

40% of Campus Hires Last Year were Women

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2023, 40% of the fresh talent hired from college campuses were women, a 5% jump from the previous

year, when the figure stood at 35%. An in-depth analysis of the report reveals that most of the women's

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New Delhi: One out of every three candidates participating in campus hiring in 2023 is female, according to a report by HirePro, an AI-powered recruitment automation firm. HirePro has released its report on the "State of female participation in campus hiring in India".

The report reveals that women's participation in campus hiring exams stands at 34% and suggests that the highest proportion of women being recruited by organisations in India is among freshers. In

participation in campus hiring exams in the fiscal year 2023 was for sectors such as IT, BFSI, and R&D.

The report also highlights female participation in campus hiring exams across five different zones (Central, East, North, South, and West) for the academic year 2022-23. It reveals that South India exhibited the highest share of female participation at 39%, while East India recorded the lowest participation at 24% for campus hiring. Following South India, West India stands at 34%, Central India at 28%, and North India at 27%, signalling efforts to enhance gender diversity.

Creating a skilled young workforce

The Union government has reportedly written to 1.8 lakh firms to meet their obligations under the Apprentices Act. The law requires them to engage apprentices numbering at least 2.5% of their total manpower every financial year, with the cap on this varying across states.

Non-compliance is penalised with fines, but that doesn't seem to have had a deterrent effect.

The urgency shown by the Centre is welcome. India's youth bulge translates into a mammoth employment demand. Against this, a high unemployment rate of ~8% along with inadequate skills training, and thereby, poor employability portends a demographic disaster in the making.

There is a need for State intervention at multiple levels. To start with, school education must include skilling and vocational education, which, in turn, needs the National Education Policy 2020 provision for skills and vocational training from Class 9 onwards to be implemented urgently. Out-of-school children also need to be imparted training for employment — the National Curriculum Framework 2005 had proposed "workbenches" with vocational training, which must be pursued.

The successive iterations of the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana have met with limited success. Just 22% of the 1.10 crore candidates certified under the scheme so far have managed to find placement. While the training modules are industry-designed, there seem to be last mile hurdles affecting the uptake of the trainees by companies. These need to be identified and resolved. Industry must also collaborate with educational institutions across levels so that the training and content is matched to its needs to give employability a boost. HT/14

ITIs gearing up to introduce AI for All in their curriculum

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) across India will soon gear up to introduce the curriculum "AI for All," aimed at building awareness on Artificial Intelligence (AI) which will prepare students for the challenges and opportunities of the future.

This initiative, spearheaded by the Future Right Skills Network (FRSN) in collaboration with the Directorate General of Training (DGT), marks a significant step towards equipping youth with awareness on AI to enhance their employability prospects.

In the presence of Union Minister of Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Dharmendra Pradhan the MOU between DGT and FRSN was exchanged. "For new entrants in the job market skilling is critical and for ones who are already working, reskilling and upskilling is critical," Pradhan said on the occasion. He said that he was also delighted that all the MoUs have an element of tech in it,

which was imperative in making things evolve faster and also played a critical role in communication and networking.

"Our present era is a disruptive era. Whoever is able to see it and tries to understand this, will remain relevant."

The "AI for All" curriculum aims to initiate the journey into AI by fostering awareness, with a focus on bridging the gap between industry requirements and academic offerings. This step is crucial in aligning academic programs with the evolving needs of industries. The AI curriculum by FRSN is part of the larger initiative of DGT, to integrate AI learning at ITIs.

This initiative envisions to empower up to 2.5 million learners across 15,000 ITIs nationwide, equipping them with essential future skills such as digital literacy, green mindsets, problem-solving, critical thinking and workplace readiness among others.

Aakash Sethi, CEO, Quest Alliance said that the objective behind developing the curriculum was to help learners gain a comprehensive understanding of AI, its history and principles

as well as understand the types of AI.

"In addition to this, learners can also explore the use of AI and Generative AI tools in creating various digital contents and in education. We also ensure that the learners understand and discuss the ethical considerations and responsible use of AI," he said.

He also added that by equipping our youth with future skills, we not only empower them to thrive in an increasingly complex landscape but also foster a community of lifelong learners and innovative problem-solvers. The renewed MoU outlines a comprehensive framework for collaboration to work in four broad areas: curriculum and assessment to build employability skills, trainer development, women and work, and integration of future skills such as Green and AI.

Formed in 2019, FRSN is a collaborative effort of QUEST Alliance, Accenture, Cisco, J.P. Morgan, and SAP Labs India. The collaborative underscores a collective commitment to empowering India's youth for the knowledge economy. 910



AARTI SHUKLA

Microcredit courses revolutionise learning

These courses are democratising access to knowledge and empowering individuals from diverse backgrounds

In a country as diverse and populous as India, with its myriad socio-economic challenges, the need for innovative approaches to education and skill development has never been more pressing. Microcredit courses emerge as a beacon of hope, offering a transformative pathway towards enhancing both learning and employability among the masses.

