

Newspaper Clips

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Abolition of NEET: Giving legal sanction to colleges of scandal

By Vatsala Vedantam

When a national television channel telecast a sting operation last month revealing the auction of undergraduate and post graduate seats in three private medical colleges, one heaved a sigh of relief that public awareness and activism were still alive in this country. The sigh turned into a moan when the highest court in the land passed a startling judgment shortly afterwards giving such colleges legal sanction to continue their illicit activities.

The three-judge Supreme Court verdict banning the National Entrance cum Eligibility Test (NEET) from admitting students to the 345 medical/dental colleges in the country from the academic year 2014 has ensured that 45,000 standard doctors and dentists will be unleashed in India's hospitals in the next five years.

The judgment was in response to 115 petitions from private managements whose business interests were hit when

the Medical Council of India rightly ruled that all medical and dental seats should be filled only on the basis of a single entrance examination hereafter.

The apex court ruled that the MCI order was constitutionally invalid – which still does not make it academically or democratically unsound.

In a country which needs more than a million doctors still to fill its primary health care centres that cater to the poorest patients, it is suicidal to unleash under-qualified medical personnel on an unsuspecting public which already suffers a serious shortage of doctors in rural areas where 80 per cent of the population resides. The dissenting voice of one judge confirms that there is still hope for health care and its inputs to be restored to their proper place.

It is no secret that the present state of medical education in the country is in a shambles. Not only is it ridden with insurmountable problems like innumerable entrance tests which make students run from college to college seeking admissions; but



it has no guarantee that the most deserving alone will gain entry into medical colleges. If they do, the best among them leave the country in search of greener pastures abroad, as working conditions in hospitals here are deplorable.

Among those who stay back, few will want to serve in rural areas and hospitals where living conditions do not make it conducive to work. As for the institutions themselves, it goes without saying that ill

equipped private colleges can only turn out ill-equipped doctors and dentists. Their 'private practice' will be a poor substitute for conducting proper medical duties. As for the few autonomous medical schools in the country which are well ordered and train their students to perfection, they would prefer the doctors whom they trained at great cost to work in their own hospitals when they graduate, and rightly so.

Poorly equipped medical colleges

State medical colleges which admit students through the common entrance test in each state are themselves poorly equipped and managed as they are completely controlled by the state governments. Nepotism, corruption and political interference plague these institutions. Their teaching hospitals, though rich in patient strength, reek of unsightly filth and mismanagement. Lastly, the ugly face of the capitation fee culture looms large over private medical education which has mushroomed in uncontrol-

lable numbers in many states. Financially crippled students, however deserving they may be, cannot gain entry into these institutions which are managed by private trusts, business houses and politicians in power.

In this ugly scenario, neither the student nor the patient stands to gain. The only beneficiary is the politically influential, socially irresponsible business magnate – read 'educationist' – who gains by 'launching' such unviable medical colleges for ineligible students.

In the light of these severe drawbacks in the field of medical education, the single National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) proposed by the Medical Council of India was a boon. It was too good to be true. It may have had certain constitutional limitations. Or, lacked proper examining criteria. It may have been too theoretical and lacked practical inputs. Yet, none of these justified its total abolition. Its weaknesses, if any, could easily be corrected. Its legal aspects amended.

If the MCI guidelines did not permit it

to conduct entrance examinations through the CBSE or otherwise, those guidelines could be suitably revised. Instead of being a mere regulatory body, it could be made the authority for regularising and planning the mechanics of admission to undergraduate and post graduate courses in medical colleges. As for the test itself, as pointed out by the Director of the Christian Medical Hospital in Vellore, it could be revised so that greater attention is paid to practical work and bedside skills – two very important qualifications for doctors.

These are details that can be put in place instead of totally scrapping the NEET itself – which would be like throwing away the baby with the bath water! The dissenting judge in the case rightly said: "Holding the NEET is legal, practical and the need of society." If a single test can enable 300,000 high school leavers to compete for admission to 45,000 seats with no other strings attached, what better options for medical education? The apex court must take another long look at this aspect.

