

ENGINEERING EXAM

Yaj Medury, vice chancellor, Bennett University, on the pros and cons of a common entrance test for engineering courses

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There is nothing new about the proposal for a common test for engineering courses. The ministry of human resource development had made a proposal in 1999-2000 as well. The single test has some advantages as well as certain disadvantages. As far as the negatives are concerned, why should an individual's career and everything else in the future be dependent on his/her performance in just one test? A bad day can ruin a person's career. If a student doesn't score well, s/he cannot enrol in an engineering institute the same year. If you want, make it a single-window test because there is nothing like it.

However, it should be administered several times a year so that



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candidates can retake it to improve their scores if necessary. This is like the SAT which students applying to undergraduate courses in the US can retake after a couple of months. Whichever score is higher can be used for admission.

This would mean curtains for the multitude of tests which stress stu-

dents. Today, an average student attempts at least seven to eight entrance tests for engineering courses — from the JEE to those conducted by state governments, large universities and private institutes. In certain cases, this has become a money-making exercise. If 300,000 students make applications at Rs 1,000 or 1,200 each, a university earns at least Rs 30 crore. Once the government does away with this system, students can study whole-heartedly for a common test with several trials and attempts allowed for improvement.

At the same time, the admission process will no longer be within the purview of private colleges and state governments like those of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Maharashtra. This is a major setback for state governments.

Yet, in my view, an independent third party should conduct the test with some flexibility to ensure students from different exam boards have a fair chance to succeed. There are international players, too, which have managed other tests in India.

Intellectual humility makes you a better person

Andrew Griffin

Scientists might have figured out one of the keys to becoming a better person.

Showing "intellectual humility" — recognising that you might be wrong about what you believe — is a reliable marker of how good people are at making choices and understanding, according to a new study.

The personality trait is little studied but doing so could shed



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KEY TO IMPROVING YOURSELF

light on how people make decisions in politics, health and other arenas, according to researchers from Duke University.

The trait is equally spread between liberals and conservatives, and religious and non-religious people. But it affects how people make decisions about all those things and more, according to the study. The authors define intellectual humility as the opposite of arrogance or conceit. It means that people are open-minded,

they write; while people with the trait can have strong beliefs, they also recognise those beliefs as fallible and are willing to be proven wrong about them, according to lead author Mark Leary.

The researchers conducted four different studies to test out how the trait works and measure it in people.

The researchers hope that they can work to encourage and teach intellectual humility, to help improve people. THE INDEPENDENT