Newspaper Clips
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AICTE to become statutory constitutional body conducting engineering and management entrance exams

http://www.prepsure.com/news/aicte-to-become-statutory-constitutional-body-conducting-engineering-and-management-entrance-exams/

The All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) has been suggested to be formulated into a statutory constitutional body to conduct entrance exams for engineering and management aspirants. The affiliation to technical schools would end in the coming 10 years. The recommendation has been made in a report by the government panel. The panel has opined that the AICTE should act as a mentor. The Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry had established a review committee headed by the former education secretary M.K. Kaw in November 2014.

As per the panel's report, the AICTE will have quit the affiliation system in a decade and conduct an entrance exam for all engineering schools under its purview and also a management entrance test for all management institutes. However, it would not include the prestigious institutes like Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) and Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs).

The report said, "AICTE should be recognised as the chief instrument of state policy in order to establish India as the technical education superpower of the world. It should be converted into an apex constitutional authority to promote orderly, integrated and coordinated development of technical education."

At present more than 11,000 institutes including engineering and management schools are affiliated and are under the purview of the AICTE. It also conducts Common Management Admission Test (CMAT) and Graduate Pharmacy Aptitude Test (GPAT).

Panel tells IISc, IITs to aim for world top-100 list

Prashanth G N, Bengaluru, July 30, 2015, DHNS:

http://www.deccanherald.com/content/492270/panel-tells-iisc-iits-aim.html

IISc students world-class, but global tie-ups lacking: Faculty

Top Indian Institutes including IISc and IITs do not figure in the top 100 list of global universities, while IISc manages to rank at the top within the country, according to rankings undertaken for 2014 by the UK-based Times Higher Education magazine for the top 100 prestigious universities in the world.

A Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) committee has asked IISc and IITs to tone up their academic work and take up concrete measures to improve ranking and reputation worldwide. The committee was set up to enquire into reasons why IISc or IITs do not figure in the top 100 list. The committee had the task of talking to heads of IISc and IITs to understand the rankings and the criteria to be fulfilled to be part of the top 100.

The committee has found that in terms of number of laboratories, number of researchers, published papers and citations, the IISc lags several top universities in the world, particularly from US, UK, China and South Korea. But the IITs have argued that they have not been marketed well by the country, as a result of which they are not seen in the right places at the right time.

The committee states that Indian Institute of Science continues to be the most highly rated university in India, though its position dropped from around 130th place to just below 200 in the world. IIT Bombay is now in the 210-220 group, while IIT, Delhi and IIT, Kanpur are near the 250th position in the world. Among the BRIC nations, India is the only one which does not have a university in the world top 100, China has two, both in the top 50, followed by Russia and Brazil with one each.

Former faculty at the Institute feel that IISc and IITs have global reputation to the extent that students from these institutes have been working in prestigious universities abroad as faculty, research scholars and students.

Collaborations required

"They have managed to write papers equal in number to those from other parts of the world. Their citations are also fairly good. What is required is a higher number of collaborations between IISc and research institutes in other countries. This will lend publicity to the way IISc scholars function, the courses they take up and the disciplines that are being taught here," the faculty said.

The IISc students have worked in global Fortune 500 companies, which gives them a fair degree of international presence. IISc scholars are seen in companies like IBM, HP, Motorola, Accenture, GE, Deloitte and Genpact.

The former faculty feel that more is required than just presence in companies and universities. "It is not enough if we bring up trained, technical personnel. "We need cutting-edge work which leads to new leads in a subject if not discoveries. Breakthroughs are vital to build reputation and credibility. It's not enough to say that we're as good as others unless we bring up new results often that are path-breaking. If we do this, the rankings will take care of themselves."

JoSAA: Despite faults, still the best change incorporated in admission to premier engineering institutes

http://www.pagalguy.com/articles/josaa-despite-faults-still-the-best-change-incorporated-35113539

Joint Seat Allocation Authority, has been the buzzword over the last few weeks for lakhs of students. Has this been one of the best changes in the system? Or, did it add to the confusion of the already existing process? How did the option of being able to fill in more than 500 choices affect the students? What could have influenced the minds of the 18 year olds while making the choices? Is it just the brand name of the IITs that ultimately matters to the students? The fundamental education is put at stake, in a bid a to coach students for the entrance exams. Where will this lead to?

Read on to know Prof. Aakash Chaudhry's take on the scenario that looms over the engineering field.

One of the most sensible things the JEE authorities have done this year was, to conduct combined seat allocation process. I think it helped in preventing the seats going waste in IITs. This had been a problem for some years especially since the time more number of IITs came into existence; a student would block an IIT seat and then join an NIT in his/her home state. This year, however, thanks to the Joint allocation this problem has reduced considerably.

