Employment scenario in India grim, says ILO report
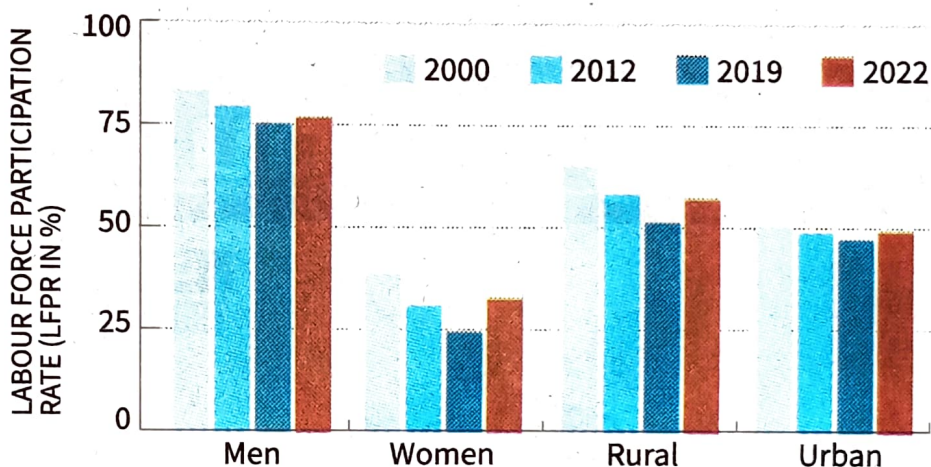
A. M. Jigeesh
NEW DELHI

The share of those with secondary or higher education among the unemployed youth in India has almost doubled from 35.2% in 2000 to 65.7% in 2022, according to the India Employment Report 2024 released by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Institute of Human Development (IHD) here on Tuesday.

The report says that youngsters account for almost 83% of the country's unemployed workforce. Employment and underemployment of the youth increased between 2000 and 2019 but declined during the pandemic years, the study, released by Chief Economic Adviser V. Anantha Nageswaran, said, adding that educated youngsters experienced much higher levels of unemployment in the country during the period. The Labour Force Participation Rate

Employment blues

Labour participation for various sections increased slightly in 2022 (compared to 2019) but was still low vis-a-vis 2000

(LFPR), Worker Population Ratio (WPR) and Unemployment Rate (UR) showed a long-term deterioration between 2000 and 2018, but witnessed an improvement after 2019, the study said. It added that the improvement coincides with periods of economic distress. "This improvement needs to be interpreted cautiously as jobs generated in the slowdown period raise questions about the drivers of these changes," the authors of the report said.

The report said India's job story over the past two decades had seen some paradoxical improvements in labour market indicators, while the basic long-term feature of the employment situation in the country continued to be insufficient growth of the non-farm sectors and the ability of these sectors to absorb workers from agriculture.

Employment scenario in India grim: report

"This is notwithstanding the fact that non-farm employment grew at a higher rate than farm employment over the different periods prior to 2018," the report said.

Labour from agriculture was mainly absorbed by the construction and services sectors.

Also, almost 90% of workers remain engaged in informal work, while the share of regular work, which steadily increased after 2000, declined after 2018.

There are widespread livelihood insecurities, the report added, with only a small percentage being covered with social protection measures, precisely in the non-agriculture, organised sector. "Worse, there has been a rise in contractualisation, with only a small percentage of regular workers covered by long-term contracts," the report said. While India's large young workforce is a demographic dividend, the report noted that they don't appear to have the skills to deliver — with 75% of youth unable to send emails with attachments, 60% unable to copy and paste files, and 90% unable to put a mathematical formula into a spreadsheet.

The lack of quality employment opportunities is reflected in the high level of joblessness among young people, especially among those who have achieved higher education, the report noted. "Many highly educated young people are unwilling to take on low-paying, insecure jobs that are currently available and would rather wait in the hopes of securing better employment in the future," the study said. The country is also facing the challenge of a substantial gender gap in the labour market, with low rates of female labour force participation. Throwing light on the growing social inequalities, the report said despite affirmative action and targeted policies, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes still lag in terms of access to better jobs.

'Govt. can't solve all social, economic problems such as unemployment'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Asserting that it was incorrect to think that government intervention could solve every social and economic challenge, Chief Economic Advisor V. Anantha Nageswaran contended that a diagnosis was easier than the solution when it concerned issues like unemployment.

Speaking at the unveiling of the "India Employment Report 2024: Youth Employment, Education and Skills" co-authored by the ILO and The Institute for Human Development on Tuesday, Mr. Nageswaran wondered what the government could do on the

Anantha Nageswaran

employment front "short of hiring more itself".

"In the normal world, it is the commercial sector who needs to do the hiring," he pointed out, while listing out the actions taken by the government to spur job creation in recent years, such as the skill development efforts and the National Education Policy

of 2020, which he stressed should not "become hostage to political considerations."

The CEA also pointed to the corporate income tax breaks for salary payments as well as subsidies towards provident fund contributions and asserted, "Indeed, we can state very confidently now that the tax code no longer favours capital accumulation over employment generation."

Citing the 1970s' satirical film *Mohammed bin Tughlaq* written and directed by Cho Ramaswamy, the CEA said there is "an element of truth" in what the film's protagonist, who becomes the fictional country's Prime Mi-

nister and seeks to address problems like corruption, says about unemployment.

"For unemployment, he simply says, "Look, all I will do is I'll keep talking on every dais and stage that we have to solve the unemployment problem, and that is my contribution to solving the unemployment problem. Because this is not something I can address."

The CEA also wondered whether governments worldwide were reducing the incentive to work through welfare policies intended to 'ameliorate the negative consequences of unemployment' that ended up disrupting the labour market for the worse.

First Dalit president in 27 years and first-ever BAPSA nominee in JNUSU

The newly elected students' panel has two Dalit members — Left's Dhananjay, who was elected the president, and BAPSA's Priyanshi Arya, who won general secretary post; students' body hopes to address infrastructural issues, reinstate GSCASH

Ashna Butani
NEW DELHI

A day after Holi, the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) campus was soaked in hues of red and blue as flags of winning student outfits fluttered on the campus. United Left Panel candidate Dhananjay was declared the winner of the president's post in the student body poll results that were announced on Sunday. He is the first Dalit candidate to hold the post in 27 years.

