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TCS switches to e-test to recruit engg graduates Process Is Faster Than Campus Visits

Shilpa Phadnis & Avik Das | TNN

Bengaluru: Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), one of India's biggest hirers, is changing the way it has been recruiting engineering graduates over the past many years.

The tech company is digitising the recruitment system, and reducing its dependence on the traditional process of going to campuses to find candidates — which is the way much of the IT industry hires today. Starting this year, it has started a pan-India online test — called the National Qualifier Test — and is following that up with a video interview, or a face-to-face interview, depending on the candidate's location.

The company says this has enabled it to reach out to a far larger student talent base, as also complete the recruitment process in three-four weeks, compared to the three-four months it took under the traditional process. TCS traditionally had a pool of 370 accredited colleges where it visited annually for fresh hires. With the online test, the company said it could reach out to nearly 2,000 colleges, including those "in Baramulla, Kohima and other far-flung areas".

The number of students who registered for the test on the company's digital platform iON was 280,000 from 100 cities and 24 states. This figure is

EXPANDING CO'S HIRING AMBIT

Traditional		New
1,01,818 students registered, from 370 accredited colleges last year		2,80,000 students registered from 2,000 colleges registered this year
Process completed in 3-4 months		Process completed in 3-4 weeks

TCS headcount & fresher hiring

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Total headcount	3,00,464	3,19,656	3,53,843	3,87,223	3,94,998
Trainees	20,961	22,133	32,584	39,428	20,000

175% higher than the number of students who registered for the traditional process last year. "The basic process of campus recruitment is not changing but the way we are doing is changing," Ajoy Mukherjee, executive VP and head of global human resources at TCS, told TOI. When TCS visits engineering colleges, it conducts recruitment tests for those in the fourth year (7th semester) with the help of its HR team, technical team and recruitment team in individual institutions. After the test, an interview is conducted. So 370 colleges took three to four months to cover. "We have optimised recruitment so that it can be done faster — in three to four weeks," said Mukherjee.

This year, the tests were con-

ducted earlier this month, and the interview process is currently on. "We could not go to colleges in far-flung areas. Now they come together in one nearby accredited college or an iON centre for the interview," Mukherjee said. The traditional campus recruitment process, however, will continue in top institutions such as the IITs, NITs and IIMs. But the hiring numbers could be fewer.

The company declined to comment on how many graduates it would hire this fiscal, but said the number would be more than last year, when it recruited about 20,000 trainees. Venguswamy Ramaswamy, global head of TCS' digital assessment platform iON, said the company has "democratised talent spotting" through this novel method.



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Report: 16% Indian youth unemployed

New Delhi: India's structural transformation has been slower than desired, resulting in a situation in which there has been an absolute decline in employment post 2013, with the rate of unemployment among the youth now at 16%, says a report by one of the country's noted private universities released on Tuesday.

The State of Working India report by the Centre for Sustainable Employment at Azim Premji University said there is an urgent need to think comprehensively about employment and for the government to formulate a National Employment Policy.

"Even as GDP growth rates have risen, the relations-



There is an urgent need to think comprehensively about jobs and for government to formulate a National Employment Policy, says the study

hip between growth and employment generation has become weaker over time. Growth creates fewer jobs than it used to. A 10% increase in GDP now results in less than 1% increase in employment," the SWI report said. "Between 2013 and 2015, total employment actually shrank by seven million. More recent data from private sources show that the absolute decline has continued past 2015," it said.

"A recent study claims, to

the contrary, that the economy generated 13 million new jobs in 2017. Unfortunately, this optimistic conclusion depends on selective use of data and unjustified assumptions. As a result, the rate of unemployment among the youth and higher educated has reached 16%."

India's new payroll data by the EPFO shows that around 9.5 lakh jobs created in the formal sector in July, as against the requirement of

more than a million joining the workforce each month.

The SWI report conceives of India's ongoing structural transformation as composed of two processes – movement of workers from agriculture to non-farm occupations and from informal to formal activities – while it adds crucial considerations of social equity and ecological sustainability to this framework.

India's problem has traditionally been known as not one of unemployment but underemployment and low wages, according to the report.

"But a new feature of the economy is a high rate of open unemployment, which is now over 5% overall, and a

much higher 16% for youth and the higher educated," it said. "The increase in unemployment is clearly visible all across India, but is particularly severe in the northern states."

According to SWI, adjusted for inflation, wage rates have grown in most sectors at 3% per annum or more. "But 82% of male and 92% of female workers earn less than Rs 10,000 a month," it said. In this regard, the minimum salary recommended by the 7th Central Pay Commission (CPC) is Rs 18,000/ month. "Even in the organised manufacturing sector 90% of the industries pay wages below the CPC minimum," the report said.

AGENCIES

As jobs grow scarce, VTU to make syllabus industry-oriented

It's working on a 'balanced' curriculum

TANU KULKARNI
BENGALURU

Keeping in mind the declining placement opportunities for engineering graduates, Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU) is working on updating its curriculum so that students are industry-ready. The university has established 19 board of studies (BOS) committees that will look into framing the syllabus for courses in the third to eighth semesters.

"The new model curriculum has been implemented from the 2018-2019 academic year for first-year students. Curriculum for the next few semesters is being developed by a group of experts. We want it to be industry-oriented and meet the requirements of industry. So we have several members from industry on board," said H.N. Jagannath Reddy, Registrar of VTU.

He added that faculty members of the Indian Institutes of Technology and the Indian Institute of Science were also on the board of studies to weigh in on how the university could improve the standard of the curriculum.

Students will have to complete a mini-project between the fourth and fifth semesters. This is over and above the mandatory final-year projects. "The idea is to find a balance between hands-on experience and

What's on the cards

- Mini-projects between the fourth and fifth semesters
- New computer languages
- Emphasis on data analytics
- Modules on entrepreneurship

theoretical knowledge," he said.

Sources who were part of the BOS said that the committees were also looking at introducing new computer languages as many that are currently being taught are outdated. Committee members have also suggested a short module on entrepreneurship and an introduction to the startup ecosystem to be made mandatory for students.

"We are also planning to put more emphasis on concepts such as data analytics and virtual laboratory," a source said.

Welcome move

The move has been welcomed by both faculty members and students, who feel it will be a "refreshing change".

Sheshadri S., a final-year engineering student, said: "Many of the concepts taught in our classes are obsolete, which we found extremely irrelevant during our internship. Revamping the syllabus is the need of the hour," he said.