But the joint allocation was not an easy sail. Though the options were available under one roof, it caused a lot of chaos and confusion for the students. Most 17 and 18 year olds do not have the maturity to understand complex matrix of options and new changes to fill in appropriate choices according to their ranks.

Choosing a college is a big decision for children, and more so for parents. The selection they make involves a lot of discussion and guidance from their family. One thing however, that is common to students across the country is their attachment to the native states. This influences their decisions more than anything else. Apart from this, other factors too, like their ranks, the availability of seats in their preferred stream, too plays a role in deciding the choice of college.

Many students get into an IIT just for the brand name that comes with it, even though it may be Ropar or Bhubaneswar. This could be a good thing. If one looks at the example of IIT Guwahati, they will understand. Over the years it has developed to have recognition as one among the top IITs despite being a relatively new IIT. However some still would like to stick to the top older ones and just accept whatever branch they get.

The option of filling up to 500 choices added to the confusion, simply because at that age students cannot understand the logic and make their choices accordingly. The fact that parents influence their decision is good as well as a bad state. It is good because parents are more mature and usually take the right decision for their children. Bad because ultimately they tend to force their opinion or aspirations, and the child may never develop a sense of decision making in their lives.

Funnily enough, one can never understand what, apart from the parent's opinion that influences the choice of the student.

Ultimately getting into the IIT is what matters to them, which is not very difficult these days with all the tutoring, motivation, guidance etc. that has become easily available now. The education system has been dumbed down to a great extent with dummy-schools, so cracking an entrance exam is not a distant dream anymore. Any student can easily score 'A' grade, and eventually crack the entrances and get a rank.

But in a bid to just crack these entrance exams students in some these coaching hubs, don't attend school. The dummy schools and proxy attendance, is something I am against. It ruins the students' overall growth and ultimately their academic potential as well. What does this lead to? Where will we head to? What are we trying to achieve? Why does it have to boil down to a point where the students learn to crack the JEE but not sustain the life and rigour of IITs?

Answers for this are not easy to find. The flaw in the system needs to be changed. How? And, when? These again have no right answers.

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Kerala's Technological University to be Named After President APJ Abdul Kalam

http://www.ndtv.com/kerala-news/keralas-technological-university-to-be-named-after-president-apj-abdul-kalam-1201742

Thiruvananthapuram: Honouring the contributions of former President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, Kerala government has decided to name its proposed Technological University after him.

The announcement was made by Chief Minister Oommen Chandy in the state Assembly, here today.

"Dr Kalam was a person who had made exceptional contributions to accelerate India's pace in the field of science and technology. He had close connections with the state for around 20 years as a scientist," he said.

"So we decided to name the Technological University as APJ Abdul Kalam Technological University," Mr Chandy said.

The Chief Minister said a delegation from the state would attend the funeral of Dr Kalam at Rameswaram tomorrow.

"The Kerala delegation will include Governor Justice P Sathasivam, Opposition leader VS Achutanandan and minister PJ Joseph, besides myself," he said.

Mr Chandy said that Speaker N Sakthan also wanted to accompany the delegation but would not be able to participate because of the Assembly sitting.

Mr Chandy also said though the state wanted the mortal remains of Dr Kalam to be brought to Kerala to enable the public to pay homage, the plea was not accepted by the Centre due to some 'technical reasons'.

Indian Express ND 30/07/2015 P-10

Furnish details we seek or face aid cut: UGC to universities

SHIKHA SHARMA
NEW DELHI JULY 29

UNIVERSITIES STAND to lose up to 25 per cent of their annual grant-in-aid if they fail to provide required information to the University Grants Commission (UGC), according to a new regulation introduced by India's higher education regulator.

The new regulation, titled 'UGC Furnishing of Information by Universities — 2015' requires universities to furnish detailed information under 20 different heads to the body annually or before the UGC's specified deadline, failing which institutions could attract cut in grants or other punitive action.

"Failure to upload data or information on the All India Survey on Higher Education or for any other purpose for which UGC directs furnishing of data may entail reduction of up to 25 per cent of the annual grant-in-aid and other punitive action as the UGC or Central government may deem fit. Furnishing of inaccurate or wrong data or information shall attract similar punitive action," the regulation stated.

Apart from basic information — updated copies of acts, statutes and ordinances, rules for grant-in-aid to affiliated colleges, rules and reports of inspection of colleges, rules of recognition or affiliation of colleges, and total number of colleges recognised or affiliated to the university — universities must submit detailed information on grants received from UGC or Central agencies, scheme-wise annually, along with its position of utilisation of funds and status of compliance with various UGC regulations.

The universities have been asked to submit annual accounts, status of accreditation and statistics of students admitted below minimum qualification.

According to UGC officials, the government had sent rules for such a regulation to UGC in 2004, but no action was taken by the body. The information will be used for the All India Survey on Higher Education, officials added.