Another Dalit candidate, Priyanshi Arya, from the Ambedkarite organisation Birsa Ambedkar Phule Students Association (BAPSA), was elected the general secretary. Ms. Arya's victory marks the first time that BAPSA, founded 10 years ago, has made an entry into the central panel. The RSS-affiliated ABVP trailed on

(From left to right) JNUSU president Dhananjay, vice-president Avjit Ghosh, general secretary Priyanshi Arya and joint secretary Mohd. Sajid. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

all four students' body posts.

"After a decade, BAPSA finally made it into JNUSU central panel. JNUSU isn't red, now blue is in it," read an X post by the Ambedkarite outfit.

Ms. Arya, a Dalit woman from Uttarakhand's Haldwani district, said she hopes to fight for the reduction of weightage in the viva-voce, "where Bahujan students are discriminated against."

"I also want to address the high dropout rates among students from the SC and ST communities," Ms. Arya said. Also on her agenda are the construction of gender-neutral washrooms and the use of the pronouns they/them in official documents.

Pramod Sagar, president of BAPSA's JNU unit, said the party has a presence across universities in Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Uttarakhand. "Many parties field Dalit candidates now. However, the discourse was started by BAPSA, which pledged to question Brahmanical structures on campuses," he said. Meanwhile, the United Left Panel stated that it had fielded candidates across sections with inclusivity on campus being the end goal.

Charter of demands

Speaking about the plans of the newly elected union, Mr. Dhananjay, a PhD scholar from Bihar's Gaya, said, "We will organise a GBM [general body meeting] across schools and then prepare a charter of demands based on the students' suggestions."

Other JNUSU members said the union will tackle sexual harassment, accessibility, and infrastructural issues . The students' union will also seek to re-establish the Gender Sensitisation Committee Against Sexual Harassment (GSCASH). The panel also intends to tackle gender-based discrimination and homophobia on the campus.

'Started with 300 votes'

BAPSA's history on campus can be traced back to 2014. Rahul Sonpimple, former BAPSA leader, said, "The basic idea was that upper-caste people lead the parties both on the Right and the Left. In 2015, when we first contested the polls, BAPSA got 300 votes. It was a decent beginning ." He said other parties have, over the years, fielded more candidates from marginalised sections as talking about caste has now become a necessity.

ISRO to hold training sessions in educational institutions

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will conduct the Space Science and Technology Awareness Training (START) 2024 programme during April and May.

In this connection, ISRO solicits Expression of Interest (EoI) to host START-2024 in educational institutes, universities, colleges within India who are offering UG and PG courses in physical sciences and technology.

The main objective of the training programme is to attract the youngsters to the fields of space science and technology.

The training modules will comprise introductory level topics on various verticals of space science and technology. In addition to these, there will be sessions on Indian space exploration programmes and research opportunities.

Post-graduate students and final year undergraduate students of physical sciences (physics and chemistry) and technology (e.g. electronics, computer science, mechanical, applied physics, radiophysics, optics & opto-electronics, instrumentation and other associated subjects) studying in educational institutes, universities and colleges within India are eligible to be considered for the training.

Last date for online registration of EoI through https://jigyasa.iirs.gov.in/START by institutes, colleges, universities is April 2. Student registration opens on April 8 and ends on April 12.

A ND-ND

A cry for help, a call for reflection and action

The current socio-academic climate in India raises significant concerns in the context of the nurturing of students. The transformation of socio-economic dynamics is not only instilling a sense of despondency among youth but is also becoming a cause for stress in their academic endeavours. This often causes students to go into a spiral, manifesting itself tragically in a spate of suicides.

Take for example, reports of a note that a teenager from Bihar wrote before fading away in Kota, Rajasthan (the hub of tuition/coaching). The stress that the child was facing was evident in the reference to the 'Joint Entrance Examination' (JEE) that the child was preparing for. In 2023, there were reports of youngsters preparing for various competitive exams in Kota ending their lives. Based on police records, 15 students faded away in 2022; 18 in 2019 and 20 in 2018. There was negligible data during the COVID-19 pandemic years of 2020-21 when traditional coaching centres were either closed or operated virtually.

Coaching and student welfare in Kota

Every year, over 2,00,000 aspirants from every corner of India flock to Kota in pursuit of 'academic excellence', to prepare rigorously for 'coveted' entrance examinations such as the JEE and the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET), the gateways to engineering and medical education in India, respectively. Enrolling in its residential coaching institutes, they ensure that Kota's economy thrives – an impressive annual revenue of "approximately ₹10,000 crore" due to these educational pursuits.

While the children pursue their goals, the management of these institutes have taken several significant, yet sombre, measures. Hostels have now been equipped with 'anti-suicide features' that include devices fixed to ceiling fans to prevent children from harming themselves and iron grills across balconies and passage ways. However, it is difficult to maintain uniformity in the approximately 25,000 paying guest accommodations in Kota.

In another preventive measure, the local government has stopped all routine testing in coaching institutes for over two months as a temporary measure. Hostel staff are also being trained and prepared to deal with the welfare of their wards. In the push towards professional development there is specialised training in mess administration, psychological support, behavioural counselling and an emphasis on overall student welfare. The Kota police have pushed hostel wardens to become more proactive by endorsing campaigns such as "darwaze pe

Sumant Kumar

is Assistant Professor in the Alliance School of Liberal Arts, Alliance University

The unyielding quest for scholastic distinction often causes many an Indian student to go into a spiral, with tragic outcomes

dastak (knock on door)," while kitchen workers and meal service providers have been encouraged to alert authorities immediately if they notice students missing their meals or leaving their food untouched.

In 2022, according to data in the "Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India 2022" report by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), over 13,044 Indian students ended their lives – 7.6% of the total suicide fatalities in that year. Another grim statistic was that the number of suicides (students) rose from 10,335 in 2019, to 12,526 in 2020, to 13,089 in 2021. As in NCRB data (2018), nearly 95,000 students faded away between 2007-18.