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DU APPROVES APPOINTMENTS AS PER UGC GUIDELINES

HT Correspondent

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NEW DELHI: Clearing any ambiguity, the Delhi University has finally approved appointments for the posts of assistant professors and professors at Delhi University, as per the rules of the

University Grants Commission. The move comes after the Ministry of Human Resource Development asked DU to follow the UGC guidelines.

The approval brings good news for teachers from the reserved categories as it clears all hurdles in appointments

keeping in mind the reservation policy for teachers from SC, ST and OBC categories. The university has sent a memorandum to all colleges and departments informing them that all appointments will have to take place according to the UGC rules of 2006. The Executive Council of

DU had resolved to implement the reservation policy in 2007, but it was never put into practice.

Implementing the UGC norms for appointment of teachers has been a long standing demand of the Delhi University Teachers' Association (DUTA) and has also been an election

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DU teachers question vacancy ads

New Delhi: The Delhi University teachers have demanded an inquiry into why the orders regarding reservation policy and 200-point roster for posts of teachers were not implemented before advertisement for vacant posts was put out.

A memorandum by the registrar on Tuesday stated that the reservation policy—mandated by a human resource development ministry letter dated June 25, 2013 and a

UGC letter dated May 9, 2013—is to be implemented in all teaching and non-teaching posts. On Wednesday, a letter by the assistant registrar asked the colleges to prepare the roster of all teaching posts according to the 200-point roster.

"On what basis did the university clear the roster which was uploaded on the website for some colleges

leading to the advertisements? Somebody has to be made accountable for this and the vice-chancellor should initiate an inquiry," said J Khuntia, president, Academic for Action and Development (Rathi).

"While questions were being raised on four-year undergraduate programme (FY-UP), the ministry said DU is autonomous. Now it is slam-

ming the university for appointment lapses. If the university has to revise its decision because of constitutional requirement in the appointments, it should also review FYUP," said Rajiv Kumar Verma of Satyawati College (evening).

Termining the promises of appointments as nothing but a gimmick to influence the DUTA election, Pramod C

Sharma of Kirori Mal College said, "The letter which the registrar is referring to dates back to May and June. So why this was not implemented before the advertisements came. It was a gimmick before the DUTA election and now all the roster calculations have to be modified and the whole exercise has gone waste."

DUTA president Nandita Narain has called for an EC

meeting to re-amend the ordinance in sync with UGC regulations. "The DU administration had kept the MHRD and UGC rules under wraps and the colleges were made to come out with the advertisement. There is still no clarity about how the roster is to be made. Moreover, the EC has passed two ordinances which are against the UGC stipulation on the selection committee and these should be amended as per UGC regulation. Otherwise the whole process will become invalid."

IIM Placements: Starting Salaries May Stay Flat

The Silver Lining

PPO trend at IIMs, with 2-3 months to spare



	2013 (till date)	2012
IIM-C	50	97
IIM-B	65	97
IIM-L	60	72
IIM-K	Not available	39
IIM-I	Not available	40



Average salaries expected to go up by 8% for the current batch; pay increases may not cross 4%

SHREYA BISWAS
KOLKATA

The economic slowdown is likely to hit campus placements at business schools later this year, with a few Indian Institutes of Management (IIM) bracing themselves for modest increases at best in starting salaries compared with those offered to the students in the previous batch.

The average salaries may remain the same or go up by up to 8% for the current batch, officials at IIMs in Kolkata, Bangalore, Lucknow, Indore and Kozhikode said on the basis of feedback received from top recruiters across sectors.

"There is no concern about placing students, but salary increases might not be as phenomenal as in the past few years and could range between 3% and 4%," said IIM Calcutta director Saibal Chhattopad-

hyay, even as most of these IIMs are reaching out to more recruiters this year. IIM-L, IIM-K and IIM-I have similar salary expectations while IIM-B expects 7% to 8% increases for the current batch.

