

'When it comes to grants, Govt discriminates against private educational institutes'

Manipal Global chief Mohandas Pai speaks on the challenges and future of education

GARIMA SINGH

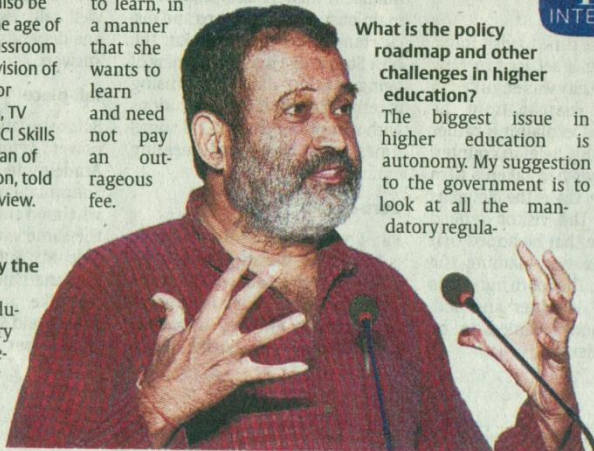
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Technology has become an integral part of our everyday life and its impact can also be seen in education. In the age of smartphones, smart classroom and online exams, the vision of future is Education 4.0 or personalised education, TV Mohandas Pai, Chair-FICCI Skills Committee and Chairman of Manipal Global Education, told *BusinessLine* in an interview. Excerpts:

What do you mean by the term Education 4.0?

In the earlier times, education was a repository for a few, then it became available for many. As time passed, knowledge became available freely on

the Web and now the ultimate outcome of all this that the student has flexibility to learn what she wants to learn, in a manner that she wants to learn and need not pay an outrageous fee.



So, Education 4.0 is about personalisation of the educational experience for a student. The students will look at all the courses and will opt for those on-line or otherwise.

What is the policy roadmap and other challenges in higher education?

The biggest issue in higher education is autonomy. My suggestion to the government is to look at all the mandatory regula-

tions of the University Grants Commission and make it voluntarily and not recommendatory for the top 100 universities. The 100 universities that are best, get them away from UGC, AICTE regulations and give them full freedom.

Another issue is public funding for research. The government needs to create a kitty of ₹5,000 crore a year and ask all the universities to bid for research. The Indian

government discriminates against private institutes, they do not want private universities to come and bid for educational grants. A total of 65 per cent of India's students are educated by the private sector, but the government does not give them the same money that they give to public institutions. Everything is not IIT and IIM.

Many students from India go abroad for higher studies, but when it comes to foreign students, only a few choose India?

When Indian students go overseas, they go to a country that gives them good education and jobs. Around 3, 67,000 Indians are studying outside the country. On the other side, only 40,000 students come here and that too mostly from the neighbouring countries. The reason for

less number of overseas students coming to India is because we are not in the top 100. We do not market our universities, our pedagogy is old and we have rigid course structures. Apart from IITs and IIMs, the degrees that students get from Indian universities are not recognised in the world. Also, we need to focus on better infrastructure, since students from advanced countries are used to a better quality of life.

How is higher education going to contribute to the country's GDP?

Higher education creates people who can think, who are problem solvers, who are skilled and naturally a part of the knowledge economy. We need more and more human capital that is very knowledgeable, which understands, which can work. So,

it's obvious that higher education is the key to development.

Today, the US is greatest superpower, innovator and economy in the world because of its universities. In universities, research happens, you train people, they innovate and come out with a new product and create new economies.

Somehow our academia thinks that more the number of students, the lesser will be the quality. This notion is rubbish. For a country like India, which has 29 States, there are only 25 IITs. India should have 100 IITs.

The government says there is a less faculty. But faculty will come, get them from abroad. Thousands of Indians are doing PhDs in America. Now is the time to bring them back. Give them grants and they will come back.

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TV MOHANDAS PAI
Chair-FICCI Skills Committee and
Chairman of Manipal Global
Education