

TOWARDS AN EDUCATED INDIA: PRIORITIZING THE RESEARCH SETTING

Policy-makers need to wake up to the importance of research and development



As world is evolving to become a global village, the technology is becoming obsolete more often. Products and services are living shorter life cycles. Traditional businesses are facing the brunt of competition and efficiency in satisfying their consumers. The initiation of a new economy is based on more innovations and creativity. It demands continuous technological changes. The businesses do not only demand technological changes but also management strategies to befit the ever-changing business scenario. This fact has placed premium on the knowledge and skills that are found and developed within the arena of higher education. Higher education is a great national asset.

In India, higher education currently enrolls more than nine million students (about 10% of the relevant age with almost 20% of students in engineering and medicine.) More than 300,000 students graduate each year with qualifications in science and engineering; of these graduates, according to one study, only about 100,000 are comparable to U.S. bachelor's degrees and another 100,000 are comparable to U.S. sub-bachelor's awards, such as associate's degrees. In both cases, the annual volume of graduates is similar to U.S. degree production in these fields. Further, India's elite science and technology institutes rank among the world's best, producing graduates who track into leading posts in national and multinational firms. Overall, however, graduate unemployment is high, at a time when

the supply of graduates in some dynamic fields is judged insufficient to meet demand. One more distressing fact in our nation is that entrepreneurial development programs have not yet gathered impetus in the higher educational institutions.

Research in higher education pushes back the frontiers of the human knowledge and intellectual capital. Research is the base of the human advancement. The finding of a research enhances skills of the manpower in the knowledge-dominated age. It gives a researcher both personal and intellectual fulfillment. When a researcher is put into work-practices, it powers the economy & enlightens the society as a whole. Innovation is the key to progress; progressive nations in the world have al-

ways motivated researchers. The corporates in India have realized that they have to invest much more, side by side, and motivate their employees to go in for higher education.

The benefits of an excellent higher education program are far reaching. A paper published in Indian Journal of Science & Technology by P.K.Shetty, M.B.Hiremath, Sreeja and Murugan suggests that University of Madras has the highest research funding with Rs 41.46 crores among the selected universities. All the PhD students get a fellowship from their re-

universities have two to three patents or have just filed for patents. The patent facilitation cell has been established to promote national and international patents of indigenous innovations. In biotechnology, 112 patents have been filed for out of which 7 international patents and 7 national patents have been granted as on December 2005. Although patent filings in India have gone up four-fold in the last five years, they are still relatively low when compared to other Asian countries like South Korea, China and Taiwan.

A critical review of activities of higher educational institutions as well as their budgets needs to be conducted to phase out outmoded activities and create necessary space for new activities. Highlighting on quality structure is all the more necessary in the light of mushrooming of private institutions - with the opening up of the Indian economy.

A recent report by the United Nations Development Programme estimates that 100,000 Indian students migrate to USA for conducting research in various fields. After successful completion of their research programs they get absorbed by great MNCs in USA. If we seriously consider the potential economic gains, which these exceptionally talented people could have brought to India, one realizes that the economic losses due to this migration are huge. Are the policy makers listening?

EXPERT SPEAK: HIGHER EDUCATION FORUM

pective departments to complete their PhD. Pune University received the second highest research funding with Rs 16.02 crores among the selected state universities. The Pune University had spent 68% of its resources from its budget on research activities. The ISO certification of the finance wing has helped Pune University getting more funds for projects from industries as well as funding agencies. NAAC re-accreditation, quality education, quality faculty, good research output and a good organizational management of University of Madras helped receiving more funds when compared to other selected universities in the country.

Among the selected universities, Calcutta University has a total of 10 patents in the last 10 years. Rest of the uni-

It is high time, that we improve the higher education scenario in this country. We need better monitoring system of higher education institutions. Our professional courses must be reorganized with stress on skill development and research. When the present age presents very challenging environment to the businesses because of rapid changes, frequent technology upgrading, changing demographic profiles, research becomes very important to survive in the business. Educational institutions must update their syllabus regularly, appoint trained faculty, provide professional environment for the studies to the young and innovative minds.

The Public Private Partnership plays a pivotal role in the research and develop-

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IN NEWS

The new market growth-drivers

A RECENT research report, titled "Indian Education Services- a Hot Opportunity" has found that professional education has seen rapid growth in the recent past. As per the research the number of engineers will rise at a CAGR of 24% during 2011-2013. Besides, other professional courses like medical and management will witness sharp growth rates in higher education services. The number of doctors will rise at a CAGR of 7.6% during the forecast period. E-learning and the entry of foreign players are potential growth areas, while low pedagogic quality is the major challenge in the higher education. It also revealed that the demand for technical courses such as non-IT engineering will boom in near future. Besides this, the report identified the Indian higher education sector as offering considerable opportunities for foreign universities.

Technology shows the way

SELF-SCHEDULING, long test window are concepts that are being introduced in India for the first time. The Narsee Monjee Management Admission Test (NMAT) 2011 has announced its plans for "on-demand testing" that will bring several advantages to the test takers, and also change the way Computer Based Tests (CBTs) are conducted in India. Some of the salient features of NMAT 2011 include 3 month plus window as against 10 days window for NMAT 2010, options for the candidates to self schedule the date and time of test in real time mode based on seat availability, a maximum choice of 3 attempts, doling away with the negative marking system, adoption of a standard testing environment for differently-abled candidates and lastly, unique question paper for each candidate.

Managing Relations



and the corporate giants from all over the world making India the hot destination for business; PR as an industry in India is thriving over a fast pace growth. "There are also a growing number of 'specialist' Public Relations firms that are mushrooming.

So, the business of Public relations is on a constant growth path. Creating word of mouth and managing reputation will never go out of fashion," explains Amith Prabhu, Head, Corporate Communications at Starcom MediaVest. According to a survey conducted by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham), the size of India's public relations industry is poised to touch the \$6-billion mark by the end of 2010 - owing largely to increased competition amongst companies to build brands resulting in more sales.

PR pedagogy

A career in PR demands less of qualifications and more of knowledge, soft skills and presentation-skills. Here's a list of must-haves that the experts believe are pre-requisites to make it in the industry: "Every aspiring PR professional needs to have basic skill sets and understand what PR is to be able to survive in the industry which is continuously evolving. It is always essential to remember that the basics of writing skills, speaking skills and listening skills would never change even if the medium used may change." - **Moksh Juneja, founder of Avignyata, a social media branding consultancy.** "Passion to deal with people of all types is paramount; an ability to manage egos and expectations is also required. A basic knowledge of communications and an understanding of management are essential skills." - **Amith Prabhu, Head, Corporate Communications at Starcom MediaVest.** "On skills, PR is all about communication. It also requires a bent of mind for research and lots of hard work and patience. A good PR practitioner must have very good people management skills and should have a fair understanding of human behaviour." - **Amit Mohile, Head Media Centre (West), Genesis Burson-Marsteller.**

Trouble-shooting
The PR manager is simply a communications manager, who ensures the organization or the client is heard

CAREERS

PR SCHOOLS:

Few of the renowned institutes offering Public Relations courses are:

- Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi
- Mudra Institute of communication, Ahmedabad
- MET Institute of Mass Media, Mumbai
- Symbiosis institute of Mass communication, Pune
- School of Broadcasting and Communication, Mumbai
- Xavier Institute of communication Mumbai

Choices upfront

In terms of a career choice in PR, it has a broad variety of roles within its purview. According to Prabhu, "The basic avenues in Public Relations include - either to work in a consultancy (pure public relations or social media), or to work in an organization (corporate or non corporate)." The roles of the PR professional in these avenues though seem very close, but are very specific. He further explains, "Working in a Consultancy (very often referred to as an agency) gives a professional a good grounding in the business, working across clients and media, to work in an organization (corporate or non corporate) practice ar-

With increasing role of marketing in present-day corporate scenario, Public Relations is becoming a choice for many young aspirants

and talked about for all the right reasons. And, when a crisis hit, the PR manager dons the mask of the superhero to safeguard the 'image' created. "A career in PR is like working for the police force. While there is no crime, the cops can be breathe, but never relax. But when there is crime or even a hint of crime the force is responsible for maintaining law and order," says Amit Mohile, Head, Media Centre (West), Genesis Burson-Marsteller. "The PR Industry works as the clients' silent force, protects them from danger, at the same time helping them to increase their organizational and brand value," adds Mohile, a former journalist and now a PR professional.

The basic functions to be performed in a PR professional's typical day include -

- Monitoring media in the morning,
- Planning the outreach programmes and executing them,
- Engaging with stakeholders - very often this is journalists and senior executives in the company and
- Reporting or evaluating an activity

Work pattern

Typical the night ends with watching the late night news and finding out what you missed out while you were working. Evaluating the next day's newspapers, studying online blogs, keeping a close watch on what's happening on twitterverse, going for meetings, supporting crisis calls and advising internal stakeholders. "At times there are large format events to manage - Planning for eventualities and working with teams across locations, and getting everyone on the same page." Narrates a senior professional of what is a round-the-clock work pattern followed by most PR professionals. "Starters with a graduate degree can expect a monthly salary of Rs 15000 to Rs 20000 and post graduates could start with Rs 20000 to Rs 25000," says Prabhu. The industry remunerations escalate drastically with experience and also vary from one organisation to another.

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