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:

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**


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.

Mr. Aakash Chaudhry is the, Director of Aakash Educational Services Pvt Ltd, Delhi.
Kerala's Technological University to be Named After President APJ Abdul Kalam


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'.
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


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

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: 1,024: no. of seats in upstate medical entrance exams 31 lakh: no. of students who appear for exam 30,000: no. of seats in all India medica exams 31 lakh: no. of aspirants who appear for exam

FAST BUCK: 60,000-2 lakh: Money impression gets for cracking exams for others

CHASING GOV COLLEGES 30-50 lakh: Capital fee based on marks in entrance exam that private colleges charge 1 crore: Annual cost, including fees to secure college O: Capital fee in government colleges 75-110 lakh: Cost per year, including housing fees, in government colleges

In the backwaters of Lucknow’s Sarvansh Park, the university for gifted boys preparing for a competitive entrance exam, the center boasts a sprawling, smartly designed campus. It’s a sprawling, smartly designed campus where the pattern of thought is clear: to ensure that every student who enters this place has a future. The Vyapam Recruitment and Employment Department (VRDE) was the result of a brainstorming session held in 2003 by the government to address the problem of admission frauds.

The department was set up to crack down on the rampant cheating that had been going on in the state’s medical entrance exams. The department has made some headway in recent years, but the problem persists. In fact, it’s getting worse.

The department has been able to catch a few perpetrators, but it’s hardly had any impact on the overall problem. The reason is simple: the demand for MBBS seats exceeds the supply by a wide margin. This creates an ideal environment for fraudsters to operate.

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