

NIIT

NIIT in the News

March 2008



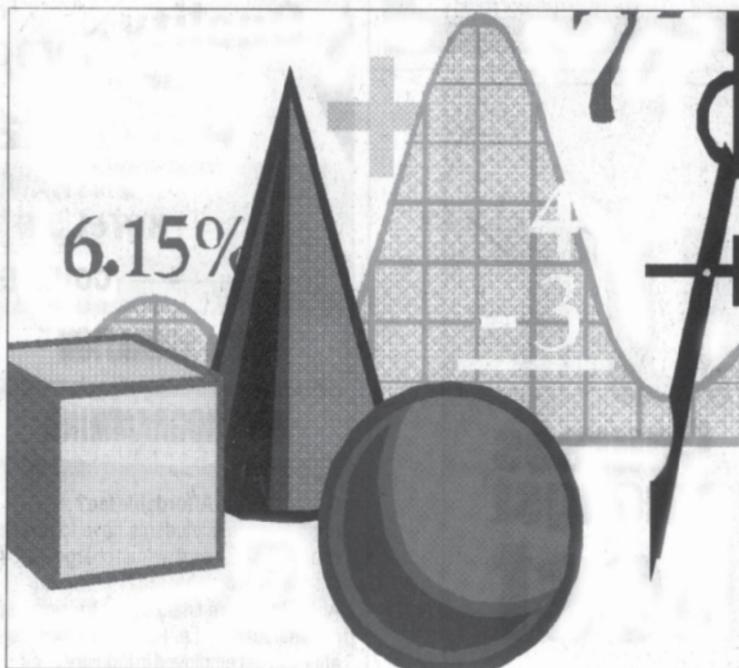
Experimenting with Maths

NIIT has come up with a new concept of introducing Math Labs in schools

Cara Gupta Sarkar

The National Council for Educational Research and Training has indicated in its National Curriculum Framework that Mathematics will be treated as a prime focus area by 2010. It has recommended that all schools set up a Math Lab for promoting the subject and that 20 per cent of the final marks for each student would be from assessments of Math Lab work.

Keeping in tune with the NCERT's suggestion, NIIT has come up with a new and revolutionary concept of introducing Math Labs in schools. It aims to cater to students from classes six to ten. Like physics or chemistry laboratories, the Math lab will also help students to visually experience mathematics.



For many students, mathematics is an abstract subject and they just cannot relate to it. Low self-esteem, stress, low attention span and lesser powers of recollection, are the main disabilities, which make some students perform worse than other classmates. To bridge this gap between a 'good student' and an 'average' one, the NIIT math lab provides the 'three I approach'. The three 'I's' are Imagine (thinking out of the box), Investigate (question and explore) and Interact (to work collectively and share knowledge). A math lab will be set up in schools with NIIT's assistance to enable teachers to demonstrate, explain and reinforce abstract mathematical ideas using concrete objects models, charts, graphs, pictures and posters.

The labs will have computers equipped with software like Geometric Sketch Pads (GSP) -- a special tool, which promotes a child's understanding of geometrical concepts. There will be 31, 57, 30, 70, and 35 activities designed for the 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th classes respectively. ■

The Telegraph
Kolkata
March 6, 2008

Maths made fun



Teachers at the math lab. Picture by Anindya Shankar Ray

Maths need not be only about memorising formulae. Teachers and principals of city schools were introduced to innovative techniques of teaching mathematics at a workshop organised by NIIT at Taj Bengal on February 27.

Recently the Central Board of Secondary

Education (CBSE) has directed its schools to install "math labs" to help students learn by applied reasoning.

"We want to create a set of tools by which every student can visualise and feel maths," said Mohan Kumar who conducted the NIIT math lab.

He demonstrated how 22 petals can be drawn in seven revolutions, thus demonstrating the value of "pi", as the ratio of the circumference and the diameter of a circle as $22/7$.

Even the furniture used in the workshop were in geometrical shapes to add to the excitement. "We would like

to start such a lab in our school too," said Mitali Guha Sarkar, maths teacher at Ballygunge Siksha Sadan, at the end of the seminar.

