



Online Newspaper Clipping Service
 Dtd-Tuesday, 09th, January- 2018

Pg.No.12

Data of educational institutes under government radar

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NEW DELHI, DHNS: Higher educational institutions will witness much closer scrutiny of records by the Central government from this year.

The Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry has decided to conduct "random" verification of the data to be submitted by universities and colleges for the annual survey of higher educational institutions in India.

The decision has been taken to ensure that the institutions do not submit "false data" and "strict action" is taken against those doing so. "We will conduct random verification of the data to be submitted by higher educational institutions for All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE) from now on," HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar said.

The minister released the latest AISHE report on Friday.

During the collection of data from higher educational institutions, the ministry detected instances of gross violation of rules by a large number of faculty members and private institutes. About 80,000 teachers were found to have been on the payroll of more than

one higher educational institution as their regular faculty members in gross violation of the UGC regulations.

The HRD ministry's move to link Aadhaar data of faculty members of the country's higher educational institutions with a central database exposed this scam.

"We believe that 90% of the data collected from institutions for AISHE 2016-17 is correct. But the possibility of some institutes, particularly private ones, submitting false data cannot be ruled out as the ministry depends on them for collection of data," official sources told *DH*.

The ministry has already brought in many changes in the way data is collected for the annual AISHE report since 2011-12. Last year, the UGC made it mandatory for all higher educational institutions to furnish data for the AISHE, notifying new regulations for it on the instructions of HRD ministry. "The exercise will also help bring in transparency in the functioning of the institutions. It is for this reason the ministry has decided to conduct random verification of data to be submitted by the institutions," sources said.

Colleges at sea over new accreditation process

Applications Of 13 Institutions Await Decision

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Bengaluru: The revamped accreditation process of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has left government educational institutions across the state in a quandary. Applications of 13 of the 23 government institutions seeking accreditation are hanging fire, the state quality assurance cell (SQAC) has reported.

NAAC accreditation is crucial for government institutions in availing of grants. But the new accreditation system which was put in place in July 2017 and shifted the process online, has thrown up many imponderables, leaving colleges, especially those in the hinterland, flummoxed.

Several institutions that have applied for renewal of accreditation said they have been waiting for two months to hear from the council on the application status.

"Earlier, the council had a system of responding to the institution within 10 days of submitting the Self-Study Report (SSR), by post. But now even though we upload the SSR online, it's taking time," said an official from Government First Grade College, Chitradurga.

The college had applied for the third cycle of accreditation on November 23. "We later received two clarification mails from NAAC to which we

ONLY 2 WINDOWS FOR APPLICATION

The revamped NAAC accreditation process provides only two windows for application — May-June and November-December. Under the earlier process, colleges could re-apply repeatedly through the year. Siddalinga Swamy, coordinator, SQAC, said May-June and November-December are periods when exams or vacations are under way in most institutions, and finding faculty members to conform to various processes is difficult.

UNREALISTIC CONDITIONS

Institutions are finding requisites of the revised process like student diversity, choice-based credit system programmes and presence of differently abled students unrealistic. "In rural areas, one cannot expect a government college to have national diversity, let alone international," said Swamy, adding, "Some questions have a weightage of 10 points but don't apply to the institution. This ambiguity in the framework has not been addressed by the council."

replied the same day. But we haven't heard from the council since," the official added.

Another government institution from Kushalnagar, Kodagu, also confirmed that it is facing similar problems after having applied for the third cycle of accreditation last November. The SQAC, a wing of the department of collegiate education which co-ordinates with government institutions on accreditation, has raised a string of issues dogging the revamped process in three letters to NAAC. Copies of the letters are with TOI.

Institutions are also upset over the new norms governing peer team evaluation visits, another vital stage in the accreditation process. While details of

WHAT NAAC SAYS

"The new processes employed in the methodology facilitate transparency and better coordination in the assessment and accreditation process as a whole. It may also be noted that applications for the second window are under acceptance and the last date is January 12, 2018. All higher education institutions which had applied in the first window (May-June 2017) are expected to undergo peer review in February/March 2018," says NAAC.

the peer team members are not shared with them, institutions are expected to not only pay for the visit but also make travel, food and lodging arrangements. In many instances, last-minute calls made to institutions to pick up peer team members from railway stations, airports and bus stands have caught the colleges off-guard.

"The institutions are left in utter panic as everything is shrouded in mystery..The framers don't seem to have anticipated these practical hurdles in their mission to make the process theoretically simple but practically complicated," Siddalinga Swamy, coordinator, SQAC, who's also a peer team member, wrote in one of his letters to the NAAC.