Microcredit courses, often provided by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), microfinance institutions, or government agencies, offer short-term, skill-based training programmes that are accessible even to those with limited financial means. These courses cover a wide array of subjects ranging from vocational skills such as carpentry, and plumbing to digital literacy and entrepreneurship. In a unique initiative, Masai School, in collaboration with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and IIT Guwahati, has launched the Micro-Credit Programme in Computer Science and Engineering (CSE), aiming to bridge the gap between aca-



ademic learning and professional success in the technology sector. This initiative introduces a credit-based curriculum covering crucial domains such as Programming, Mathematics for Computer Science, Data Structures and Algorithms, Databases, System Design, and OS Networking. The partnership emphasises outcome-driven education, guaranteeing internships and job assurance for students who meet specific academic and engagement criteria.

The programme stands out for its rigorous admission process, comprehensive learning methodologies, and emphasis on preparing students for employment through innovative delivery methods and assessment systems.

The Micro-Credit Programme represents a transformative approach to technical education, blending

academic rigour with industry exposure. By directly linking academic achievements with professional success, it sets a new standard in higher education. NSDC, as the principal architect of the skill ecosystem in India, plays a pivotal role in catalysing vocational training initiatives and supporting private sector participation in skill development.

IIT Guwahati's involvement underscores the programme's commitment to academic excellence and innovation, leveraging its reputation as one of India's premier engineering institutions. Masai School bridges the gap between academic learning and industry demands further strengthens the initiative's potential to revolutionise technical education.

One of the most significant advantages of microcredit courses lies in their accessibility. Unlike traditional educational institutions, which may require hefty tuition fees and possess stringent admission criteria, microcredit courses are designed to be inclusive, reaching out to marginalised communities, women, and rural populations. By break-

ing down financial barriers and geographical constraints, these courses democratise education, empowering individuals from all walks of life to acquire new skills and knowledge.

Moreover, microcredit courses are tailored to meet the specific needs and demands of local communities. They are often developed in consultation with industry experts and employers, ensuring that the skills imparted are relevant and market-oriented. This close alignment with industry requirements enhances the employability of participants. Furthermore, microcredit courses foster a culture of lifelong learning and self-reliance. By providing individuals with the tools and resources to upgrade their skills and adapt to changing market dynamics, these courses instil a sense of empowerment and agency. In the context of India, where sizable population lacks access to quality education and training, microcredit courses hold immense potential to drive social and economic transformation.

(The writer is an educator, views are personal)

The transformative power of education in fostering global unity

Education serves as a bridge that transcends cultural divides, fostering mutual understanding and collaboration among diverse populations

In today's intricate global tapestry, education emerges as a pivotal force, transcending cultural boundaries and fostering mutual understanding among diverse populations. Delving into the realm of academic achievement, this study explores the profound impact of education, particularly focusing on the experiences of Indian students.

Within the contemporary global educational milieu, institutions offering rigorous research-oriented programmes attract a kaleidoscope of students from various backgrounds. This commitment is exemplified by programs spanning disciplines such as petroleum engineering and the energy sector. Such institutions serve as melting pots



VIVIAN WANG

for students from around the globe, facilitating a dynamic international community. This dynamic illustrates how educational settings can serve as conduits for intercultural exchange, fostering innovation and academic excellence. Indian students are renowned for their academic prowess, particularly in STEM disciplines. Beyond their intellectual contributions, they enrich their academic environments

by sharing their cultural heritage through various events and celebrations. This exchange cultivates mutual respect and understanding among peers, broadening perspectives and equipping students for an increasingly interconnected global workforce. Initiatives promoting cross-cultural exchanges and collaboration underscore the mutual benefits of cultural integration in fostering educational and economic growth. Transitioning from academia to the professional realm marks a pivotal stage for students. Certain institutions distinguish themselves by seamlessly integrating career preparation into the educational journey. For instance, programmes like the Job Placement Guarantee

