

Newspaper Clips

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'WE WANT TO REMOVE DUBIOUS PLAYERS FROM THE INDIAN EDUCATION MARKET'

IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH *MILLENNIUM POST* UNION HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT MINISTER **M M PALLAM RAJU** EXPLAINED THE EXISTING STRUCTURE OF EDUCATION IN THE COUNTRY AND STRESSED ON THE NEED TO IMPART QUALITY EDUCATION

TANIA AMEER KHAN

You have earlier been minister for defence and now are handling HRD ministry, which is a completely new arena. How has your experience been till now?

Both the ministries have been a great experience for me. I had learnt a lot in the ministry of defence. However, the education ministry is a very enabling environment, where you can experiment and take new initiatives. You are accountable on a day-to-day basis, there are several challenges and we are working hard to overcome those. Being in the HRD ministry has been an enabling and positive experience for me. Yet, the work in the two ministries is also very different because there are certain parameters beyond which you can't go in the ministry of defence, whereas in education you can try out a lot of new initiatives.

Your predecessor Kapil Sibal was a very proactive minister during his tenure. How does it feel taking over this ministry after him? Have you tried to take his ideas forward or introduce new changes after him?

I think he had taken some great initiatives and now it is for me to consolidate them and work on them. It is not a small but a huge task ahead now.

In terms of literacy growth, what have been the major achievements of the HRD ministry?

The biggest achievement

after the promulgation of Right to Education Act (RTE), whereby we have managed to get 96 per cent of children into schools, has been creating the environment in terms of schools, classrooms, teachers and other facilities. Now the important thing is to focus on learning outcomes, on how effectively this infrastructure could be utilised to teach our children, whereby they also retain what they have learnt.

The cost of education is going up at all levels, as a result of which, some people and even political parties have alleged that the UPA is slowly privatising education. Any comments?

We believe in equity and access not only in school education but also in higher education. There is a lot of conscientious emphasis on ensuring that education is affordable to even the most deprived sections of society. That's why you feel that the fee is very reasonable in central institutions. Having said that, it is important to make institutions viable, you cannot allow them to deteriorate. There is a minimum charge that they have to bear as cost of education. Scholarships are always there to take care of marginalised sections of society. As far as private institutions are concerned, they are filling the gap that is there in terms of shortage of capacity within higher education. There we don't want it to be profitable, but we certainly want it to be viable. If any of them are putting up shop, it should be a viable and sustainable. en

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The UGC and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and such organisations, which are under the HRD ministry, have come under criticism a number of times. What is your view on this and how do you plan to improve regulatory mechanism in this sector as a whole?

Both the organisations are very important regulatory bodies and both of them are serving the purpose of ensuring the quality factor in our educational system. We are taking measures that universities and colleges are accredited because that is the first step to ensuring quality. Even the issue of shortage of faculty is addressed. We are using both these regulatory bodies - UGC and AICTE - to substantially improve the quality factor in education.

In improving higher education what has been your policy and what have been your achievements?

In the eleventh Five Year Plan, we have introduced a number of central institutions, which includes central univer-

sities, IITs, IIMs, NITs and others. Now my job is to consolidate what we have begun as that is more important for me before taking new initiatives. When I say 'consolidate', it is important to make sure that it is a wholesome environment where students go to for their higher education once they are enrolled, and after the required number of years of study, they come out with substantial degrees.

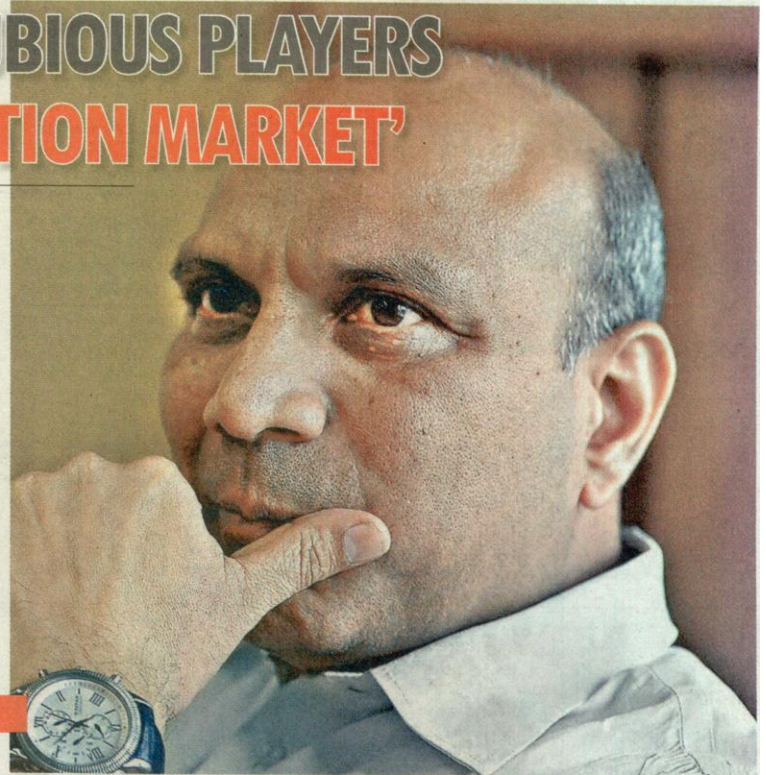
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Since education is a joint responsibility of the central and state governments, how do you assess the performance of different states in India in terms of policy and implementation?