"This is the first time that the UGC has come out with such a comprehensive regulation. As the funding body, it has every right to know how the money allocated by it is being spent. Besides, it will also help UGC to take informed decisions about the varsities," Indermohan Kapahi, member, UGC said.

While some teachers welcomed the move, others questioned the UGC's intention. "With regulations like these, UGC is clearly overstepping its brief. It is yet another way for it to seek control of universities," said Rajesh Jha, senior professor in the Delhi University.

DU VC defying government order on appointments, alleges DUTA

http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/du-vc-defying-government-order-on-appointments-alleges-duta-115072901308_1.html

The Delhi University's Teachers Association (DUTA) today accused Vice Chancellor Dinesh Singh of defying government order regarding the freeze on appointments three months before his tenure ends.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) had earlier this month directed him not to make any appointments after July 28 as his tenure ends three months from then.

"In a shocking expression of defiance, the VC has allowed two constituent DU colleges, namely Swami Shraddhanand College and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee College to schedule interviews for permanent appointments of teachers after this date," DUTA President Nandita Narain said.

"According to the current composition of the Selection Committee for permanent appointment of faculty in DU colleges, the VC will be represented by four personally nominated experts out of a total of seven members in the Committee. In such a scenario, the scheduling of interviews after July 28 can only be deemed as illegal," she added.

Following the directive from UGC, the varsity had gone on a hiring spree and its move to line up back-to-back interviews for important administrative positions within a week, had raised eyebrows with a section of teachers terming it an "unholy scramble" and demanding President Pranab Mukherjee's intervention in the issue.

Amid complaints against one of the candidates shortlisted for the post of Controller of Examinations, DU had last week deferred the interview process.

"We urge the HRD ministry to promptly intervene and ensure that the scheduled interviews for permanent appointments are cancelled forthwith and appropriate punitive measures are initiated against the VC," Narain said.

The teachers' body has also alleged that despite Constitution of Governing Bodies (GB) in 28 colleges funded by Delhi Government, the varsity has permitted the truncated GBs to carry on with their proceedings.

The AAP government had in April ordered a freeze on all appointments in 28 Delhi University colleges funded by it till the governing body members were appointed in them, following which the varsity had on July 20 approved the nomination of GB members.

University authorities, however, denied allegations saying there has been no deviation for the established norms.

"The advisories and directives of the government have always been respected by DU while maintaining the sanctity of the statutes and ordinances that govern the university and no departure has been made from these well established norms," DU spokesperson Malay Neerav said.

What it Takes to Lure Exam Frauds

At the heart of admission scams like Vyapam are bright MBBS students who crack exams on behalf of aspirants. Why do they do it? Rohini Mohan tries to find answers

Fertile Ground For Corruption

HEAVY COMPETITION

1,034: No. of seats in UP state medical entrance exam

1 lakh: No. of students who appear for exam

30,000: No. of seats in all India medical exam

3 lakh: No. of aspirants who appear for exam

FAST BUCK

₹60,000-2 lakh: Money impersonators get for cracking exams for others

CHEAPER GOVT COLLEGES

₹30-50 lakh: Capitation fee based on marks in entrance exam that private colleges charge.

₹1 crore: Annual cost, including fees, in private colleges

0: Capitation fees in government colleges

₹5-8 lakh: Cost per year, including hostel fees, in government colleges

In the thick of Lucknow's Nawal Kishore Marg, the watering hole for girls and boys preparing for competitive entrance exams, lies the Comfort Hostel. Upstairs, in an uncomfortably cramped room smelling of sweat and recently eaten egg fried rice, five boys sat discussing a solved question paper. One of them, a thin, clean-shaven young man with frameless glasses, had appeared thrice in the Uttar Pradesh medical entrance exam (UP CPMT) for someone else.

He spoke on the condition his real name would not be revealed. "Otherwise I'll also be Vyapam-ed," he said in Hindi, referring to the over 50 mysterious deaths and 1,900 arrests of people accused of involvement in the admission scam in Madhya Pradesh. Abhay, 21, hails from Gorakhpur town. When he was 17, he first wrote the CPMT for a student he had never met. An agent paid him ₹60,000. The next two times, he got ₹1 lakh apiece.

As the Vyapam scam unravels, whistleblowers like Indore-based Dr Anand Rai have revealed several cheating methods. Agents and officials, in collusion with politicians, organise tampering of hall tickets, leak question papers, arrange favourable seating for copying, recruit pliant invigilators, and facilitate exchange of money. But at the centre of this vortex of admission illegality are bright MBBS students who crack the exams on behalf of aspiring students. They have many names: impersonators, scorers, imposters.