Chandreyee Bhaumik
Second year, English Honours,
St Xavier's College

Daily Excelsior
Jammu
March 13, 2008



*Excelsior/Ashok
Shampi Venkatesh, vice president NIIT Ltd. addressing media persons on launching ceremony of NIIT Global Net+ program in Jammu on Wednesday.*

NIIT launches its Global Net+ program

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Mar 12: The NIIT today announced the launch of NIIT Global Net+ program in its Jammu Education Centre and became the first institute to offer this specialized training program in the State.

Ms. Shampi Venkatesh, vice president NIIT Ltd, while interacting with mediapersons here today, highlighted the emerging career opportunities in this sector. She apprised that Global Net+ program, a network and infrastructure management program, which provides the learners the option of pursuing globally mapped certification pro-

grams with an option to specialize further in diverse fields of networking and information security.

She said, as per an IDC survey, there will be a need for over three lakh skilled professionals. "And the NIIT's endorsed Global Net+ curriculum is mapped to popular job profiles as per industry requirements" she added.

R K Sharma, NIIT's business partner in Jammu also addressed the press conference and highlighted the need for specialized training programs for career aspirants in the region.

NIIT moulds future entrepreneurs

By Kgotsfalang Botsang

GABORONE - Business studies should instill a sense of entrepreneurship in the minds of those studying it, Assistant Minister of Education, Mr Peter Siele has said.

He was speaking at NIIT graduation ceremony in Gaborone on Friday. He said the graduants must learn that acquisition of tertiary education is not meant to prepare them for employment by another person or corporate or civil service. He added, that graduants must aspire to start their own business ventures.

Business studies should therefore instill a sense of entrepreneurship in the minds of the graduates. It

should arouse the business man spirit that lies untapped in them and reaffirm in them their conscious resolve to control a portion of the business climate of this country, he said.

He commended NIIT for their contribution towards provision of Information Communication Technology (ICT) training.

Mr Peter Siele commended the NIIT for providing ICT training at a time when the country had to embrace the changes brought about by the IT age.

He also commended the Institution for having been among some of the private institutions offering tertiary education even at a time when government was not sponsoring students in private

institutions.

Around 200 graduants were awarded their Professional Diplomas in Information Technology and the Honours Diploma in Applied Management and Business Skills.

Mr Siele also commended the 10 year old institution for having 65 per cent of staff members as locals, adding that it was in line with the localization and training policy.

Congratulating the graduants he said it was important that the institution produces graduates that are globally competitive, adding the graduate should not only be somebody with technical skills but a well rounded person with the right attitude towards work.

He called on the management to meaningfully engage with students and promote bodies such as the Student representative Council, to expose them to issues of governance and develop their leadership skills.

I wish to encourage effective communication between the students and institution leadership to avert potential acrimonious relations that have recently characterized the learning institutions around the country, he said.

He told the graduants that the ceremony marked the beginning of a long life journey, which was sometimes punctuated with uncertainties, competition, disappointments as well as

success stories.

For his part the Chairman and Co-founder of NIIT Mr Rajendra Pawar said students could make a big difference in their country by making their dreams come true.

To achieve that he said students should continue learning new subjects, and think constructively. Think with great passion, keep your mind sharp and clear, said Mr Pawar to the graduants. He said the first step in life is for students to dream what they want to become, adding that they should be ambitious and dream big.

