

Newspaper Clips

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Collegium of scholars to select IITs, IIMs' head

Akshaya Mukul | TNN

New Delhi: It is common among higher educational institutes — Central universities, IITs, NITs, IIMs and others — to remain headless for a long time after the incumbent demits office. IIT-Kharagpur, for instance, remained without a director for nearly a decade, and the NCERT, too, had the same fate till a few years ago.

To deal with this chronic problem, the HRD ministry has decided to establish a collegium of scholars that would prepare a directory of academics for leadership positions like vice-chancellors or heads of institutions of central educational institutions. There are more than 100 autonomous educational insti-

tutions under the HRD ministry. Earlier, the provision of having a collegium was part of the National Commission for Higher Education & Research Bill. But since it looks improbable that any of the HRD bill would get Parliament's nod, the ministry had decided to take the executive route.

Once the collegium prepares the directory, the UGC as custodian of the directory would recommend a panel of three names from the list, whenever the HRD ministry or any of the central government institutions ask it to do so.

On Tuesday, a selection committee, under the HRD minister, met to finalize the "first fellows of the collegium of scholars."

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Pioneer ND 21-Aug-13 P-5

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BILL — Under pressure, HRD Min drops jail clause

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Succumbing to pressure from different lobbies, including political and private educational institutions, the HRD Ministry has dropped the two-year jail term provision from the National Accreditation Bill for those found guilty of violating the laid down criteria for accrediting higher educational institutions. The Bill pending in Lok Sabha is slated to be taken up in the ongoing Monsoon Session.

The Bill provides for setting up an overarching National Accreditation Regulatory Authority (NARA), which will make it mandatory and compulsory for every higher educational institution to get accredited by accreditation agencies like AICTE, UGC, and MCI (except for agricultural institutes) to certify academic quality.

The violation of rules entailed stringent punitive measures which included a provision of jail term for the head of institution, proprietor or promoter and simultaneously the erring official of the agency. It has, however, been struck-off now.

The National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for Higher Educational Institutions Bill, 2010 also states that if an accreditation agency fails to comply with its prescribed duties, it would be liable to pay compensation to the higher educational institution, which has to be determined by the State Educational Tribunal.

Clause 41 of the original Bill stated that if any person contravenes or abets the contravention of the provisions, he or she would be liable for punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend up to two years or with fine which may extend to Rs 10 lakh or both.

Sources in HRD Ministry

said the two-year jail term clause has been dropped after considerable deliberations with all stakeholders. Fearing a backlash on the provision, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on HRD too had recommended the Ministry to amend the provision, sources said.

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While the standing committee had suggested suitable modification of the provision, private educational institutions had opposed it. "Since now there seems to be consensus among political parties for the Bill it is expected to be passed in this session," said a top HRD Ministry official.

The NARA, which will register accreditation agencies, lays down norms and policies for assessment of academic quality in higher education institutions, undertake audit on matters related to conflict of interest, disclosure of information and transparency, levy of fees, advise central and state government, and collect and disseminate information on accreditation of higher educational institutions.

Hindu ND 21-Aug-13 P-8

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Sarita Brara

Hoardings put up by coaching institutes displaying photographs of high-ranked students making it to the premier engineering and medical colleges and IITs greet one almost everywhere while entering the historic city of Kota in Rajasthan.

Once considered the industrial capital of the State, Kota today is renowned as the coaching hub of India. There are over two dozen major coaching institutes and more than a hundred smaller ones that have mushroomed here to prepare students aspiring to become doctors, engineers or technocrats. Between one to two lakh students from across India come here every year to take coaching and the number has been increasing with every passing year. Some of the institutes start coaching students from as early as Class VI and have nurture classes for students of Class X to Class XII in addition to preparing students for entrance exams of professional colleges.

Over 50,000 students had registered at a particular institute alone for admission to medical colleges a few days back. Among the thousands of parents who accompanied their wards was Mithilesh



WAITING FOR THEIR TURN: Students seeking admission in one of the coaching institutes. PHOTO: SARITA BRARA

Students flock to Rajasthan's Kota, the coaching hub of the country, hoping to crack professional entrance exams

from a village in Haryana. She had come with her husband to get their daughter Chanchal enrolled in the institute. Her son, who took coaching from a Kota centre, got admission in a Kerala college last year and now she is hopeful that her daughter, too, would be able to make it to a good medical college.

Whether it is Mohammed Sabir from Bhagalpur or Devendra Prasad from Motihari in Bihar or Sharad Gupta from Khargone in Madhya Pradesh or parents from tribal villages of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand to big and small cities, everyone

dreams of having their children admitted to reputed professional institutes. They don't mind shelling out a bomb on coaching that costs at least Rs. two lakh as fee and hostel or paying-guest charges.

While parents feel that admission to coaching institutes will help their children, it adds to the pressure on the students. Away from their homes in the midst of cut-throat competition, the stress sometimes can be too much for the students to bear and it takes a toll on their health, some even take the extreme step

of committing suicide. As per the Kota police records, 11 students committed suicide last year and four this year so far.

According to the State's Inspector General (Kota range), Praful Kumar, sometimes it is the unrealistic expectation of the parents, inability to cope with the pace of the studies apart from other emotional and psychological factors which lead to students taking their lives. To prevent students from going into depression, most of the big institutes have student welfare cells. Some of them provide 24X7-

facility where students can open up and discuss their problems with counsellors, said a teacher at one such institute. Helplines have also been set up for students.

On a positive note, the coaching business has put Kota on the academic map of the country, boosting the city's economy. Running students' hostels or PG accommodations has become a lucrative business. Many houses have been converted into multi-storey guest houses. The owner of one such newly-constricted girls' hostel, Ram Swarup Gupta, said contrary to expectations, all the rooms got occupied in the first year itself.

A large number of departmental stores catering to the needs of the students, too, have come up near the hostels and the institutes.

New avenues of earning have opened up for women like Kamlesh. Studied till Class XII, Kamlesh had never thought of working; but with a large number of hostels requiring caretakers, she was offered a job as warden ten years ago.

Kapil and his wife are among the many couples who have opened mess facilities and send tiffin to students who have taken rented accommodation. Another couple who recently took a place on lease to run a mess is hopeful that they will be able to earn enough to meet the expenses of education of their own children, one of whom is studying medicine.

With competition for entrance to professional colleges getting tougher by the day, there is no doubt that the coaching industry in Kota is expected to grow further in the coming years.

HT Mumbai

IIM-A GETS OWN PAGE ON LINKEDIN

MUMBAI: The Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad will become the first institute in the country to own a 'university page' designed by LinkedIn, a US based social networking website.

The pages, which will be functional from September 12, have been designed to help students browse the university and to connect undergraduates or prospective students with alumni. The company will lower the age to join the website to 13 years in some regions, to make it accessible to young aspirants.

"We are happy to be able to open our institute to prospective students. The page will start operations soon," said an IIM-A spokesperson.

APOORVA PURANIK