

# **Newspaper Clips**

**December 25, 2011]**

**Business Standard ND 25/12/2011 P-13**

## **Higher education regulator**

### **Reforms in universities a must**

The Union Cabinet has approved a single independent regulator for higher education. The regulator is expected to push reforms and put an end to the stagnation in the higher education sector in India. Only medical and agricultural studies will be out of its purview. The proposed National Council for Higher Education (NCHER) will merge existing regulatory bodies like the University Grants Commission and the All India Council for Technical Education. At present there is a multiple approval system under the plethora of regulators. That stifles innovation and discourages private sector participation and investment in higher education. The pro-

posed NCHER has apparently been asked to develop a national curriculum.

The Authority should guarantee transparency in functioning. Market forces should be brought into play to throw up the best. It may be a good idea to introduce an accreditation based process of certifying universities. Secondly, investors in higher education should be given the right to make profit, which will stimulate their interest. The government proposes to incentivise the creation of 700 new universities and 10,000 new colleges in the next five years. The question is whether such multiplication of numbers is the road to reform.

**Shillong Times, December 23**

**HindustanTimes**

**Title : Delete anti-religious posts: Court to networking sites**

**Author :**

**Location : NEW DELHI:**

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# Delete anti-religious posts: Court to networking sites

**HT Correspondent**

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**NEW DELHI:** A Delhi Court on Saturday ordered 22 social networking sites, including Facebook, Google, Yahoo and Microsoft, to remove all "anti-religious" or "anti-social" contents in the next one-and-a-half-month and file compliance reports by February 6, 2012.

Additional Civil Judge Mukesh Kumar passed the order on a suit filed by Mufti Aijaz Arshad Qasmi seeking to restrain the websites from circulating objectionable and defamatory contents.

Kumar had on December 20 issued summonses to the social networking sites and asked them to remove objectionable photographs, videos or texts that might hurt religious sentiments.

The order comes a day after a criminal court issued summonses to the sites for facing trial for allegedly webcasting objectionable contents. The court had also directed the Centre to take "immediate appropriate steps" and file a report by January 13.

Representatives of Yahoo India Pvt Ltd and Microsoft on Saturday told the court that they had not got copies of the order and complaint against them and

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- Court has given 22 social networking sites 90 days to remove anti-social and anti-religious content from their sites
- The suit filed by Mufti Aijaz Arshad Qasmi had sought an order restraining these websites
- Facebook, Google, Google Orkut, Youtube, Blogspot, Microsoft India Pvt Ltd, Microsoft, Zombie Time are among the sites ordered to remove objectionable content.



**We comply with valid court orders wherever possible, consistent with our long standing policy.**

Google spokesperson

pleaded the judge to provide the same. Qasmi's counsel told the court that he would supply the relevant documents to them.

Monitoring contents on the Internet, particularly those generated by users, has been a controversial issue and IT minister Kapil Sibal had recently raised the issue with representatives of some of these companies and discussed ways to ensure such

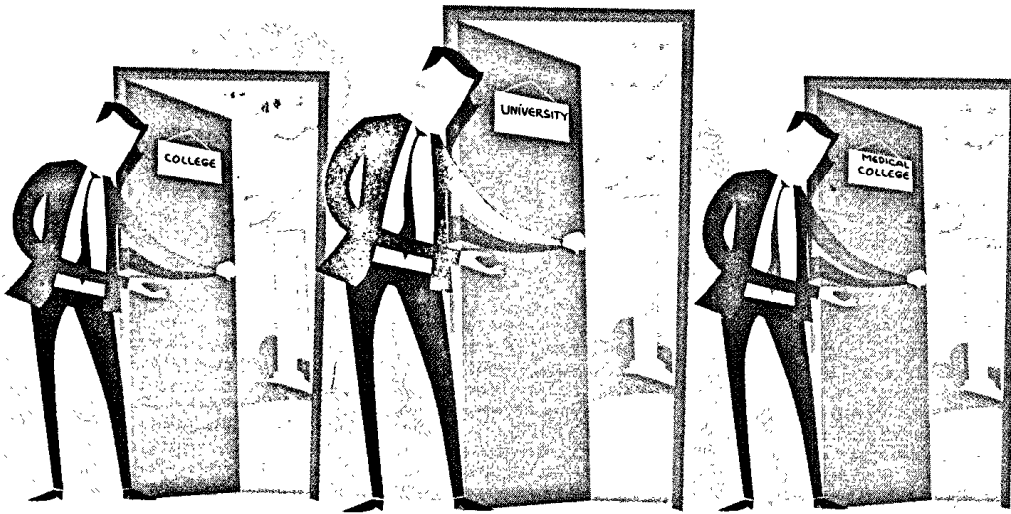
contents are not posted.

The websites — asked to remove objectionable contents — include Facebook India, Facebook, Google India Pvt Ltd, Google Orkut, Youtube, Blogspot, Microsoft India Pvt Ltd, Microsoft, Zombie Time, Exboii, Boardreader, IMC India, My Lot, Shyni Blog and Topix.

A Google spokesperson told HT: "We comply with valid court orders wherever possible, consistent with our long standing policy. We're yet to receive the details of this order and can't comment on this specific case."

Yahoo, Microsoft and Facebook could not be reached for comments.