There is also another grim fact. Over half of India's populace, specifically 53.7%, is made up of individuals under the age of 25. However, a significant barrier to their entry into the labour force is widespread deficiency in essential skills. The last decade has seen a distressing rise in student suicides, which is also connected to a lack of viable job opportunities.

The education system

In contemporary India, the lack of (suitable) job opportunities, a limited number of seats in government institutions and the high fees charged in private institutions have all created a climate where there is intense competition. This is deeply troubling and an issue that requires urgent attention. The relentless strain of competition plays on the young student, which is made worse by the pressures imposed on the child by parents without understanding their child's wishes. While some are coerced, often relentlessly, into achieving the 'pinnacle' of academic excellence, others are urged to aspire for admission in a 'desired institution'. Many others face harsh criticism for failing to 'meet expectations'. When the weight of these demands proves unbearable, or their aspirations seem impossible to satisfy, some choose to escape all of this in a tragic way.

An All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) report (2019-20), showed that only 21.4% of colleges are under governmental administration, with 78.6% under private entities (as reported by the Union Education Ministry). A study in 2008 in *The Lancet* revealed that nearly 61% of global suicide fatalities were concentrated in Asia. Numerous families in India (especially in the middle and lower-income brackets), face financial constraints that prevent them from providing their children with supplementary educational resources such as coaching and tuition. This lack of support in turn places immense and intense pressure on students to succeed in examinations of various kinds. A lack of success then leads to tragedy. Additionally, there are numerous instances of faculty members in institutions often chastising students for their subpar academic performance, when they should be offering encouragement and assistance instead.

Society and family expectations

In contemporary Indian society, there is a noticeable shift in family structures with a weakening of crucial connections between children and their families. This in turn impacts a child's ability to engage with their relatives. Various factors influence a child's development within the Indian context, in turn affecting social relationships. The lack of establishing strong bonds between parents and children becomes clear when parents impose their academic preferences on their child. Parental control, emotional detachment, and societal expectations contribute to the sidelining of a student's individual interests. As a result, students grapple with the hurdle of meeting parental standards, especially when they have no innate interest in the subject or course forced upon them. A feature in Indian society is the emphasis on expectations, performance, and personal interests in family interactions. These dynamics can either propel students forward through positive reinforcement or negatively affect them due to socio-economic circumstances.

The inability to satisfy parental expectations can leave young individuals feeling humiliated, dejected, desperate, and harassed. It is crucial to create an atmosphere of empathy and acceptance to cancel out any potential negative consequences for our younger generation.

The unyielding quest for scholastic distinction often overshadows the social facets of a student's existence, driving them to sacrifice interpersonal bonds and pursuits that are essential for a well-rounded persona. It is disconcerting to find young students voicing their inner turmoil on social media, signalling distress. Educational purveyors themselves fail to provide the requisite emotional scaffolding that these young minds require. Moreover, pupils from socioeconomically underserved communities are confronted with the stark actualities of endemic discrimination, thereby intensifying their hardships.

So, it becomes clear that there is an urgent need for our social infrastructure to grow more supportive and accommodative and support these young lives.

Those in distress are encouraged to seek professional help, visit counsellors or call helplines

Is unemployment a major factor in shaping the vote choice of the youth?

In the debate over who bears responsibility in employment generation, the narrative swings like a pendulum between governmental bodies and individual citizens. This discourse not only reflects the complexities of economic challenges but also plays a role in shaping public opinion

Jyoti Mishra
Sanjay Kumar
Sandeep Shastri
Suhas Palshikar

For the upcoming Lok Sabha elections of 2024, Narendra Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have strategically crafted their narrative around four key pillars: the poor, the youth, women, and farmers, referring to them as the 'chaar jatiyan' (four castes). This rhetoric is a departure from traditional caste politics in India, emphasising development and inclusivity under the pledge for a *Viksit Bharat* (Developed India). Among these, youth emerge as a critical focus. Prime Minister Modi's call to action in his 110th 'Mann ki Baat', urging first-time voters to participate through the 'Mera Pehla Vote - Desh Ke Liye' campaign, underscores the importance of the youth's engagement in the democratic process.

However, amidst these promises, a pertinent question arises: Does the BJP agenda truly resonate with the concerns of the youth, particularly regarding employment? Using data sourced from the Lokniti-CSDS survey, we attempt to unravel the pulse of the young electorate from Delhi. Conducted in the first week of March 2024, the survey involves interviews with 611 students in Delhi.

Existing employment realities

Existing realities reflect the struggles and aspirations of Indian youth to secure employment within a constrained job market. The youth themselves are aware of the limited employment opportunities in recent times. Data indicates that an overwhelming majority of youth in Delhi believe that it has become somewhat difficult (55%) or very difficult (25%) to secure employment in the last two years (Table 1). Despite claims of economic *growth, the issue of job creation* continues to be the biggest challenge. This uncertainty significantly impacts the opinion of the youth on their future job prospects. A considerable proportion of students express uncertainty about their employment prospects, particularly concerning their educational qualifications. While approximately a quarter (24%) express confidence in securing employment, a significant portion remains uncertain (Table 2). The youth aspire to secure stable jobs with security, exhibiting a prevalent preference for government jobs – with three in five (63%) aspiring for a government job.

The BJP initiated a narrative of transforming youth from job seekers to job creators within its vision for economic development. This idea promotes entrepreneurship, innovation, and self-reliance among the youth, aiming to shift their orientation from seeking employment to creating opportunities, not only for themselves but also for others. Interestingly, when youth in the survey were asked about this slogan, nearly half aligned themselves with the Prime Minister's vision of becoming job creators, suggesting resonance with the government's emphasis on entrepreneurship. Conversely, a little over one fourth (27%) stated they would seek employment. Nearly one in 10 also mentioned an inability to marshal

Not enough jobs

In the realm of electoral decision-making among Delhi's youth, unemployment and inflation emerge as the important issues shaping voting preferences. Nearly four in five youngsters assert that the issues of unemployment and inflation would impact their voting decision

Table 1: Perceived ease of attaining employment over the past two years

In last two years, availing employment has become	%
Very difficult	25
Difficult	55
Easy	16
Very easy	3

Note: The rest did not respond.
Question asked: Compared to the last two years, is it easier or more difficult to get work or employment now?