एनआईआईटी देगा माइक्रोसॉफ्ट सर्टिफिकेट

माइक्रोसॉफ्ट जल्द ही बाजार में विंडोज सर्वर, एसक्यूएल सर्वर, विजुअल स्टूडियो-2008 और सिल्वरलाइट लांच करने जा रहा है। तकनीक के क्षेत्र में आ रहे इन्हीं बदलावों को देखते हुए आईटी एक्सपर्ट को भी बेहद पेशेवर अंदाज में तैयार करने की शुरुआत एनआईआईटी की ओर से कर दी गई है।

आईटी सेक्टर में आए दिन बदलाव जारी है, कम्प्यूटर प्रोग्राम की बात करें तो माइक्रोसॉफ्ट लगातार नए-नए उत्पाद पेश कर रहा है। अगर माइक्रोसॉफ्ट की नई पेशकश की बात करें तो वह जल्द ही बाजार में विंडोज सर्वर 2008, एसक्यूएल सर्वर 2008, विजुअल स्टूडियो 2008 और सिल्वरलाइट जल्द ही लांच करने जा रहा है। तकनीक के क्षेत्र में आ रहे इन्हीं बदलावों

एनआईआईटी के मुख्य कार्यकारी अधिकारी विजय के. थडानी ने इस मौके पर कहा कि इस भागीदारी से उनके पाठ्यक्रमों तथा टैकनोलॉजी में हमारे लार्निंग कन्टेंट के शामिल हो जाने से छात्रों की रोजगार क्षमता बढ़ेगी और साथ ही यह यह उद्योग दुनियाभर में अपनी प्रतिस्पर्धी ताकत बरकरार रखेगा। वहीं दूसरी ओर माइक्रोसॉफ्ट लार्निंग के महाप्रबंधक क्रिस पायरी ने



को देखते हुए आईटी एक्सपर्ट को भी बेहद पेशेवर अंदाज में तैयार करने की शुरुआत एनआईआईटी की ओर से कर दी गई है। एनआईआईटी ने दुनियाभर में माइक्रोसॉफ्ट सर्टिफाइड पेशेवरों को तैयार करने के मकसद से माइक्रोसॉफ्ट कॉर्पोरेशन प्राइवेट लिमिटेड के साथ एक अनौखा करार किया है।

इस करार के तहत माइक्रोसॉफ्ट लार्निंग अपनी लाइसेंसशुदा शैक्षिक सामग्री के अधिकार एनआईआईटी को देगी, जिससे आईटी पेशेवर, सॉफ्टवेयर डेवलपर, व्यावसायों आदि को माइक्रोसॉफ्ट टैकनोलॉजी तथा अन्य उत्पादों के बारे में जानकारी तथा आवश्यक कौशल प्रदान किया जाएगा।

कहा कि टैकनोलॉजी के मोर्चे पर हो रही प्रगति तथा ग्राहकों की आकांक्षाओं के चलते उद्योग के लिए पूरी तरह तैयार आईटी पेशेवरों की मांग है और इसे यह भागीदारी पूरा करेगी।

इस तरह अब एनआईआईटी से तैयार होने वाले पेशेवर माइक्रोसॉफ्ट सर्टिफाइड होंगे।

नया कार्यक्रम भारत में एनआईआईटी के 200 शिक्षण केन्द्रों में शुरू किया जा रहा है और इसे जल्द ही चीन सहित 30 अन्य देशों में भी शुरू कर दिया जाएगा। दोनों ही कम्पनियों की ओर से अगले तीन सालों में करीब एक लाख माइक्रोसॉफ्ट टैकनोलॉजी एक्सपर्ट तैयार करने की योजना है।

Empowering Employees!

For any organization looking to outsource its training, the golden rule before joining hands with a training partner is to first chalk out organizational goals and objectives

Simply put, corporate training refers to the design and delivery of learning to improve performance, skills, or knowledge of employees to enhance job performance, or up-skill new employees before they are taken on-board.

Today, India has a very young, growing, and productive workforce, and this advantage is being protected through strong investment and focus on building the talent. With the gap between demand and supply growing in India and the increasingly complex business needs, organizations now realize the need to invest in corporate training.

Given the trends, one can say that corporate training is at its prime with top IT firms spending millions of dollars on employee training and development. Organizations are now moving toward innovative learning mediums like e-learning and m-learning to bridge the talent gap. In addition, organizations are collaborating with academia, and developing finishing schools to build talent.

