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Varsities told to take part in US global meet

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NEW DELHI: The Centre has given a call to all the universities and colleges to participate in an international conference on higher education in the US to project India as a preferred destination for education and research.

Acting on a directive from the Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD), the University Grants Commission and All India Council for Technical Education have asked the higher educational institutes under them to consider participating in the six-day National Association of Foreign Student Advisers (NAFSA) conference in Los Angeles from May 28.

The ministry swung into action after the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce

and Industry (FICCI) approached it, suggesting the conference would be an effective platform for building "brand India" by showcasing some of the finest Indian universities and colleges under 'India Pavilion' during the six-day event.

"In line with the prime minister's vision to make India a global leader, it is imperative that the country is projected as a preferred destination for education and research. Though the English speaking talent pool and low cost of workforce have attracted many multinational companies to set up their offices in India, it has not been the case in (the field of) education," FICCI president Pankaj R Patel had written to HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar earlier this year.

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Centre urges varsities...

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The NAFSA is an association of international educators and considered as the world's largest non-profit organisation dedicated to international education and exchange. Its annual conference on higher education is also considered as one of the biggest.

Founded in 1948 to promote professional development of the US colleges and universities, the NAFSA has members from at least 3,500 institutions from over 150 countries.

The HRD ministry has been making several efforts to increase the number of foreign students in the higher educational institutions to improve its international presence.

Many of the Indian Institutes

of Technology (IITs) recently sent their delegations to the US and other countries to offer faculty positions to Indian origin students and researchers. They also offered teaching posts to foreign faculties.

Foreign factor

Inadequate number of foreign students and faculty in Indian institutions was one of the main reasons why even the premier institutes were not able to grab top slots in the international ranking, it emerged during several discussions.

The Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, recently secured eighth rank in the best small universities of the world list released by international rating agency Times Higher Education.

Odia no NEET way to MBBS as just 450 students take test in the language

On December 22 last year, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik shot off a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking inclusion of Odia as a medium for the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET-UG) for admission into MBBS programmes. He felt it had been conspicuously left out of the list of regional languages and would put students who have studied in Odia medium "at a great disadvantage."

Four days later, Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Dharmendra Pradhan wrote to Union Health and Family Welfare Minister J P Nadda demanding the same but he trained a gun at Naveen for overlooking the interests of the State's students by not raising the issue during the

consultative process where such matters are decided. The Centre included Odia as a medium for NEET in February.

Now that NEET 2017 is over, it is time to assess how the demand for Odia's inclusion worked out. Going by CBSE sources, just 450 candidates appeared for the NEET in Odia language out of 29,000-odd students who took the test in the State on May 7. If one takes into consideration the seven other regional languages which were also the medium of examination apart from English and Hindi, Bengali saw a turnout of 34,000 followed by 15,000 in Tamil and 4,700 in Gujarati. Just 1,700 candidates took the test in Telugu whereas in Assamese, Marathi and Kannada, the numbers were 3,800, 900 and 700 respectively.

English remained the most-preferred with 9.15 lakh students out of the total 10.97 lakh appearing for the test in the language, followed by 1.21 lakh in Hindi. This though, in no way, indicates the students' dislike for their mother tongue. It simply means that they are comfortable with English as the medium for Science subjects in Class X and Class XII levels.

This also explains why so few students took the test in Odia despite the ruling BJD and its challenger BJP pitching for the test in the local language. Neither of the parties bothered to find out why such a demand does not make sense in the first place.

Of the 90,643 students who took the annual Plus Two exam in the Science stream this year, barely a few hundred appeared for it in Odia. There were instances where



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evaluators had returned answer sheets in Odia. The problem is clear: Science subjects are neither taught in Odia nor are teachers proficient in it because they have used English all their lives.

The bigger problem, though, lies elsewhere. There is no Science textbook available in Odia. The Odisha State Bureau of Textbook Preparation and Production prints textbooks to the tune of ₹7

crore annually and not a single book is published in Odia for Plus Two Science subjects. Every year, the Council of Higher Secondary Education, which conducts Plus Two examinations in the State, hands out indents for course books printing to the Bureau. But there has never been any indent for publication of Science books in Odia because there is hardly any demand.

Since no Odia textbook is available for Plus Two Science, which is the qualifying examination for NEET, students generally take it in English. Similarly, most students who aspire to be a doctor take to professional coaching classes where the medium of instruction is invariably English.

Under such a scenario, how can one expect students to use Odia as an option for the NEET? It was

wrong to expect them to benefit from it since the papers in Odia were a mere translated version of English questions. Experts say that nuances of the questions of an all India-level entrance are lost in the translation which confuses the students even more. The CBSE can neither be blamed nor challenged.