Table 2: Surety about job prospects relative to education among Delhi's youth

How likely are you to get a job with the course you are doing?	%
A lot	24
Somewhat	49
Not much	16
Not at all	10

Note: The rest did not respond.
Question asked: What do you think, how likely are you to get a job with study you are doing – a lot, somewhat, not much, or not at all?

Table 3: Aligning with Prime Minister Modi's vision of becoming job creators

Job giver or job seeker?	%
Preferred to become a job giver	47
Preferred to become a job seeker	27
Lack of resources to become a job giver	12

Note: The rest either did not respond or gave other responses.
Question asked: The government says that don't be a job seeker but be a job giver, do you think that you can become a job giver to others in the times to come?

Table 4: Student perspectives on becoming job creators across diverse backgrounds

Gender	Preferred to become a job giver (%)
Women	39
Men	58
Stream of study	
Arts	39
Commerce	54
Science	48

Note: The rest studying other courses.
Question asked: The government says that don't be a job seeker but be a job giver, do you think that you can become a job giver to others in the times to come?

Table 5: Youth believe that the people themselves are responsible for unemployment

Who is responsible for increasing unemployment?	%
Narendra Modi-led Central government	30
Kejriwal's State government	14
The people themselves	35
Jobs are decreasing in every country	9

Note: The rest did not respond.
Question asked: According to you who is responsible for increasing unemployment

Table 6: How the youth are not disregarding the government's effort in generating employment

Assessment of Modi government in generating employment	%
Modi government completely failed	16
Modi government tried but couldn't succeed	55
Modi government has been completely successful	25

Note: The rest did not respond.
Question asked: Some people believe that the Modi government has completely failed in providing employment, but some people say that Modi government tried its best but could not succeed. What do you think?

Table 7: Unemployment, the most influential factor for youth's voting decision

	%
Unemployment	41
Inflation	23
Narendra Modi's leadership	12
Corruption	9
Ram Mandir	5
Your religious identity	2
Beneficiaries from government schemes	1

Note: All figures are in percent. The rest did not respond
Question asked: Which one of these issues will mostly influence your voting decision?

> The BJP initiated a narrative of transforming youth from job seekers to job creators within its vision for economic development. This idea promotes entrepreneurship, innovation, and self-reliance among the youth

resources to generate employment for themselves and others. This segment does not directly negate the overall idea of job creation (Table 3). Across gender, men exhibit a higher preference for this role, with nearly three in five young men (58%) expressing their willingness to become job creators compared to two in five (39%) women intending the same. Moreover, within various streams of study, the preference for becoming a job creator was higher among commerce

students (54%), followed by science (48%). Students studying the arts (39%) were less likely to aspire for this role (Table 4).

Who should generate employment?

In the ongoing debate over who bears the responsibility in employment generation, the narrative swings like a pendulum between governmental bodies and individual citizens.

This discourse not only reflects the complexities of economic challenges but also plays a significant role in shaping public opinion. The attribution of responsibility to escalating unemployment rates is clearly visible among close to half the respondents. Three out of every 10 youngsters hold the Central government accountable, while one seventh point towards the State government for the squeeze in job opportunities.

Moreover, one third of the students attribute individual responsibility to the lack of employment opportunities (Table 5) and this perception is further nuanced by the belief in the efficacy of the Central government's efforts. While some acknowledge the endeavours made by the government in creating job opportunities, others assert that these efforts have fallen short of expectations. Interestingly, only one in every six (16%) admitted to a complete failure on the part of the Central government in providing adequate employment opportunities (Table 6).

Will issue of unemployment drive voter's choice?

In the realm of electoral decision-making among Delhi's youth, unemployment and inflation emerge as the important issues shaping voting preferences. Nearly four in five youngsters assert that the issues of unemployment and inflation would impact their voting decision. When asked to select the most important issue that would shape their vote choice, the issue of unemployment eclipses other important concerns, with nearly two-fifths of the students emphasising its significance. In contrast, inflation (23%), leadership under Prime Minister Narendra Modi (12%), corruption (9%), and other issues trail behind (Table 7). This data captures the centrality of economic concerns, especially unemployment, in shaping the electoral calculus of Delhi's youth.

In the lead-up to the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP has strategically positioned itself as the forerunner of development and inclusivity, particularly targeting the youth demographic. The data suggests that despite the BJP's emphasis on entrepreneurship and self-reliance, the youth's aspiration for stable government jobs persists, highlighting a desire for security amid economic uncertainties.

Furthermore, the attribution of responsibility for rising unemployment exposes the politicisation of economic issues, with divergent perceptions of the government's effectiveness in addressing this challenge.

Ultimately, the issue of unemployment emerges as a pivotal factor shaping the voting preferences of Delhi's youth, eclipsing other concerns such as inflation and leadership.

The writers are with the CSDS.

IIM-A *seeks to restore, not demolish, iconic Louis Kahn-designed buildings in rethink*

The IIM-Ahmedabad campus.   RAHUL SHEEL/FLICKR

Maulik Pathak

letters@hindustantimes.com

AHMEDABAD: The Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad (IIM-A) is considering restoring its storied Louis Kahn-designed red-brick campus, instead of demolishing the buildings as previously planned, several people directly involved in talks about a proposed restoration said, asking not to be named.

"We plan to restore as many buildings as possible. The fundamental essence of Louis Kahn's visionary design and architecture principles will be preserved as best as possible," said a top IIM-A official.

The new plan comes a little more than three years after the institute's governing council initially proposed the reconstruc-

IIM-AHMEDABAD

tion of student dormitories and other structures within the revered campus, hailed as a marvel of modern architecture. Despite encountering widespread global resistance, the administration made a concerted push for consensus, including a town hall meeting last year that engaged various stakeholders.

It isn't clear what prompted the rethink.

The institute's chairman Pankaj Patel declined a request for comment. An email sent to IIM-A director Bharat Bhaskar and his office for response remained unanswered till the time this paper went to print.

HT learns that, as a first step, the institute plans to have a team of three experts conduct a thorough survey of the campus, assessing the possible need for additional specialists, and overseeing the tendering process for the restoration and conservation efforts.

