

Lack of job creation is one of the major reasons behind un-employability. Prof VS Rao, President, NIIT University, Neemrana, shares his insights on how start-ups help create jobs

By Triparna Ray

Tell us the plan on preparing students as per industry needs.

A deep connect with the industry is the hallmark of NU. The curriculum is directly aligned to the needs of industry. Accomplished industry professionals participate in our curriculum design and teach a significant proportion of the program. The NIIT University's Industry Advisory Board comprises corporate leaders from some of the world's premier industrial organisations.

At NIIT University, career preparation for the students starts from day one of the programme. Also students work on multiple industry projects and assignments during the programme – making NU as an extended workplace for the students.

Research is at the core of the university's curriculum and we believe in engaging undergraduate scholars in research work through a well thought out course called the R&D Project. Students start working in research – right from year one at NIIT University. The course aims to help them acquire research orientation that can be applied in their future jobs where there is a dire need for creative problem-solvers. Quite a few of our student start-ups have the genesis of their business –from the research work done during various projects.

Q. Presently, the university is already offering integrated courses in M.Tech & B.Tech. Are there any plans on including more courses by 2020?

NIIT University offers integrated programmes in B.Tech & M.S -

NIIT University and University of Missouri-Kansas City have developed a collaborative degree programme. Under this programme, NU B.Tech students will complete the NU B.Tech degree followed by UMKC, SCE, M.S degree in 5 years. We also have integrated M.Tech Programme - the five year integrated programme enables students to pursue an M.Tech specialization in Computer Science & Engineering, Electronics Communications Engineering, Biotechnology, Educational Technology, and Geographic Information System. Other than these, NIIT University offers 4-Year integrated M.Sc. in Computer Science with specializations in Big Data/Data Sciences, Cyber Security, Mobile Technologies & Applications, Cloud Computing, Computational Biology and Bioinformatics, as well as, 4-Year Integrated MBA with specialization in marketing & marketing analytics, entrepreneurship, finance, banking & fintech, business analytics, communication & media studies and digital & social media marketing.

Q. How do you think the industry and academia can benefit from each other?

Higher education programmes which are 'co-created' with a collaborating organisation ensures students create value for the organisations. The industry-academia connect helps create 'leaders of tomorrow' who can adapt to the fast-changing global economy and contribute meaningfully to the growth of their organizations. It is important, to equip students with the skills that are relevant to the current industry requirements.

Towards this, NIIT University has partnered with 519 industry leaders for its 6-month long Industry Practice course for all undergraduate students during their four-year programs and also offers industry sponsored programs like MBA (Business Analytics) with WNS (Intelligent Data Sciences) with NIIT Technologies, MBA (Finance & Banking) with ICICI Bank, PGDBRM with Federal Bank, PGD (Banking & Finance) with United Bank of India, PGD (Banking & Finance) with Bank of Maharashtra and more. These programs will help young people and professionals to equip themselves with new age skills by working closely with the industry.

Q. In what ways does the university support start-ups?

NU is increasingly becoming known for providing learners with an environment of ideation, innovation and entrepreneurship. The university is indeed sowing the seeds of entrepreneurship on its turf, teaching students to think differently, come up with ideas that create the wow effect, and take these concepts to market fearlessly. Recognizing that there is a thrust on start-ups in India, NU is encouraging its students to be job creators rather than job seekers. Around 40 startups have come up from the university so far.

As a university that boasts strong linkages with industry NU is exposing learners to the entrepreneurial world through internships, as well as, visiting teachers who are drawn from successful start-ups and other organizations. The institution's deep research-orientation has also enabled it to foster

NIIT University has partnered with 519 industry leaders for its 6-month industry practice course for all undergraduate students during their four-year programs

innovation and instill the culture of entrepreneurship in the DNA of its learners.

Innovative products are increasingly coming out of NU, conceptualized and created by its students. The university's B.Tech class of 2013-17, for example, has been responsible for imaginative and breakthrough software applications. These include ASAP Messenger, SmartBin, and EDAWS, an early diagnostic and warning system. All these apps are a result of serious exploration and dabbling in the extraordinary by students.

Among the start-ups that have been incubated in the NU campus are Peer

XP Technologies, RAAV and Czar Securities. are AT-Lead, a drone

design and manufacturing center founded by Atif Inayat Khan and Czar Securities, a cybersecurity solutions venture set up by Shikhil Sharma and Ananda Krishna. The duo of Shikhil and Ananda in fact won the Start-up Pitch at the prestigious Global Conference on Cyberspace 2017, where Astra, a web security solution developed by these NU students, enabled them to be recognized as the 'Most Innovative Start-up' at the conclave. The students were presented the award by none other than the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi.

Q. How was the placement of the last batch?

NIIT University, has achieved 100% placement of its B Tech programme for 5 years in a row. NU has achieved 100% placement in B.Tech - CSE, ECE, Biotechnology and M. Tech - GIS.

This year, the prominent recruiters like IBM, Sapient, PwC, Reliance Jio,

Zomato, ZS Associates, ESRI India, MapMyIndia, Fortis, National Centre for Cell Science (NCCS) and Thales Group continued to show faith in the calibre of the students.

Tell us about the measures taken up by NU to save environment.

The environment policy of NIIT University is a unique initiative where a campus is established on a comprehensive long-term master plan keeping environmental considerations at the centre. The University directly adjoins a 750-acre range of pristine hillocks which form the foothills of the Aravali Range, and we are fully committed to protect and conserve the

Technologies, AT-Lead Our students are enthusiastic about the green campus and areas surrounding it and are actively involved in various Notable amongst these initiatives that we have undertaking over the past decade.

> natural environment and provide a safe, comfortable, healthy and interactive educational, working environment, optimize the use of energy and natural resources through effective training on prevention and reduction of exposure to environmental risks and hazards.

> Our students are enthusiastic about the green campus and areas surrounding it and are actively involved in various initiatives that we have undertaking over the past decade.

> Making the hills green- NU students have launched a drive called 'Shram-Daan' in an effort to convert the neighbouring barren 'Kali Pahari' to a fertile 'Hari-Pahari'. About tenthousand trees of various varieties have been planted in the neighbouring hills during the monsoons this year.

> Drip-Irrigation- NU has adopted about three hectares of nearby land for treeplanting.

Minimizing carbon footprint through Earth Air-Tunnels-The NIIT University earth air-tunnels act as enormous selfregulating heat sinks for the campus, with little electricity required to cool or heat the air. The earth air-tunnel installation harnesses wind chimney for a natural ventilation effect.

Preserving natural resources with water-recycling-NIIT University campus is being designed with rainwater harvesting facilities and water recycling

Containing illegal mining of rocks-Blasting in surrounding ranges of Aravalis and illegal mining of rocks, earlier a rampant practice, has now been

> successfully through a positive collaboration with local people.

Soil-Erosion-NU Controlling highlighted the problem of washing away of fertile top-soil during monsoons by putting forth videos and pictures of soil erosion to mobilize public opinion. With the support of District authorities NU got over a dozen of large earthen damns created to contain the monsoon waters.

Nursery of local plant varieties- NU nursery is also home to the 'Jal Pilu' tree, a native plant which has now become extremely rare in the region. NU plans to plant more than one thousand Jal trees by the end of this year.

Minimizing fossil fuel consumption through 'Pedestrian Only Campus'-The campus is comfortably explored on foot via the 'pedestrian promenade' that seamlessly unifies the campus and provides a daily meeting place for students, faculty and staff. |