In this age of outsourcing, where companies across the globe are focusing on keeping the core functions in-house and outsourcing the

rest to domain experts, organizations see benefits in outsourcing important functions like training and development to companies, as it is critical to their business.

Training has emerged as a specialized area. Building structured, standardized, scalable, and rigorous learning mechanisms requires full-time attention. Organizations prefer to outsource the same, given the availability of specialized service providers, who have extensive knowledge about a functional area of work.

Experts believe that while individual training was until now the predominant driving force of the training market, corporate training, too, is gradually picking up with enterprises outsourcing their training needs. The reasons are not too far to seek.

The reason why most IT companies prefer outsourcing rather than having an in-house training department is because of scale and speed. This implies that most training vendors today are able to provide the requisite scale to their clients when it comes to providing consistent and high-quality training to thousands of people across several locations and because training vendors are able to source the services of outside content experts.

Almost all IT companies outsource



Experts Panel

ASHISH BASU

president, Knowledge Business Solution,
NIIT

NAVYUG MOHNOT

CEO, QAI India

NILESH VANI

EVP and head, Aptech Learning Services

their training induction program simply because induction training programs are on a large scale, and the company might not want to divert its resources in induction training. Moreover, with outsourced training vendors, there is no organizational baggage since the partner becomes a sounding board for all training-related decisions.

Courses in Demand

Technology-oriented courses like Java and C++ continue to be in demand even today. Training is generally of two types: the first is base-level training, which includes training in .NET, Oracle, and Microsoft Technologies. The second type is related to industry-specific, structured training like in software engineering, quality management, project management, and process management. One also sees a lot of specialized training in business intelligence, storage and operating system.

As per the *Training* magazine's 2007 industry report, globally, the highest demand for training is in the financial services sector, at 18%, followed by manufacturing at 16% and educational institutions at 15%.

With India becoming a major offshore player and outsourcing hub, the trend is quite different. A major chunk of the corporate training market share goes to the IT/ITeS sector. Other sectors where demand is growing are PSU, financial services, and manufacturing.

Need for Corporate Training

The need of the hour is to make organizations understand that learning of any type should be a continuous process and organizations need to help employees at all levels, from the executive to the senior management level. The training should aid them in identifying their learning paths and support them to achieve it by providing enhancement avenues and encouraging them to acquire skills to get to their desired role.

The benefit of this initiative is two-pronged: employees feel empowered and have more clarity on where they are headed; and they help in reducing noise and issues related

Benefits of Corporate Training

- Specialized Content
- Consistent Instruction
- Scalability of Learning Solution
- Greater Levels of Assessment
- Reduced Cost of Developing Content
- Access to In-depth Research, Case Studies, Success Stories, Live Examples
- Access to Time-tested and World-class Solutions and Expertise
- Retaining Company's Focus on Core Business Activities
- Lower Operating Expenses

to job stagnation, role enhancement, etc.

To supplement the learning paths and assess the skills acquired, companies need to instigate the need for certification. Learning paths act as a step-by-step guide providing competency assessment at each step, skill acquisition for the next step and certification milestones at designated intervals.

Choosing a Training Partner

For any organization looking to outsource its training, the golden rule before joining hands with any training partner is to first chalk out organizational goals and objectives. Enterprises need to first get clarity on their business vision—whether they are looking at training in order to prepare its employees for handling scaling and expansion, or the training aims at equipping employees with skills to defend its market share.

The next important consideration is the background of the training partner. Other considerations include finding out whether the training partner has enough local resources to pitch in during training programs, and whether the training company has enough assets—technology, infrastructure, trainers, and relevant content.

—Stuti Das
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A New Wrinkle on Promoting Innovation

Posted by: Steve Hamm on March 07

NIIT Technologies is one of those second-tier Indian tech services companies that we don't talk about much in the United States. But when I met recently with its chairman, Rajendra Pawar, he told me about a management program they're running that could be a model for other companies—no matter the industry or home country. Like other Indian outsourcers, NIIT focuses a lot on quality improvements and business processes. It ran conventional quality improvement programs in the 1990s, and then came up with an individual quality program—where people applied Six Sigma principles to themselves, spotted defects in how they worked, and went through root cause analysis methods to eliminate the defects. For the past three years, the company's management has been preparing a new wave of changes, which Pawar calls the Personal Innovation Initiative. It's just launching now. The idea is that in order to have an innovative company, he needs to create a culture of innovation and innovative individuals.