The team comprises three well-respected experts, according to two other people familiar with the plan: KB Jain, renowned for his collaboration with the American architect Kahn in Philadelphia and known for his expertise in urbanism and conservation; Marina Tabassum, an architect famous for her innovative brick projects from Dhaka, Bangladesh; and Arun Menon, a structural engineering professor from IIT Madras, who worked with a team of architects earlier to restore the IIM-A library.

The two people added that a preliminary meeting involving the three experts and IIM-A officials took place less than a

month ago. Jain is likely to be named as the master architect for the IIM-A campus, they said.

One of the three experts confirmed being in discussions with the institute regarding potentially being brought in as part of the team.

In December 2020, the IIM-A governing council proposed to tear down 14 of the 18 student dormitories and replace them with newly constructed dormitories but a global outcry from experts and former students forced the institute to put its decision on hold /

Organizations such as the World Monuments Fund (WMF) called for the IIM-A to re-evaluate the partial demolition of the visionary building complex.

"Conceived as an ensemble, the Kahn campus must be preserved in its entirety to protect the aesthetic, functional, and symbolic values imbued within," WMF said on December 30, 2020.

Critics of the demolition expressed deep concern about the loss of architectural heritage and the erasure of Louis Kahn's vision. They emphasize the historical and cultural value of the buildings, which are considered emblematic of Kahn's design philosophy and should be preserved for future generations to appreciate and learn from architectural history.

"These are living buildings after all should be restored to meet today's requirements. It is a complicated process. The term conservation can mean many things – sometimes it may also require some demolition. But overall, it has to remain in tune to the architect's vision. I think that IIM-A will find out a solution a year's time from now," said an architect aware of the development.

American architect Kahn, at the invitation of scientist Vikram Sarabhai and industrialist Kasturbhai Lalbhai, began work on the campus for IIM-A in 1962 with Indian architects BV Doshi and Anant Raje. The project, realised in brick masonry, was nearly complete when Kahn died in 1974.

Kahn created the architectural masterpiece on about 25 hectares of land in Ahmedabad that constitutes the "heritage campus" of IIM-A today. It has 18 buildings that were constructed between 1962 and 1974. Some of the notable buildings in the IIM-A campus include the Main Building (also known as the Louis Kahn Plaza), Faculty Block, Dormitories (Dorm 1 to Dorm 18), Library, and the Kasturbhai Lalbhai Management Development Centre (KLMDC).

The restoration work in the campus started in 2014 when IIM-A appointed Mumbai-based firm, Somaya and Kalappa (S&K) Consultants to restore Dorm-15 that was in the most dilapidated state. The work was completed in 2017. Meanwhile the same firm also restored the Vikram Sarabhai Library at IIM-A in 2018 and received an award of distinction at UNESCO Asia Pacific Award for Cultural Heritage.

In November 2022, the IIM-A governing council decided that restoration work at the heritage

campus would cease altogether. While the Louis Kahn design with brick façade was to be replicated for a few of the outer dorms, other residential dorms were slated to be redeveloped based on new designs by commissioned architects.

An independent committee that reviewed the IIM-A last year listed key challenges faced by the institute in wake of global competition had pulled up the institute for demolishing iconic dorms "without consulting" the alumni.

The committee, led by former Nasscom president Kiran Karnik (also an alum), in its 71-page report, underscored several imperative recommendations, including enhancing inclusive decision-making and alumni involvement, improving rankings, prioritising world-class research, ensuring affordability for students, and preserving architectural heritage.

"Many alumni are concerned about possible damage to IIM-A's reputation as an eminent institution of repute because of its slippage on global rankings and some negative coverage in the media," said the report dated May 12, 2023, which was made public a few months later.

"If the management wanted to demolish the buildings and replace them with newer ones, they could have done so in the last 10 months, especially after the townhall event on June 4, 2023, where a team of engineers from IIT-Roorkee highlighted structural soundness and integrity issues in the dormitories and other buildings at multiple locations. The fact that they haven't taken such action is evidence enough that there is a reconsideration of the issue," said an IIM-A 1987 batch student.

Supporters of the demolition contend that sentimental attachments to the past should not impede IIM-A's growth and advancementA. They argue for embracing the evolving educational landscape by integrating modern amenities and technologies to enhance the learning experience. From their perspective, the demand for additional space and enhanced functionality outweighs the historical significance of the current structures.

Another student from the 1997 IIM-A PGP batch, shared that they were given assurance by a governing council board member that the institute's priority lies in restoring the buildings rather than demolishing them and replacing them with entirely new designs.

A second architect familiar with the situation said, "Conserving modern buildings presents unique challenges compared to heritage structures. Additionally, while significant conservation efforts have been made in stone or steel, there is a noticeable lack of expertise in India regarding brickwork. Established protocols are sparse, and there are few architects equipped to handle such iconic buildings. Furthermore, the complexity of the task often leads management to fatigue, prompting them to resort to short-cuts due to the considerable associated costs." HT

Ashoka varsity to set up 'equal opportunity' cell amid protests

VIDHEESHA KUNTAMALLA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

AFTER WEEK-LONG protests by a section of Ashoka University's students demanding a caste census on campus and an anti-discrimination cell, the varsity has decided to set up an Equal Opportunity cell to improve policies on inclusion and diversity.

In a statement on Tuesday, it said: "Ashoka University prioritises inclusion and diversity and follows all relevant norms prescribed for private universities. The University engaged with its students over the last few weeks, including (at) a Town Hall meeting with the Vice-Chancellor last week, and shared its position which is consistent with the Government of India, Government of Haryana, and UGC norms."

"We are actively working on creating an Equal Opportunity cell, whose role will include making recommendations to the University to improve prevailing practices and policies on inclusion, diversity and sensitisation. It will have faculty, staff, and elected student representatives as members and will be operational soon...," it added.

Heading the protest is the university's Social Justice Forum (SJF), an independent student body advocating the rights of those from

Students demanded caste census, anti-discrimination cell on the campus. *Archive*

ethnic and religious minority backgrounds. Speaking to The Indian Express, a student involved in the protest said on condition of anonymity: "We asked for an equal opportunity cell and a caste census on campus three months ago after which we did not see any progress, so we decided to hold a demonstration."

The forum had previously demanded an independent anti-discrimination cell as well.