After NEET was over, a group of students who had appeared for the test in Odia complained to the State government that the question papers were completely different from those in English. In West Bengal, the TMC government has already announced to take up a similar matter with CBSE. Here, not a word has been heard. So much for protecting the interest of Odia students.

Playing up the Odia sentiment is fine but political parties like

BJD and BJP should be careful about what they are fighting for? And at whose cost? If the government is so concerned about students losing competitive advantage, it should start preparing course books in Odia first and train teachers in the language. No political party would be interested in this because it would take a long time.

For years, the Odisha Joint Entrance Examination was the qualifying test for MBBS programmes before NEET came into place in 2013 and not once Odia as an examination medium was considered. So why now? A doctor has to deal with the subject in English all his/her life, be it in practice, medical education or research. Pushing Odia for political reasons will only tantamount to playing with their career.

ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಸೇವೆ ಮಾಡದ ವೈದ್ಯರ ಪ್ರಮಾಣಪತ್ರ ರದ್ದತಿಗೆ ಸೂಚನೆ

ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು: ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ಸ್ನಾತಕೋತ್ತರ ಪದವಿ ಪಡೆದ ನಂತರ ಒಂದು ವರ್ಷ ಕಡ್ಡಾಯ ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಸೇವೆ ಮಾಡದ ವೈದ್ಯರ ವಿರುದ್ಧ ಶಿಸ್ತುಕ್ರಮ ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳಬೇಕು ಇಲ್ಲದಿದ್ದರೆ ಅಭ್ಯರ್ಥಿಗಳ ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ಪ್ರಮಾಣಪತ್ರ ರದ್ದುಗೊಳಿಸುವಂತೆ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಇಲಾಖೆ ಸಚಿವ ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ಪರಿಷತ್ತಿನ ರಜಿಸ್ಟ್ರಾರ್‌ಗೆ ಪತ್ರ ಬರೆದಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ಕೋಟಾದಡಿ ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ಕೋರ್ಸ್ ಪ್ರವೇಶ ಪಡೆದ ಅಭ್ಯರ್ಥಿಗಳು 2006 ನಿಯಮದ ಪ್ರಕಾರ ಕಡ್ಡಾಯವಾಗಿ ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಪ್ರದೇಶದಲ್ಲಿ ಒಂದು ವರ್ಷ ಸೇವೆ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಬೇಕು. 2013-14ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನಿಂದ ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ 3702 ವೈದ್ಯರು ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಸೇವೆ ಮಾಡಬೇಕಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಈ ಪೈಕಿ ಕೇವಲ 86 ಜನ ಮಾತ್ರ ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಸೇವೆ ಪೂರೈಸಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ.

1159 ಅಭ್ಯರ್ಥಿಗಳು ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಸೇವೆ ಮಾಡದಿದ್ದರೆ, ಸರ್ಕಾರ ವಿಧಿಸುವ ದಂಡ ಕಟ್ಟುವುದಾಗಿ ಕರಾರು ಪತ್ರಕ್ಕೆ ಸಹಿ ಹಾಕಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಸೇವೆ ಮಾಡುವುದಾಗಿ ಕರಾರು ಪತ್ರ ಬರೆದು ಸೇವೆಯಿಂದ ದೂರ ಉಳಿದಿರುವ ವೈದ್ಯರಿಗೆ ನೋಟಿಸ್ ನೀಡಿ, ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಸೇವೆಗೆ ಹಾಜರಾಗುವಂತೆ ಸೂಚಿಸಬೇಕೆಂದು ರಮೇಶ್ ಕುಮಾರ್ ಪತ್ರದಲ್ಲಿ ತಿಳಿಸಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

ಸಚಿವರ ಪತ್ರದ ಅನುಸಾರ ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಸೇವೆ ಮಾಡುವುದಾಗಿ ಒಪ್ಪಂದ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಂಡು ಸೇವೆಯಿಂದ ದೂರ ಉಳಿದಿರುವ 688 ವೈದ್ಯರಿಗೆ ನೋಟಿಸ್ ನೀಡುವಂತೆ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಇಲಾಖೆಯ ಪ್ರಧಾನ ಕಾರ್ಯದರ್ಶಿ ಶಾಲಿನಿ ರಜನೀಶ್ ಅವರು ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ಪರಿಷತ್‌ಗೆ ಪತ್ರ ಬರೆದಿದ್ದಾರೆ.