The program consists of a workflow system for coming up with creative ideas and getting support to get them implemented, tools such as de Bono Consulting's innovation training programs, and a little ever-present leather bound booklet in which they'll keep track of their progress. The message of the program is simple. They're supposed to ask themselves, "Why not?" whenever they encounter a problem or limitation. Rather than just putting up with things as they are, the employees are supposed to come up with creative ways of changing things. As you can expect, there will be metrics of personal progress. But Pawar doesn't want to over-measure things. The main stimulus is supposed to be creating role models and giving people rewards. "When you keep asking, 'Why not? Why not?' it's transformational," says Pawar. "If individuals start doing this, institutional change is a consequence." He's starting with pilots in four deliver centers--about 10% of his workforce.

The program seems kind of gimmicky, especially the little book. But these kinds of inspirational behavior-modifying programs have served the Indian outsourcing leaders well over the years. And remember Thomas Watson Sr.'s "Think" motto at IBM. It served as a constant reminder of what the company's business depended on. So I'm curious about how this program will work out.

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/Now

SA on track to accelerate IT delivery



President Thabo Mbeki met his International Advisory Council on IT in Tswane today

March 15, 2008, 18:15

President Thabo Mbeki's International Advisory Council on information technology is confident that the country is on track to accelerate IT delivery. The President met his council in Tswane today to talk about IT matters.

The time was used to reflect on achievements. Government has been heavily criticised for not delivering fast enough on the countries IT needs, but the council says the countries policies are clearer now.

"We are feeling confident that now we can inter- connect those various policies and start seeing the outcomes," says the NIIT

Chairman, Rajendra Pawar.

Vice President of Microsoft International, Ali Faramawy, says: "In terms of confidence of how we go forward ... whether things will never get better, the answer is yes, it is a simple yes because there is a willingness and the intentions are there."

Government will now set up various committees to monitor implementation of IT policies. With South Africa hosting the 2010 world cup, it has been thrust into a unique and enviable position.

In just a few short years, it seems set to catch up with the rest of the world and with that, bringing down the cost of doing business. The government will however have to keep its eye on rural communities to avoid widening the digital gap.



14:19:41

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The Chinese Will Learn Computers from NIIT

By Pankaj Maru
Mumbai, Apr 8, 2008



Recently, NIIT has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Wuxi Municipal Government, to set up IT training centers that will teach computer programs to the locals. Under the MoU, NIIT and Wuxi Government will work together, to develop a talent pool to cater to the demand of IT industry in China.

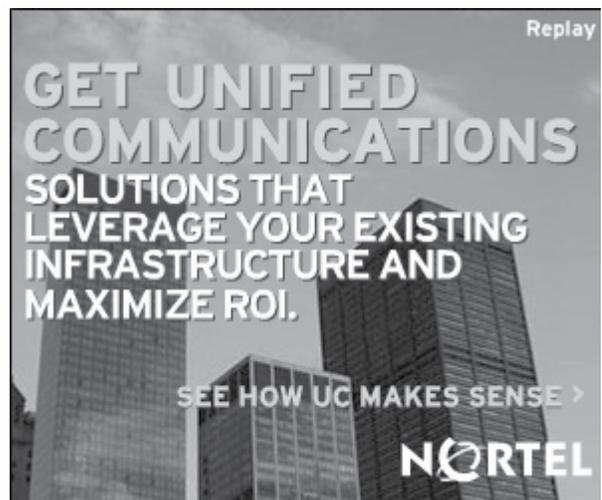
G. Raghavan, president (Individual Learning Solutions) of NIIT and Yang Weize, general secretary of Wuxi Municipal Government had signed the MoU, during the 'Wuxi-Bangalore Business Seminar on Service Cooperation.'