In an email to the student body on March 12, the SJF called for a sit-in protest as "the V-C had failed to establish an EOC by the timeline he had stated".

As per SJF's statement, the protest started with three demands: A comprehensive and anonymous annual caste census that includes students, faculty and workers; an annual event

called the Ambedkar Memorial Lecture, where the university will invite speakers and panelists from marginalised communities to speak on social justice; a change in fee payment policy which blocks ID cards and keeps students locked out of facilities like Google Classroom and mess meals, if they pay fees late, which disproportionately affects those from marginalised communities.

Following this, V-C Somak Raychaudhury sent an email to students on Tuesday evening. He wrote: "... emails from (SJF) misrepresented both the intent and particulars of conversations I had with students last week... In the meeting, I'd explained why at the current time, the university would not be holding a census. It is, however, agreed that an annual lecture, with a focus on matters of inclusion, justice and representation, would be planned... For matters related to fees... there are well-defined processes and offices that students can reach out to..."

"Over the last few... months, I have been in conversations, on aspects of inclusion and sensitisation, with students and faculty... one of the outcomes... was a commitment to establishing an Equal Opportunity Cell... (It) is currently in the process of being composed... it will be announced shortly," the email added.

From Haldwani & Gaya, meet 2 Dalit PhD students on the JNUSU panel

VIDHEESHA KUNTAMALLA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

AMONG THIS year's winners in the Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union polls are two Dalit students: Priyanshi Arya, who bagged the post of general secretary, and Dhananjay (28), who won the post of president. *The Indian Express* spoke to them about the experiences that shaped their life, their journey to JNU, and what their plans are for the coming year.

Priyanshi Arya (23)
Birsa Ambedkar Phule Student's Association

Oldest of three daughters, she hails from Uttarakhand's Haldwani and is from a middle-class family; her mother is a primary school teacher and her father is currently self-employed. "Growing up, I saw how we were treated differently because of our caste. My father lost his job... because he belonged to a lower caste. Such experiences have inspired me to do social work for the Bahujan community," she said.

Arya defeated the ABVP candidate Arjun Anand by a margin of 926 votes. A first-year PhD student pursuing Philosophy at JNU, she did her Bachelor's degree from Delhi University's (DU) Indraprastha College for Women.

When she first set foot in JNU, the sense of finding a space for herself led her to join BAPSA: "It felt like home here... interacting with people in study circles who belong to the same marginalised community and sharing the same thoughts and problems as I do... I was never ambitious about entering student politics. I have always been adamant about speaking for my people and circumstances in my life pushed me to believe in the Ambedkarite ideology strongly."

As general secretary, Arya would like to first focus on bringing back an effective Gender Sensitisation Against Sexual Harassment on campus which has not been functional post the resumption of the varsity after the Covid-induced lockdown.

On her plans, she said she wants to become a teacher and

Priyanshi is JNUSU's new general secretary while Dhananjay was elected president. *Express*

do social work for her people in Haldwani.

Arya also clarified that there was no alliance between BAPSA and the United Left in this year's election: "We never asked the Left to support us. They volunteered to do so as their candidate's nomination got cancelled and there was no other way to take down the ABVP... It is unfair for the Left to take credit for BAPSA winning

a post in the central panel..."

Dhananjay (28)
All India Students' Association

Hailing from a middle-class family in Gaya, Dhananjay is the youngest of six siblings. His father is a retired policeman and his mother is a homemaker. He studied in Ranchi and did his Bachelor's from DU's Aurobindo College, where he pursued Political Science, and his Masters from Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD). Currently, he is a first-year PhD student of theatre at JNU.

Like Arya, Dhananjay also faced instances of caste discrimination which inspired him to raise his voice for the marginalised. "There were several incidents when I came to Delhi too,

where parents of my roommates would ask what caste I belonged to. At a very young age, I saw how my family was treated differently...," he said.

Explaining why he chose AISA, he said, "It is associated with CPIML, which has a stronghold in Bihar... When I came to Delhi and read across different party lines, I realised AISA is very close to the ideology I believe in." While he didn't contest the DU student union polls, he was a councillor at AUD.

During his tenure as president, he promised to take up the issues of increasing stipend amounts for student fellowships and the recruitment of single ideology-bearing faculty members. "... A Dalit student, despite being

hardworking and talented, is not being considered in interviews... due to a single-ideology group of professors being appointed to the varsity. It is time we demand a change in this," he said.

Explaining why the ABVP can never take over JNU, he added, "... Money and muscle power don't matter here, where most students are from marginalised backgrounds..."

Aspiring to be a politician one day, Dhananjay also spoke of his love for theatre. "I was actively a part of it even during my DU days. Currently, I teach theatre to a few students twice a year."

According to AISA, he is the first Dalit JNUSU president in two decades. On Tuesday, the four elected candidates took oath.

Age of artistic enterprise

The evolving landscape of technology is revolutionising art, culture, and tourism—necessitating the emergence of fresh job roles, and prompting educational adaptation to nurture entrepreneurship in these sectors

PANDIRI HARSHA BHARGAVI

The future of art & culture entrepreneurship is filled with exciting possibilities, with new roles emerging that demand innovative thinkers and creative problem-solvers

The art, culture, village tourism, and museums sectors have experienced significant transformation due to technological advancements, globalisation, changing consumer preferences, and a growing emphasis on cultural preservation and heritage conservation. As a result, there is a pressing need to adapt job roles and create new job profiles to meet the evolving demands of these sectors.

Changing job roles include digital curators, community engagement specialists, cultural tourism coordinators, heritage conservation managers, and virtual reality artists. Digital curators curate digital collections and exhibitions, while community engagement specialists facilitate cultural exchange programs and promote cultural awareness. Cultural tourism coordinators develop and manage cultural tourism initiatives, curate authentic experiences for travellers, and promote sustainable tourism practices.

New job profiles include virtual reality artists who create immersive cultural experiences through virtual reality artworks and installations, cultural data analysts who analyse cultural data to inform decision-making processes in cultural institutions, and sustainable artisans entrepreneurs who create eco-friendly artworks and products. Skilling youth for employability and efficiency is crucial for meeting industry demands, fostering innovation, and enhancing competitiveness.

