

View of BESUTA on the eve of transformation of BESUS to IEST

After the inception of IITs through implementation of N. R. Sarkar committee report in 1947, several decades have passed without any notable measure towards furtherance of higher technical education in our country. The eagerly awaited breakthrough appeared in the sight with the announcement of a program of setting up new IITs in our country by the former Prime Minister Shri Atal Behari Bajpayee in his independence day speech on the August 15, 2003. Immediately, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) of Government of India (GOI), initiated the program by forming the S. K. Joshi Committee in November 2003, with the mandate for identification of institutions having the potential for transformation into IITs. In the report submitted to the MHRD, GOI the committee short listed seven prospective institutions for upgradation. The report prompted MHRD to form an expert committee with Prof. M. Anandakrishnan as the convener and Prof. A. Ghosh and Prof. D. V. Singh as the members with an aim to assess the potential of the identified institutions. On the basis of a rigorous diagnostic exercise, the committee prepared a detailed road map for upgradation of the institutions and submitted its report to the MHRD in February, 2006. It is a matter of pride for everyone related to Bengal Engineering and Science University, Shibpur that it has been identified as the most suitable institute to be transformed into an Institution of National Importance (INI). Five such institutions will be named as Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology (IEST).

In the year 1945, despite its legacy in the area of technological education, B. E. College was left outside the purview of N. R. Sarkar committee. In the post independent India major attention was focused on the IITs and IISc with an aim to project these institutions as the brand of the country before the world. Institutions like B. E. College continued to survive as the state aided college for undergraduate engineering education. However, B. E. College by virtue of its acclaimed legacy continued to excel in the undergraduate education along with special emphasis on the post graduate education and research. In recognition to its contribution, B. E. College was conferred the status of autonomy in the form of deemed University in 1993. The recognition fired the aspiration but soon the crisis was realized. The university critically assessed the crisis and through a meticulous exercise figured out the projected vision and upgradation program. It was particularly realized that the conceived paradigm shift calls for not some remedial measure but an upgradation package under the scope of Institution of National Importance. In April 2004, the then Vice Chancellor submitted a proposal to MHRD for upgradation of B. E. College (D. U.) to an Institution of National Importance. The effort eventually coincided with the launching of the aforesaid transformation program by MHRD.

In the course of interactions with MHRD, B.E. College (D.U.) exerted its best endeavor and asserted its eagerness for the transformation to INI. In this direction, the aspiration has incessantly been echoed from all the corners of the B. E. College fraternity. In the meantime, the institution was transformed into a University in October, 2004 and was named Bengal Engineering and Science University, Shibpur (BESUS). The Anandakrishnan Committee visited BESU, Shibpur in December, 2005. On completion of their task the committee submitted its recommendation to MHRD on February 13, 2006. The committee placed BESUS at the top of the list of five prospective institutions.

In their report the committee proposed a novel conceptual model of a high level technological Institution of National Importance. The features of this model are that it is an INI formed by an Act of Parliament of India with a nomenclature, Indian Institute of Engineering Science and

Technology (IEST). All IESTs will together constitute a new system of institutions in technical education in the country. The proposed governance system of the IESTs will be comparable to that of the IITs, including Common Council for all IESTs; and the primary source of financial support will be the MHRD, GOI.

The committee recommended that, in order to meet the basic objectives of transformation related to strengthening the key attributes of the institutions, the financial outlay for the 11th Plan Period (2007-12) required to fulfill the common and specific goals of BESUS for transformations to IEST has been estimated at **Rs. 519.55 Cr.** including a **Recurring Annual Grant of Rs. 47.31 Cr.**

It is recognized that several prerequisites need to be fulfilled before the formation of IESTs. A set of tasks and an indicative time frame as suggested by the Expert Committee requires immediate actions from the Central and State Authorities for the functioning of the IESTs from the commencement of the 11th Five-year plan, i.e. April, 2007.

The issue which is left to be settled prior to the transformation of BESU, Shibpur to an IEST is the governance structure. The proposed governance system of the IESTs will be comparable to that of the IITs, including Common Council for all IESTs; and the primary source of financial support will be the MHRD. The present governance structure of BESUS is reasonably comparable to that of the IITs. Formulation regarding the participation of the stake holders in the governance is to be treated with greatest priority to obtain the necessary concurrence for preparation of a Parliamentary Bill for declaring the institutions as INI, under the name of Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology (IEST) on the eve of the 150th celebration of BESUS to commence on 24th November, 2006.

At this crucial juncture a few issues demand our attention.

- Creation of IESTs is well in conformance with Vision 2020 and coherent with the role of India in the global perspective of the higher technical education. The report proposed not just the individual upgradation of five institutions, but evolution of a novel and promising system of technical education comprising the five institutions. It is, therefore, important to note that isolating an institution from the proposed road-map of IESTs will not only deprive it from the projected prospect but also will preempt the essence of the mission.
- A careful scrutiny reveals that in their report the Anandkrishnan committee has encompassed all the crucial aspects and proposed a well-conceived target oriented approach. Therefore the recommendations must be implemented in its totality. Any attempt of deviation from the major propositions may spoil the purpose of the concept.
- BESUTA demands that the potential areas of our institution and interest of its employees must be properly accommodated in the process of the transformation.

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