The Wuxi Municipal Government has designated Raghavan as 'chief consultant' for the city. Under this role, Raghavan will help the local government to set up IT infrastructure that can promote the local talent pool.

"We are committed to develop Wuxi as the leading outsourcing centre in China. We are delighted to find a partner like NIIT to support us in this mission. NIIT's long presence in China and their pioneering experience in India will help us in developing a large pool of IT human resources in Wuxi," said Weize, party general secretary of Wuxi.

According to Raghavan, the tie-up with Wuxi Government is a significant enhancement of NIIT's decade long commitment to develop IT talent in the fast growing Chinese market.

"I am honored by the faith reposed by this appointment. It is indeed an acknowledgement of NIIT's global experience, and its applicability in China in the field of IT talent development," he said.



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In addition, NIIT has also signed another MoU with Wuxi New District for educational purposes. Under these partnerships, the NIIT will offer IT education and training as per the industry needs, and Wuxi Government will promote its IT educational policies at all levels of administration.

About relationship between the two countries in the IT field, Raghavan said, "Leading Asian economies, India and China can come together, and use their strengths innovatively in the area of developing talent for the global knowledge economy."

"In 1997, NIIT ventured into China, through an association with the Municipal Education Arm of Pudong. A decade back, it was not easy for an Indian company to scale the Great Wall of China, and enter its vast education market," said Prakash Menon, president of NIIT China.

"But the fact that the Chinese government was aware of our credentials helped. NIIT made a quiet entry into China, and began operations by understanding its education market, and the ways in which it could be addressed," added Menon.

Wuxi city, also called 'Liangxi' is an emerging economic center of China, situated in Jiangsu Province. The city is 128 kms away from Shanghai, and closely follows the foot steps of the former in the fields of business and commercial activities. Also, the city has earned the reputation as 'Mini Shanghai,' because of the silicon and solar cell manufacturing industries.

NIIT is offering IT educational services and trainings in China for the past 1 decade. About 129 local universities and colleges have tied-up with NIIT for the IT training programmes. More than 170 centers have been setup across 23 provinces, and about 50,000 local people have been trained by NIIT so far.

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[NIIT Announces Insurance Framework Solutions](#)

NIIT, MICROSOFT TIE UP FOR HR

Here's another short cut to finding employment with some of the top IT companies like Microsoft. The IT giant has teamed up with IT education provider, NIIT to make a large pool of Microsoft Certified professionals, available for global talent requirement.

As per the agreement, Microsoft Learning will provide rights of its licensed educational content to NIIT, for assisting IT professionals, software developers, businesses and others to gain skills on Microsoft technologies and products and thereby earn Microsoft Certification.

Students will be skilled in the latest Developer and Database platforms comprising of technologies like Visual Studio, .NET and SQL Server. Programs are also being developed for the soon-to-be-launched Microsoft products including Windows Server 2008, SQL Server 2008, Visual Studio 2008, and leading technologies like Silverlight.



New Deal: NIIT's G. Raghavan, V. Thadani, Microsoft's Chris Pirie & R. Mittal (Left to Right)

TECH TALK



Microsoft ties up with NIIT

HT Horizons
Correspondent

Microsoft and NIIT, have agreed to deepen their ongoing alliance to make available a large pool of Microsoft Certified professionals, to cater to global talent requirements. Microsoft Learning will provide licensed educational content to NIIT, for assisting IT professionals, software developers, businesses, and others, to gain the skill edge on Microsoft technology and products. With the integration of the Microsoft Autho-

rised Curriculum into its flagship career program-GNIIT, NIIT will enable career aspirants and IT professionals to earn Microsoft Certification.

"Rapid technology, advancements and dynamic customer needs call for industry ready IT professionals. In this environment, Microsoft Learning is focused on helping customers and partners realise their full potential by equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills," said Chris Pirie, General Manager, Microsoft Learning. Joining

Helping customers realise their full potential by equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills

hands with NIIT in India is a smart move as it this reaches out to a larger audience and will generate more trained and certified personnel for the industry.