For the batch that passed out this year, the median salary at IIM-B was Rs 16.5 lakh while it was Rs 12 lakh at IIM-I and the average salary at IIM-K was Rs 12.31 lakh.

"Even a few months ago, we were pretty optimistic but there are concerns now," said Ashish Sadh, chairperson of the placement cell at IIM-I, which completed placement of its batch of 450 students a month ago after a rolling process. The number of offers per company, at the institute, has come down to 2.5 offers in 2013 from 3.5 offers per company in 2012.

Krishanu Rakshit, chairperson-placement at IIM-C, said the median salary, a better indicator

of averages, had not increased much over the past two-three years. His counterpart at IIM-L, Pushpendra Priyadarshi concurred, adding that students had already tempered their expectations in view of the slowdown.

Students have tempered expectations, with median salaries staying the same over 2-3 years

Even if they want to hire a limited number of candidates, they want to be sure of who they recruit," says Sankarshan Basu, chairperson-Career Development Services, IIM-B.

With three months to go for the placements, IIM-B has lapped up 65 pre-placement offers compared with a total of 97 last year while IIM-L has 60 against 72 for the previous batch and IIM-C has got 50 against 97 for the batch of 2013.

Yet, the placement cells are doing their bit to ensure a successful recruitment season, tapping more potential recruiters. IIM-K has even set up a page on social networking website LinkedIn. IIM-C has to place a batch of 462 while IIM-B has 377 students, IIM-L has 440, IIM-I, 450 and IIM-K, 325.

"This year, we have scaled up our efforts to increase campus engagements through Global CorPLead, guest lectures, alumni mentorship programme and workshops," said Kulbhushan Balooni, chairperson-placement at IIM-K.

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'Won't quit UGC silently'

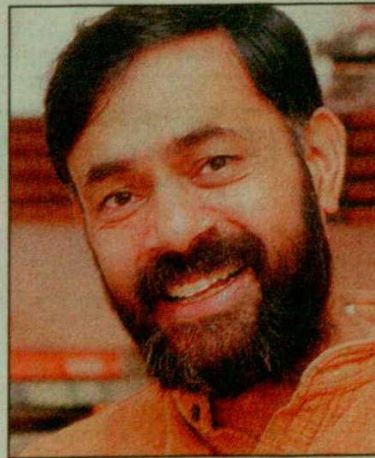
May Take Legal Route: Yadav

Akshaya Mukul | TNN

New Delhi: Political scientist Yogendra Yadav on Thursday said he would not go out silently from the University Grants Commission (UGC). "I do not want to become a precedent which can be used against any member," he said, reacting to the TOI report of the ministry serving him a show-cause notice of removal from the Commission on the ground that he now is part of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP).

Yadav said the HRD ministry's reaction shows that there is "no difference between the UGC, the HRD ministry and the Congress party". He said the reply would be sent within a week. Even legal option is not ruled out. On Friday, a number of academicians and public intellectuals are expected to protest against the ministry's move.

Ministry sources said that it does not have on record any letter from Yadav stating he wanted to quit after joining AAP. On his part, Yadav shows a mail he had sent last October to a ministry official in the department of school and adult education resigning from the panel for Re-



WILLING TO FIGHT

search in Elementary Education on the ground that he was politically involved in the anti-corruption movement. He had also stated that he would be resigning from the National Advisory Council (NAC) for the Right to Education (RTE). "I am not responsible if one hand of the ministry did not know what the other hand was doing." Ministry officials in the higher education department insist that there is a clear demarcation of work between the two departments. "Higher education department or the UGC has nothing on record," a source said.

For the full report, log on to www.timesofindia.com

HT Chandigarh



Prez to visit Jagannath temple, address IIT students

BHUBANESWAR: President Pranab Mukherjee will arrive here on Thursday on a two-day visit to Odisha, after a gap of about four months. He is scheduled to visit the Jagannath temple in Puri and the convocation ceremonies of IIT-Bhubaneswar and the Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan.