trade remains strong, but instances like Senator Schumer's Borders Security Bill and the Ohio State ban on outsourcing only reinforce our stand on discrimination. Our focus is to build open markets, global trade and we will work with key stakeholders to minimise the impact of such events by highlighting the benefits of employing IT with international governments," Nasscom said.

A high-level Nasscom delegation is also planning to visit the U.S. later this month to take the issue with relevant officials in the U.S. It has also decided to seek support from Union Commerce and Industry Minister Anand Sharma who will also be visiting the U.S. shortly.

Notably, Indian IT sector gets 60 per cent of its export revenue from the U.S. The move also comes just ahead of the U.S. President Barack Obama's India visit which is scheduled for November. It also follows the border security law where the U.S. government decided to increase fees for H-1B and L1 visas, mostly used by Indian IT industry.

Similarly, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) has expressed deep concern over the development. "At a time when companies from across the globe, including those from the U.S., are participating in government projects in India, Ohio State's ban on offshoring by government departments would discriminate against Indian companies," said FICCI Secretary General Amit Mitra.

Citing a study by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (Washington D.C.), FICCI said that it was U.S. companies that gained maximum from outsourcing. In fact, a McKinsey analysis shows that every dollar of costs the U.S. moves offshore brings America a net benefit of $1.12 to $1.14. The same study also highlighted that worldwide sourcing would produce net benefits to Americans in terms of higher productivity, lower prices, better jobs, new export markets, and stronger companies.

Infosys expresses concern

Special Correspondent

BANGALORE: The CEO and Managing Director of Infosys Technologies S. Gopalakrishnan expressed "concern" over the moves by Ohio to ban offshoring of IT services outside the U.S. However, Mr. Gopalakrishnan, in a statement, said Infosys "should not be affected," because its public services initiative in the U.S. "is focussed on creating a domestic delivery centre in the U.S. hence this should not be affected." Ohio had issued an order in August banning the outsourcing of government IT and back-office projects to offshore locations in India and other countries. An executive order prohibited "the expenditure of public funds for services provided offshore."
IT cos wary of US protectionism but dispel Ohio ban fears

Bangalore, Sep 8: IT firms on Wednesday said they were concerned about growing protectionism in the US but added that a recent ban on offshoring of government projects by Ohio will not have significant impact on the industry at the moment.

Among the large tier IT companies, only TCS has exposure to Ohio government contracts and although US forms more than half of Indian IT’s $60 billion revenue basket, very few companies have bagged US state government contracts. In fact, Indian IT firms share of government contracts worldwide in its exports pie is not more than 8-4%, analysts said.

Infosys has started a subsidiary in the US focusing on government work but currently has zero exposure. “We are concerned with the recent news from the US about banning offshore outsourcing by Ohio state government departments. Infosys’ initiative in the public services sector is focused on creating a domestic delivery centre in the US and hence this should not be affected,” CEO & MD of Infosys Kris Gopalakrishnan said.

“The US is getting into elections so there will be lot of political rhetoric in the short term. This is concerning because it could impact some of the companies working in the government space,” CFO V Balakrishnan told FE. “With high unemployment, this type of noise will only increase,” he added. Average unemployment in the US is at 9.3% and in many states such as Ohio, the rate is much higher.

The CFO said that private firms in the US were outsourcing because of the efficiency that they manage to get. “If you want to make sure governments and corporations are run more efficiently, they have to offshore and outsource. Two, there are not many employees available in a market like the US,” he said.

Nasscom warned more such electoral rhetoric can be expected in the next few months. “Ohio state’s proposed ban on outsourcing of government IT projects comes at a time when the November elections to the United State Congress and Ohio governorship are drawing nearer. Ohio’s ban on outsourcing can only be viewed as counterproductive to the US government’s thrust on reducing public deficit and possibly lead to an increased tax burden on its citizens,” the body said. Nasscom would lead a delegation to the US later this month.

Whether the Ohio decision will influence other US states to curb government offshoring, going ahead, is anybody’s guess. “We will have to wait and watch - it is an election year after all,” CEO of Zensar Ganesh Natarajan said. Although TCS refused to comment, analysts estimated the impact of the Ohio decision on the firm to be minimal.