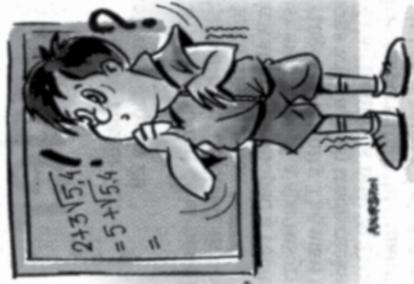
Students who go through the integrated programme will emerge skilled in the latest Developer and Database platforms including Visual Studio, .NET and SQL Server which will enhance their employability. GNIIT students will also be eligible to appear for relevant Microsoft Certification examinations after this course.

NIIT is also developing training programs for many soon-to-be-launched Microsoft products like Windows Server 2008, SQL Server 2008, Visual Studio 2008, and leading technologies like Silverlight, which will be offered to students across key geographical regions like India and China. The new range of programmes will be available in 200 centres across India and also in 30 other countries. ■

The Hindustan Times
Kolkata
March 1, 2008

EASY COUNT A TECH SOLUTION TO SIMPLIFY PROBLEMS AND EXPLAIN BASIC CONCEPTS

Maths lab to help overcome numbers phobia



Sulagna Sengupta
Kolkata, February 29

MATHS IS going to become interesting in schools if an IT major has its way.

As part of its global talent development strategy, NIIT's maths lab is going to provide students an opportunity to understand, internalise, discover and verify the basic mathematical and geometrical concepts through concrete objects and situations. To do this, the company is providing a complete pack-

age consisting of multiple teaching and learning aid.

Comprising technological applications, videos, and measuring instruments, the maths solution package would make the subject easier for students from Class I-XII.

President of NIIT School Learning Solution L. Balasubramanian said: "Though some CBSE schools have already installed the entire set-up, many are unaware about the package. We aim to reach out to teachers so that they make it a part of the school curriculum."

However, National Council of Education and Research (NCERT) has made it mandatory to implement maths lab in all schools, especially for students of Class VI-X.

NIIT's business unit is conducting six workshops for teachers across India, one of which was held here on Wednesday. Teachers from nearly 120 schools participated in the programme. The software helps students to get an overview of various mathematical concepts and can also construct geometrical figures.

Balasubramanian said: "Teachers will be provided with e-learning tutorials to help them guide students. All technical support would be provided by the unit".

Emerging from the workshop, Anuja Rohtagi, assistant teacher in-charge Maheswari Balika Vidyalaya, said: "Math lab is a great thing. If installed it will benefit students. As most students suffer from maths phobia, the technology makes the subject easier and simpler for students."

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School children from slum areas in New Delhi, throng at the adjoining NIIT HiWEL Playground Learning Centres.

Public-private bond crucial to talent growth

Policy initiatives to encourage ties between formal and non-formal institutions need to be taken to develop skills

NIIT chairman and co-founder Rajendra S Pawar is a prominent proponent of the need for a strong partnership between the formal and the non-formal sectors in education. Of late, warnings of a manpower shortage have grown louder—not just in the IT industry but in other areas of the economy, as well. Pawar talks to FE's Sanjay Anand on ways to spread education and disseminate skills to tap the global job opportunities. Excerpts:

The IT industry has been very concerned about the manpower shortage in the country. How serious is the issue?

We conducted a study some years ago, which looked at the demographic changes taking place across the world. It showed that by 2020, India will have a surplus working population of about 47 million, whereas developed countries will have a shortfall of 40 million because of an ageing population. This is an overall talent shortage and not just in IT. So, there is a mammoth opportunity for India. These jobs will not come towards India automatically but will happen only if the work force is educated and skilled. There are many other studies that show that only 10-15% of the graduates are employable. The rest are not skilled enough. Similarly, at the industry level, particularly in the IT and ITeS sectors, there is an acute shortage as predicted by Nasscom.

