

It Is Important To Maintain Rising Standards: IIT Bhubaneswar Director RV Raja Kumar

By [Sandeep Mishra Jr](#) June 6, 2019



Bhubaneswar: With campus placements getting over and the fresh admission season set to commence, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bhubaneswar Director, Ratnam Vadra Raja Kumar talked in length with **Odisha Bytes** about the expansion plan of the premier institute along with new facilities to be provided to the students.

How was the campus placement this year at IIT Bhubaneswar?

Raja Kumar: Of the total participating undergraduate students, 87 per cent got placed in different companies while 65 per cent postgraduate students also got jobs. In placements, we are at par with the senior IITs. The PG placement was better along with the UG ones. We brought a culture of giving preference to core industries. On this front, we are better than the senior IITs. Perhaps we are among the top two.

In what sectors do you encourage your students to go for jobs?

Raja Kumar: We always encourage our students to go for core industry and also invite such industries to our institute during the placement drive every year. The core industries are happy to take our students as we provide them quality and skilled manpower. We have been encouraging creativity and design-thinking among the students, which is reflected in the rise in placements over the years.

How do you see whether students are going in more for jobs or entrepreneurship?

Raja Kumar: Interest for entrepreneurship is on the rise. We have conducted two alumni meets where students were mentored by the senior ones. We have also strengthened the alumni network so that students get more exposure. The objective was to connect seniors with the junior students and the institute. We asked them to offer mentoring support to the junior students and it is going on at a good pace. There is a steep rise in entrepreneurship activities with more startups being founded by our students. I can see that there is going to be a phenomenal rise in these activities in future.

What steps is IIT Bhubaneswar taking to encourage entrepreneurship?

Raja Kumar: About four years back, we didn't have a startup policy. Three-and-a-half years back, IIT established an incubation centre, startup centre and also a research and entrepreneurship park. We introduced courses which are relevant for students who are interested in taking up startups. We have introduced courses like entrepreneurship and small ventures. We have an e-cell. These initiatives have shown the way to our students in a big way and they have become innovators now.

Any academic expansion this year?

Raja Kumar: We have doubled the student intake in the last three years. We have introduced several new programmes including dual degree ones, several M.Tech courses, B.Tech in Electronics and Communication, which is also new. We are also going to start a new school of planning, architecture and design and will provide both undergraduate and postgraduate courses in all three disciplines. Among the new courses, we have innovative courses like cyber security and forensic, which is one of its kind in the IIT system. Since last two years we are also providing specialisation to the students in artificial intelligence. There were five M.Tech programmes earlier, now we have fourteen.

Any plan to increase the student intake this year?

The intake this the Minis year is going to rise because of the EWS reservation by the Ministry of Human Resource Development. This year, we are going to implement it by 5 per cent and the next year by another 5 per cent. This is going to be implemented in the same manner by other IITs across the country. But I must say that this reservation should not affect the seats of the general category students, which means that the student reservation of 40.5 per cent should not affect the last year's reservation of 50.5 per cent. In this process, for all the categories, the seats are going to be increased by 25 per cent within two years time.

What is the plan to implement the 10% EWS reservation system in IIT-BBS?

Raja Kumar: This year, supernumerary seats will be given to girls, like last year, to see that there percentage is 17 per cent or more as per MHRD guideline. So the total seats in the IIT system is going to increase by 25 percent. This year it will be 11 percent and then the next year it will be 14 percent. The 25 percent increase in intake is necessary not to affect the admission of general category students. Off the 25 percent, the 10 percent will go for the EWS. We will have 2,100 students compared to 1,765 now. In 2015, the strength was 900.

Any suggestion on improving the education system?

Raja Kumar: There is a need to keep the rising standards intact. The rising standards are responsible for high quality faculty and the students' competition level. I must say that the students will consider institutional facilities more than the city. For example, both Kanpur and Kharagpur lack on the civic front but the standard of the IITs there has risen over the years. So, standards matter more. Place also matters, but it is more on the institutional side.