The art-related market is vast and diverse, encompassing various segments such as visual arts, performing arts, cultural tourism, and heritage conservation. The global art market was valued at over USD 64 billion in 2020 and is expected to continue growing in the coming years. Art and culture entrepreneur-

Art & culture entrepreneurship is a vital field that educational institutions need to cultivate

ship contributes to economic development and job creation, promoting cultural exchange, creativity, innovation, and preserving cultural heritage for future generations.

Adapting to changing job roles, creating new job profiles, and skilling youth for employability are essential for the sustainable growth and development of the art, culture, village tourism, and museum sectors. Understanding the scale of the art-related market and the economics of art and culture entrepreneurship is essential for harnessing the full potential of these industries.

The unorganised sectors of art, culture, village tourism, and museums require a comprehensive approach to address challenges. This includes capacity-building programs focused on skill development, entrepreneurship training, and managerial capabilities, which can empower individuals in these sectors. Establishing support networks within the industry can facilitate communication, knowledge sharing, and advocacy for the sector's interests. Access to finance is crucial for cultural entrepreneurs, and microfinance schemes, grants, and low-interest loans can provide them with the necessary capital.

Regulatory support can help reduce barriers to entry and foster a more conducive business environment by simplifying licensing procedures, ensuring compliance with safety and quality standards, and offering legal support to small businesses. Infrastructure development, such as cultural centres, museums, art galleries, and tourist facilities, can enhance destination attractiveness and provide opportunities for local artists and entrepreneurs to showcase their work. Encouraging cultural exchange programmes, festivals, and events can promote cross-cultural understanding and appreciation, while also providing opportunities for artists and artisans to showcase their talents to a wider audience.

Investing in research and development initiatives focused on innovation in the arts, cultural tourism, and museum management can drive growth and competitiveness in the sector. Public-private partnerships between government agencies, private sector organisations, and civil society can leverage resources, expertise, and networks to address common challenges and achieve shared goals. By implementing these interventions, policymakers, industry stakeholders, and civil society can work together to unlock the full potential of these unorganised sectors for economic development, social inclusion, and cultural enrichment.

Art & culture entrepreneurship is a vital field that educational institutions need to cultivate. It involves the creation of jobs through art galleries, performance spaces, and innovative cultural experiences, which attract tourism and generate revenue. These entrepreneurs also serve as ambassadors for understanding and diversity, promoting cultural exchange and tackling social issues. They can raise awareness about environmental issues or social injustice through their work. On an individual level, this path empowers students by teaching them valuable skills like creativity, innovation, resilience, and problem-solving.

However, Bharat faces challenges in fostering art & culture entrepreneurship education. Limited access to resources like funding, mentorship, and professional networks hinders aspiring artists. The education system often prioritises STEM fields, neglecting the potential of integrated arts and entrepreneurship programmes. Stereotypes portray artistic careers as non-viable, deterring talent from exploring this path. To unlock this potential, dismantling these barriers and creating an enabling environment is crucial.

The future of art & culture entrepreneurship is filled with exciting possibilities, with new roles emerging that demand innovative thinkers and creative problem-solvers. "Cultural Innovation Specialists" revitalising museums or festivals, "Digital Content Creators" harnessing technology to share art and reach global audiences, and "Social Impact Artists" using their creativity to tackle critical issues are examples.
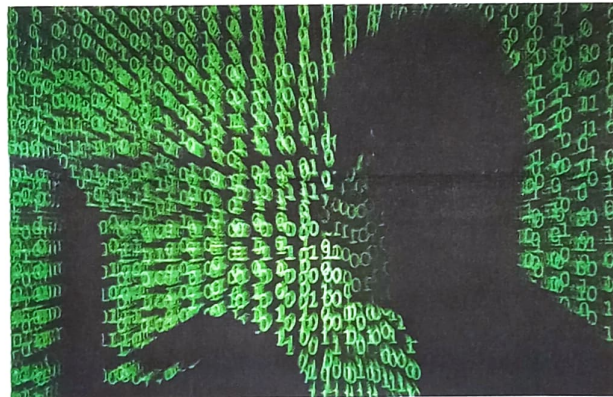
To build a bridge in the creative economy, effective course design should include an interdisciplinary approach, project-based learning, mentoring and networking, soft skills development, and embracing technology. By investing in art & culture entrepreneurship education, individuals, communities, and the creative economy can be empowered, fostering innovation and empowering a generation of artistic entrepreneurs.

The writer is Assistant Director, Telangana State. Views expressed are personal

IIT Mandi develops solution to OTP frauds

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

With the alarming rise in OTP frauds and instances of password hacking, the researchers at IIT Mandi have developed a revolutionary system which will capture unique user biometric-based behaviour patterns for secure authentication, eliminating the use of conventional methods. The system called "adapID" has been developed in collaboration with Deep Algorithms with Amit Shukla from the Center for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (CAIR) at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Mandi and J P Mishra from Deep Algorithms, spearheading the development of the tool -- a behaviour biometric-based authentication system leveraging haptics data.

Deep Algorithms is an IIT Mandi and IIT Kanpur incubated company with its head office in Hyderabad, Research and Development office in IIT Mandi and partner office in the USA. The system has already been granted a patent and has been deployed at a bank and a forensic company. The team is currently in talks with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) to use it for authentication in government schemes. Those involved in the development of the system explained that in today's digitally driven landscape, organisations encounter the daunting challenge of safeguarding sensitive data against relentless cyber threats while ensuring a seamless user experience.

"Conventional authentication methods relying on passwords and static security measures prove inadequate, leaving organisations susceptible to breaches and burdening users with cumbersome access processes. The escalating instances of cyber fraud, notably attributed to OTP compromises, have spurred organisations to seek robust solutions to fortify against unauthorised access and data breaches," according to Shukla.

"Traditional authentication methods, dependent on passwords and OTPs, increasingly succumb to phishing attacks and brute force breaches, thereby compromising security and user satisfaction. AdapID will herald a paradigm shift in secure authentication by harnessing the potency of behavioural and physiological biometrics, offering unparalleled security measures," he added. Shukla explained that the innovative approach will obviate the necessity for passwords and OTPs, streamlining user access processes while bolstering defences against emerging threats. "The adapID AI adaptive authentication integrates behavioural and physiological biometrics, presenting a multi-layered authentication framework that dynamically adapts to evolving user behaviour. This password-less authentication system will employ advanced technology, encompassing invisible keyboard features and decentralised web protocols, to establish a novel standard in secure authentication," he said.