# Show Me the Money, I Have a Seat



In the thriving education business, the fattest margins are made by shadowy market-makers: agents who arrange admissions for steep charges. *ET on Sunday* tells the disturbing story of this tightly-knit group of middlemen

By Devina Sengupta

Do not call us agents; it sounds cheap," says Anurag Arya, offended at the idea that he is a mere dealmaker in the lucrative business of running colleges. "We are counsellors and guides who know the ins and outs of education sector," he clarifies, as if craving respectability.

Sitting at the very apex of an intricate network of higher education's market-makers, Arya, in his mid-thirties, belongs to a privileged set that controls access to the middle-class' most prized asset: a university degree in medicine, engineering or business management. Arya and about a dozen others like him are purveyors of the so-called 'management quota' of college places which can be sold to the highest bidder. And their main field of operations is Karnataka, India's hotbed of higher education.

Arya came to Bangalore from his native Bharatpur in Rajasthan more than 15 years ago. He enrolled to study electronics engineering at Visvesvaraya Institute of Technology, one of the city's most prestigious colleges named after Karnataka's foremost scholar-statesman. When Arya was in the third year of his studies, a fellow student requested him

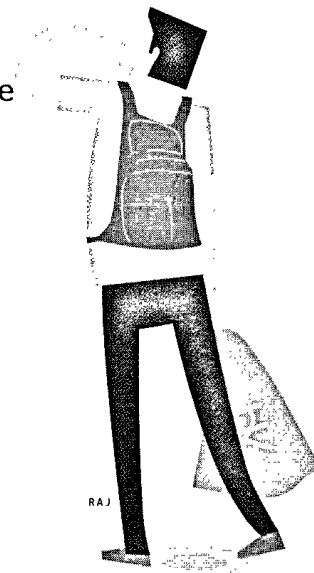
to get his friend admitted in the medical course since Arya had shown an interest in the admission process. He spoke to friends who dabbled in student politics, won access to the college management and secured the seat. The deal earned him a commission of ₹30,000, starting him off on his career which now sees him place more than 100 students in colleges every year.

Today his office has a billiards table where he relaxes after a day's work in his "counselling practice" called Career Coordinator. Arya also runs a construction firm, a just-formed software solutions company and an NGO that funds poor students' higher education.

"One can make more money from this industry than the share market. If you do not want to make profits out of it, then open more government institutes and shut all private ones," he says.

#### Supply and Demand

The management quota typically comprises 20-25% of the total number of seats. While colleges are required to admit students on merit and charge them a state-fixed rate for three-fourths of their



the situation is reversed now, particularly for engineering. This makes agents such as Arya extra valuable for college managements. For the agents, it is a golden opportunity: they earn a commission from colleges as well as students.

While Karnataka and Maharashtra have traditionally been the most popular destinations for students, now other states have encouraged setting up of more colleges, resulting in seats in these two states lying vacant. This is where the agents in Bangalore come in handy. They advise colleges on which newspapers to advertise in and the catchment areas from where students can be lured for particular degrees. And if the seats in colleges are going vacant, they lower rates by persuading college managements. For college authorities, the management quota is essential as the money from the so-called 'open seats' is as low as ₹40,000 a year, which is not enough to even cover costs.

"Politicians too put in a polite request to help our case and it works, especially if the institute wants a favour from the ministry when it comes to increasing the number of seats," says an agent who did not want his identity disclosed.

#### Ties that Bind

For the likes of Shivshankar Chaudhary from Begusarai in Bihar, dealing with an agent from his home state is a source of comfort in an alien land like Karnataka. Chaudhary, a general practitioner, wanted his son to follow in his footsteps but ran into an impediment when the boy did not make the grade in any of the colleges in Patna.

That was when a colleague told him about Neeraj Maurya, a Bihar native active as an education agent in Karnataka. Within a day, Maurya had got his son a seat at a medical college in the town of Davangere. His fee for the service was ₹50,000. Chaudhary would have to cough up ₹3.25 lakh a year to the college as 'capitation fee.'

"I will let other parents in Begusarai know about Maurya," a pleased Chaudhary said.

Maurya, 34, came to Bangalore from Gaya in 1994 to study electronics communication at MS Ramaiah College in Bangalore. He helped a student get a seat in the same college, securing a commission of ₹10,000. He had to forfeit the money since the student cancelled his admission, but realised how to play it smart. "I was a novice then but now I know how to get my way across," says Maurya.

He tried working in a software firm but the dotcom bust in 2001 made him choose

places, the quota is their avenue to make money from students who haven't secured the marks but are desperate for a professional degree.

The 'capitation fee' that students pay can go up to ₹50 lakh for a seat in a medical college and ₹15 lakh for an engineering seat. Till five years ago, the demand for college places outstripped supply, but with new colleges springing up regularly,

## **Italian B-school Bocconi comes to India**

### **Our Bureau**

*New Delhi, Dec. 24*

Universita Bocconi, a business school from Italy, has tied up with Ultimate Knowledge System, a group of Indian entrepreneurs, to set up a management institute in Hiranandani, Mumbai.

The Mumbai International School of Business Bocconi will have a training module with a global outlook, targeting placement of students in MNCs and Indian companies going global.

“There are more than 2,000 MBA schools in the country but not more than 10 are of quality. Our objective will be to prepare students for the global economy and not just India,” said Mr Ravi Saxena, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, MISB.

The first batch of 100 students will be initiated into the course from July 2012.

Once a week, students will be sent to corporate houses and trained in the trappings of corporate culture.

“When we were studying, there was an acute lack of corporate connect. MISB will structure corporate exposure into the curriculum by sending students to companies for training,” said Mr Saxena, who graduated from the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad.

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