The Madhya Pradesh Special Task Force (MP STF) has detained over three dozen students from colleges across UP, many of whom are imposters. MP STF AIG Ashish Khare said they found imposters in coaching centres and medical colleges across the state. In Lucknow, they arrested 12 MBBS students from the prestigious King George's Medical University (KGMU). KGMU's chief proctor Dr SN Kureel said he expelled the detained students from the hostel, and suspended them from the university. "They got into prestigious colleges because of their brains, and I don't understand why they want to sell it for a few thousand rupees."

What, Me Worry?

Abhay, surprisingly, seems unafraid. "These arrests are for the MP medical test, not UP," he said. "I won't get caught if I stop now." This year, he is writing the All India pre-medical test (AIPMT) for himself. "Abhay will surely get admission, he has a lot of practice!" his friend teases. But this time, he might not have agents supplying leaked question papers or invigilators who will allow him a trip to the toilet during the exam.

Outside the hostel, students have crammed the lanes and bylanes to chase their engineering, medical and railway recruitment dreams. Every tree and electric pole is adorned with posters advertising institutes and teachers like "KD Singh" offering Physics, and "Raghuvanshi Sir" offering Zoology lessons. "Come with Hope, Go with Confidence," is Nitesh Sir's motto.

Devendra Yadav, a middle-aged father, is on a tour of the coaching centres. In his village in Barabanki, Yadav owns 5 acres of farmland, a dozen cows, and an English-medium school called St. Philomena's. He wants his only daughter to be a doctor "because I only studied till the seventh standard."

In Aakash Institute, a reputed coaching centre, Yadav handed the administrator his daughter's 9th standard marksheet. The administrator spent 10 minutes explaining that to clear the PMT, she needed to improve her Science scores. She could enrol in an after-school classroom course at Aakash.

"Aur koi tareeka nahin hai? (Isn't there another way?)" Yadav asked. It would have passed off as an innocent question had Yadav not dropped his voice, and added, "We are well-off." He pointed to the large vinyl hoardings with pictures of smiling toppers alongside a sign that read 'tips for success'. "You have so many rankholders," Yadav said. "You must do something extra."

I've learnt that no one is incorruptible, only the price is different. So now we have the worthy supporting the unworthy to get into the healthcare system... what a shame

Later, the administrator said he was used to parents openly enquiring about illegal methods in competitive exams. "Vyapam kya naya hai? Uttar Pradesh ne toh ye tareeke rattke kha liye. (What's new in the Vyapam scam? Uttar Pradesh has perfected cheating systems.)"

This year, more than a lakh students wrote the UP state medical entrance for just 1,034 MBBS seats (See *What Breeds ...*). Pallavi, 17, whose face was plastered across hoardings in Lucknow for clearing the UP CPMT with a high rank, said, "Some professions have become a craze; there is so much competition that people are desperate." Aakash's administrator worried that former rankholders were now being lured. "We put out ads with toppers' photos so that it inspires other students, but some people use it as a scouting database for potential imposters."

Incredibly, this furore is for tests that provide admissions in government colleges only. Government fees are only a fifth of the capitation fees private colleges demand, and the teaching hospitals give the students crucial exposure to different sorts of patients. The very race to make the cut also imbues the government college MBBS with more market value, therefore increasing the demand for them. This heavily skewed environment, in a way, fosters the corruption.

Growing Demand

It's clear the demand for imposters is rampant. But given the risks, why do the smart students do it? "What I did funded one year of my coaching. It will also pay for my MBBS," Abhay said. His father was a compounder in a private hospital, and his mother sold puja items outside a temple. "I needed the money."

Varanasi-born Shahnawaz is halfway through his MBBS in Lucknow, and impersonated a student two years ago. When the MP STF arrested his peers, he panicked. "I regret risking my career," he said. "But my father is going to retire soon, MBBS is nearly 6 years, add another few years for MD or MS before I can start to earn, so I thought..."

Dr SC Tiwary, chief medical superintendent at KGMU, said most imposters seemed to be students from poor to lower middle class backgrounds. "It is painful to put effort and deliver a seat for someone else. They must feel the pressure for money if they do this," he said. Dr Kureel was less charitable. "It's immorality. No one is incorruptible, only the price is different. So now we have the worthy supporting the unworthy to get into the healthcare system... what a shame!"

But the clinching reason could be the culture of impunity. "So many do it, so few get caught because the big guns are involved," said Shahnawaz. Last year, a coaching teacher offered Pallavi ₹1.5 lakh to be an imposter. It is unclear if she accepted, but what is clear is who she holds responsible. "The imposters are also teenagers, you know?" she said. "We face pressure from parents, from society. The police should catch the big fish, fix the system. Don't blame only us kids if the hospitals are full of people who don't know a heart from a lung."

(Student names changed on request)

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