Programme guide students in career planning from the outset, offering support in enhancing interview skills, gaining practical experience through internships, and facilitating on-campus employment opportunities. For Indian students aspiring to pursue careers abroad, such initiatives offer a pathway to success amid the challenges of securing work visas, underscoring the institution's commitment to their holistic development. On-campus job opportunities serve as stepping stones for students to apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings, irrespective of their nationality. Indian students benefit from roles in data processing and IT help desks, gaining invaluable real-world insights and honing essential

soft skills such as problem-solving and time management. Education catalyses excellence and cross-cultural understanding. Educational institutions worldwide are laying the groundwork for a more interconnected and empathetic global community through a multifaceted approach that integrates rigorous academic programmes, opportunities for cultural exchange, and practical professional development. The transformative educational journey experienced by Indian students abroad epitomizes this ethos, emphasizing the importance of diversity and readiness for a globalised workforce. These institutions not only nurture future leaders but also pave the way for a future

where cultural diversity is celebrated as a strength rather than a barrier. By fostering environments where students from diverse backgrounds can share experiences, learn from one another, and prepare for the challenges of a globalised economy, education emerges as a unifying force, transcending cultural differences in the pursuit of collective achievement. In conclusion, the exchange of students among countries is not merely a matter of academic enrichment; it is a cornerstone for fostering a more united and harmonious world. By facilitating cross-cultural understanding and empathy, student exchanges lay the foundation for mutual respect and cooperation on a global scale. When students from

diverse backgrounds come together in educational settings, they bring with them unique perspectives, traditions, and experiences, creating a rich tapestry of diversity that enriches the learning environment for all. Moreover, these exchanges cultivate lifelong friendships and professional networks that transcend borders, fostering a sense of global citizenship and interconnectedness. As students return to their home countries with newfound knowledge and cultural insights, they become ambassadors for understanding and collaboration, breaking down stereotypes and misconceptions that often divide societies. Furthermore, the skills and attitudes cultivated through international education—

such as adaptability, tolerance, and intercultural communication—are essential for addressing the complex challenges of our interconnected world, from climate change to global health crises. By investing in student exchanges and promoting educational opportunities across borders, we not only invest in the future of individuals but also the collective well-being of humanity. Ultimately, the exchange of students among countries serves as a powerful catalyst for building a better, more united world based on shared values of respect, cooperation, and mutual understanding.

(The writer is Vice provost for global engagement at the University of Tulsa, USA.; 107 views are personal)

From just 8% in 2000, share of women CAs now 30%

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New Delhi: Not only topping different levels of Chartered Accountancy exams, female aspirants now comprise a record 48% of the qualifiers or pass-outs. In the overall pool, women CAs now have a 30% share, making a massive jump from just 8% in 2000. In the student base of 8.63 lakh too, 43% are females.

Outsourcing of accounting & auditing to India bringing in new opportunities and average annual salary of Rs 12.5 lakh for a fresher, as well as the flexibility of pursuing the course and affordable cost of study, are big attractions.

Significantly, now there are more women toppers — four of six in the final and intermediate exams in 2020 and all toppers in both old & new course exams in 2021. Women candidates repeated their 2021 feat in next two years too. Notably, 75 women aspirants have topped CA exams at different levels in the last decade.

In 2021, Institute of Chartered Accountants of India introduced a new course in

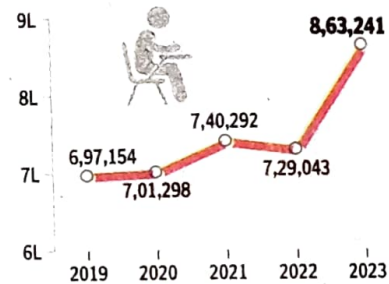
ASPIRANTS' NUMBER UP 23% IN 4 YEARS

Representation of women in the Chartered Accountancy (CA) profession

Year	Female Members (% of Female Members)	Total Members
2019	73,807 (25.3%)	2,91,698
2020	81,564 (26.5%)	3,07,238
2021	88,983 (27.2%)	3,27,081
2022	93,727 (27.7%)	3,38,374
2023	1,17,149 (29.5%)	3,96,682



The increase in CA Students over the years



sync with the National Education Policy, 2020. ICAI president Ranjeet Kumar Agarwal told **TOI**, “Participation of women in this profession in accounting, tax and finance is increasing phenomenally.”

“Chartered accountancy and financial sectors are poised for better growth in India than in countries with an aging population. India has emerged as the hub with most countries outsourcing their accounting work to us. If a burger is sold in US or UK, accounting is done in Gurgaon or Kolkata. And the attractive salary package — the average package here is Rs 12.5 lakh the moment you pass. Our highest package in the last campus placement was Rs 28 lakh and international package was Rs 49 lakh,” he added.

In 2019, of the 2.91 lakh CAs, 73,807 were women, which rose to 1.2 lakh (out of 3.9 lakh) in 2023. It was 70,047 in 2018 and 64,685 in 2017.

A bigger marker is that increasing number of women are taking one of the toughest professional programmes in India. In 2023, of the total 8.63 lakh aspirants 43% were females, against 30% in 2019.

“Growing opportunities in accounting and auditing and return on investment of a five-year course costing Rs 75,000 is seen as biggest draw,” Agarwal said. “Young population in India is technologically-empowered, and that’s why you can see that 47% of global digital transactions are happening in India, providing ample professional growth opportunities here,” he said.