So, what can we do about it?

First, time should not be wasted on debating whether there is a shortage or not. It is there and the reality is that, there are enough well-paying jobs to get, provided we can gear up for them. While the formal system produces over 3 lakh engineers and 20 lakh graduates, the mismatch exists. On the one hand, we have been saying that the formal sector alone can't cope with this shortage/skills situation on its own. On the other, we know that private institutions in the non-formal sector have shown the way by creating talent for the IT and ITeS industries. For instance, we are often told

that NIIT has not only created a training industry in the IT sector, but that it also created enormous pressure on the formal sector to respond to the changing needs by introducing courses like BCA, B.Sc computer science, B.Sc IT and so on. Today, nearly one lakh engineering students from the formal sector do a course from NIIT every year. So, we see an interesting interplay, but that has more to do with the entrepreneurial activity rather than a planned action of policy formulation. If entrepreneurial ventures in the private sector work in harmony with the formal sector through a policy framework that meets the need of the land, just think of the impact it would create.

Why is the tie-up between the government and private sector so important?

The formal sector has all the assets—land, buildings, infrastructure and students. The non-formal sector has the innovativeness, creativity, research, speed and now meeting in the market not because of a supportive policy but in the absence of it. There is a compelling logic, therefore, to create a supportive policy framework which would eliminate all inefficiencies and create a vibrant private sector, to lend a helping hand to the formal sector, which is struggling both on the quantitative as well as the qualitative fronts.

What is holding this partnership back?

The absence of a policy. There is enough lip-service though. There are many within the government who want that change, but still there is a larger number who either do not comprehend the need or are at a loss as to how to create a workable policy.

What is the argument of those not in favour?

There is some anecdotal evidence of poor

quality in the private sector, which is used as a beating stick. It should be noted, however, that there are equal if not more number of cases of poor quality in the formal sector, but they are always forgiven. The argument is that the formal sector doesn't have a profit motive, while the private sector has a profit motive. So, no one is taking a rational view that there is a need to address the weakness in both sectors. Instead, what get talked about are the pluses of the formal sector and the minuses of the private initiative, giving an unbalanced view. However, members of bodies like the Knowledge Commission, who are more detached from day-to-day operations of either sectors, are increasingly realising that we have to introduce policy changes that leverage the fantastic opportunity of the public-private partnership.

So, how do we go forward?

The Planning Commission has developed the idea of a Skills Development Mission. The government is putting substantial seed capital into this effort. So, we see that some of the ideas that were being discussed over the past couple of years are now being factored into the policy framework. The feeble voices within the formal sector that were seeking such reforms for partnership with the private sector are now getting stronger and stronger.

That will surely take care of some funding?

Funding is only one part. However, the more important issue has always been that, the formal sector has not taken due cognisance of the importance of the private or non-formal sector because of which there have been no serious efforts. We are now seeing policy planners take a more comprehensive view of the ground realities and that should initiate reforms in the right direction.

How is industry coping?

They are grappling it, with a lot of difficulty. Employers end up investing time and money in re-training the output of the formal system.

Why do you say it is not an industry responsibility?

Well... because the role of the education system in every country is to prepare work-ready people. If industry is finding that only 15% of the people are work-ready, then it indicates a serious gap between expectation and delivery in the education system. One way to bridge the gap is to build a policy framework that accelerates public-private partnerships. So, we are asking the government to create a framework for the formal and the non-formal sector to work together so that we can reach out to more students. NIIT, for instance, has various joint initiatives with the likes of IITs, IIMs and IIFT, which show industry-academia and industry-academia partnerships in a joint development.

So what are the main points that you are seeking in the policy?

First, The Private University Bill, which is pending in Parliament, should be enacted so that private universities can be set up in an open and transparent way. Secondly, the level of student-financing to be enhanced through scholarships and the voucher system should be implemented effectively. Ideas like the voucher system which gives students the choice of where to spend the money (formal/ non-formal education) could put a lot of pressure of improvement on the system.



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