"Our groundbreaking behaviour biometric-based system will redefine secure authentication, effectively eliminating the reliance on passwords and introducing seamless continuous authentication. With adapID, we not only aim to revolutionise security protocols but also empower organisations to navigate the complexities of the digital age with unwavering confidence," he said.

Deep Algorithms' J P Mishra explained that adapID addresses an array of cyber threats, including fraud, unauthorised access and phishing attacks, spanning across industries such as financial services, government, technology and critical infrastructure.

"By furnishing the most robust form of authentication and discerning anomalies in user behaviour, adapID equips organisations with a dynamic and adaptive security posture. As organisations navigate the intricate landscape of cybersecurity threats, adapID will emerge as a pioneering solution, presenting a dynamic, adaptive and secure authentication framework.
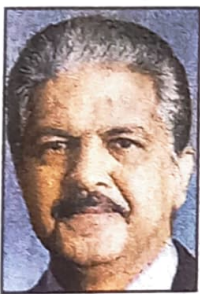
"With its innovative integration of behavioural biometrics and continuous authentication, the innovation will establish a new benchmark in secure authentication, empowering organisations to safeguard sensitive data," Mishra said.

Mahindra pledges ₹500cr to Mahindra Univ in Hyd

Nandini.Sengupta
@timesgroup.com

Chennai: Mahindra Group chairman Anand Mahindra has pledged Rs 500 crore to the Mahindra University in Hyderabad. This amount is 10 times the Rs 48 crore ($10 million in 2010 valuation) that he pledged to Harvard University nearly 14 years ago.

Speaking to **TOI**, he said: "My family and I are announcing a Rs 500-crore pledge to Mahindra University, which will be spread over five years starting this year." This, he clarified, will be in addition to the Rs 50-crore he has pledged for the Indira Mahindra School of Education endowed in his mother's name, at the Mahindra University. "This year there will be a disbursal of Rs 100 crore plus Rs 50 crore and in the ensuing four years, it will be Rs 100 crore per year," he said. MU is headed by Anand Mahindra as chancellor and Dr Yajulu Medury as vice-chancellor.

₹1L UG tech internships ticket to full-time roles

Undergrads Getting ₹1 Lakh Stipends From Biggies Like Google & Microsoft On The Rise

Shilpa Phadnis & Veena Mani | TNN

In a reflection of the growing demand for skilled engineers in the tech industry, India has seen an increase in the number of undergraduate engineering students securing internships with monthly stipends of Rs 1 lakh or more from biggies like Amazon, Google, Intuit India, Microsoft, Palo Alto and Goldman Sachs. These internships, which can last 3-6 months, are a golden ticket to full-time roles in high-demand fields like data science, cloud computing, and analytics.

At IIT Mandi, 27 students have received Rs 1-lakh-or-more stipends this year. In Bengaluru, RV College of Engineering has seen 39 students earning over Rs 1 lakh in monthly stipends compared to 8 last year. Vellore Institute of Technology also reports approximately 30 students with Rs 1-lakh stipends, with companies like Couchbase and Amazon offering Rs 1.2 lakh and Rs 1.1 lakh, respectively. The internship window is yet to close this year for the final count.

The competition for these high-paying internships is fierce. V Samuel Rajkumar, director, career development centre at VIT, emphasised the importance of technical skills, problem-solving abilities, and a learning mindset for securing these opportunities.

Professor Ranganath D, RV College of Engineering's dean of placement, said that companies such as Amazon, UiPath, and Microsoft have offered stipends up to Rs 1.4 lakh for various tech roles. Similarly, Walmart, Goldman Sachs, and Palo Alto have provided Rs 1-lakh stipends.

"The bar is high. About 39 students have received internship stipends of Rs 1 lakh and more who will be graduating this year. Campus offers from top-tier firms are internship-driven that not only gives them role exposure, but it provides a segway to working on newer technologies as these digital natives naturally lend to it," the professor said.

Himani Sood, pro-chancellor at Chandigarh University, said that companies like Atlassian, Uber, and Google have also offered stipends of Rs 1 lakh. MIT-World Peace University in Pune said cloud data management Veritas Technologies has shortlisted 10 computer science students for internships with a Rs 1-lakh stipend.

A majority of the students interning with these tech firms have secured full-time positions. Sood pointed out a high conversion from internships to full-time positions, with top tech firms in India offering annual compensation between Rs 40 lakh to Rs 65 lakh, and international roles reaching up to Rs 1 crore.

Naveen C, senior manager, training and placement in Bengaluru-based Reva University, said that a student interning with Visa received a Rs 90,000 stipend and later a job offer of over Rs 50 lakh per annum.

Last year, VIT's Rajkumar said a connected infrastructure and analytics company, MotorQ, offered a record annual compensation of Rs 1 crore to two VIT students, including stock awards. Emails sent to Amazon, Google, Microsoft, Palo Alto Networks, Goldman Sachs, Intuit India, UiPath, Uber and Atlassian didn't elicit a response till the time of going to press.

High-Demand Fields: Data Science, Cloud

➤ **IIT Mandi has seen 27** students bag Rs 1-lakh-or-more stipends this year so far

➤ Bengaluru's **RV College of Engineering** has seen **39 students** earning over ₹1L in monthly stipends compared to 8 last year

➤ About **30** students from the **Vellore Institute of Technology** reported a ₹1-lakh stipend, with cos like Couchbase and Amazon offering ₹1.2L and ₹1.1L respectively

➤ **MIT-World Peace University**, Pune said cloud data management Veritas Technologies has shortlisted **10** computer science students for internships with a ₹1L stipend

Abu Dhabi fund bets ₹1k cr on edu loan co

Mumbai: Education loan provider Avanse Financial Services has raised Rs 1,000 crore equity from Mubadala Investment Company and Avendus PE Investment Advisors.

Avanse said that the fund infusion will help in growing its business profitably. The company funds Indian students' education across various countries and provides growth and working capital to Indian educational institutions. TNN