It is a joint responsibility and we are hoping that even the states will play a very proactive role in ensuring the quality of education. That is why we have come out with this new scheme - RUSA (Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan), which will encourage states to make those regulatory changes and take measures that will improve the standard of education in their colleges and universities. The incentive mechanism in that happens to be that UGC and ministry will give them funds in proportion to the changes that they make.

Are you proposing any new syllabus or curriculum changes? If so, then what and how?

Syllabus and curriculum



at the school level are handled by the NCERT and suggestions are taken from experts, states and others to incorporate changes. As far as universities are concerned, they are in consultation with UGC, though the universities have autonomy to structure the course and also the content. I am very keen that the aspect of value in education is not neglected. I feel values in life should be enshrined into our

the students in higher education is around three crores. Now, we have to work on increasing that number. We are keen to create quality capacity in various forms. Three crore are enrolled in higher education today all over the country. It is not a question of job shortage at all. It is, in fact, about the difficulty of finding the right people for suitable jobs.

in students on false promises. What is your observation on the issue?

I think there are dubious players also existing in the market and that is why the regulatory bodies are taking stringent action against them. If the states also cooperate in this effort, then we will be able to take corrective measures, in ensuring that it is only the quality and good education providers who are

I think it is very apparent that there is a shortage of quality higher education capacity in the country. In order to bridge that gap, we must look at all kinds of channels. Definitely one of the channels is through foreign education providers. That is the reason why the bill (Foreign Educational Institutions Bill) was introduced and the standing committee had its observations regarding it. We

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education system as a whole.

What is the total number of graduates that India is producing every year and how do you explain the huge shortage of jobs in the country? How is the HRD ministry coping with this problem?

I think the figure today of

Along with government universities, colleges and schools, simultaneously mushrooming are the private institutes. But it has been observed that the amount of fee that they charge and the quality of education that they impart are both matters of serious concern. Reportedly, many of these institutes lure

there in the market. I would urge the states to cooperate in eliminating those bogus education providers.

What is your view on foreign universities - is there a possibility of collaborating, having joint ventures or affiliating with them? What do you have in mind?

are hoping that we will be able to bring in foreign education providers also to establish their educational institutes in India soon.

Does this mean that we will soon have new institutes in India that will be affiliated to foreign universities? That could be in the offing.

Economic Times ND 13-Jun-13

UGC Bars Affiliation to Technical Colleges

Directive to universities come after SC said AICTE approval is not necessary for MBA programmes

URMI A GOSWAMI
NEW DELHI

India's higher education regulator, the University Grants Commission, has asked all 566 universities not to affiliate any technical or management colleges till guidelines and regulations for technical courses are put in place.

The UGC's missive comes in the wake of the Supreme Court's April 25 judgment, which put management, or MBA programmes, outside the pale of "technical" education. The top court was of the view that approval from the technical education regulator, All India Council for Technical Education, was not required for MBA programmes offered by private institutions.

The Supreme Court had said that AICTE's role vis-a-vis universities was "only advisory, recommendatory and one of providing guidance, and has no authority empowering it to issue or enforce any sanctions by itself".

Citing its order in the Bharathidasan University and Parshvanath Charitable

Trust case, the court said that AICTE norms could be applied through the UGC. As a result, the AICTE cannot directly "control" or "supervise" these affiliated colleges.

UGC will evolve a suitable methodology to ensure that the standards and quality in technical and engineering colleges affiliated to universities is not diluted.

In his letter to vice-chancellors, UGC secretary Akhilesh Gupta wrote, "It is of utmost importance that universities having power of affiliation exercise take due care and diligence while granting permanent affiliation or affiliation to new technical colleges. Any dilution of standards of technical education at this juncture would also belie the trust reposed by the Supreme Court in the sanctity of the autonomy of the universities."

Meanwhile, the human resource development ministry has been considering an ordinance to address the legal lacunae highlighted by the court, which made it possible to put management programmes outside the purview of the AICTE. The Supreme Court had pointed out that MBA and MCA courses were brought under AICTE and included in its function through an amendment of its regulations without placing them in Parliament, which was mandatory under Section 24 of the AICTE Act.

HRD minister Pallam Raju had also said that the ministry was considering moving a review petition of the SC order.

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Soon, get a Cornell degree sitting in Delhi

Himanshi Dhawan | TNN

New Delhi: You could soon get a Cornell degree sitting in Delhi. The National Council of Hotel Management and Catering Technology (NCHMCT) will soon be collaborating with the US' Cornell School of Administration to allow Indian students an opportunity to study online courses and eventually receive a dual degree.

The MoU for the tie-up is likely to be signed soon.