Time to demystify engineering education?

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It is time for the state government to move away from outdated and redundant policies that heavily favor engineering education and to demystify the perception surrounding it? For the past three decades, the policies of successive governments in the Telugu states have excessively favored engineering education at the expense of basic sciences and other fields of study.

This obsession with engineering has not only disadvantaged other disciplines, but the realm of engineering education has also become plagued by capitation fees, similar to issues seen with land and other entities.

Speaking to The Hans India, a former faculty member of an engineering college in Ranga Reddy stated, "It is an open secret that many private, unaided engineering colleges and other professional colleges have been violating every known regulation imposed by the state and regulatory bodies." Currently, management quotas for seats in AI, Data Sciences, Robotics, and Machine Learning branches, along with Computer Science Engineering, are being sold for fees ranging from Rs 6 to 15 lakh.

"This is preying on the emotions of parents who want their children to have a bright future by studying premium branches of study," says Srinivas Reddy, an assistant professor at an engineering college in Medchal.

Moreover, the fee structure for several new subject areas introduced in the top 25 to 30 institutions in and around Hyderabad goes beyond Rs 15 to 20 lakh, largely because these institutions have higher placement records.

"Yet, many institutions do not pay salaries properly to their faculty. Some colleges that collect huge donations do not return the original certificates of students, claiming that the state government has not cleared the fee reimbursement," he added.

The manipulations of private unaided colleges include collecting donations, faking college ratings, and obtaining grades through fraudulent data, which has turned engineering education into a donation racket. When asked, Prof. K. Sridhar (name changed) from an A rated autonomous engineering college in Ranga Reddy pointed out, "We cannot blame only the colleges for all the ills. The state government and universities must establish interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary pathways that connect different fields and encourage a broad spectrum of study areas."

For instance, it is not necessary that a non-engineering student cannot study Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (AI-ML) or Data Sciences. The experimentation taking place at central universities, Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), National Institutes of Technology (NITs), and other central universities showcases how the interdisciplinarity among science, engineering, management, social sciences, and humanities has become increasingly vibrant and highly sought after by various industries.

Once the comprehensive approach is discussed, it will have a significant impact on demystifying engineering education, allowing non-engineering and non-IT students to enter emerging job markets in areas like AI, ML, and related fields.

Creating more study options with potential job prospects would help prevent engineering and other professional colleges from taking advantage of parents and violating rules and regulations, claims a senior faculty member from IIT-M.

ఈ నెలాఖరులో ఇంజినీరింగ్ అడ్మిషన్ల ప్రక్రియ!

- షెడ్యూల్ రిలీజ్‌కు విద్యాశాఖ ఏర్పాట్లు
- ఏఐసీటీఈ నుంచి ఇంకా అందని ప్రైవేట్ కాలేజీల లిస్టు

హైదరాబాద్, తెలంగాణ: రాష్ట్రంలో ఇంజినీరింగ్ కాలేజీల్లో 2025-26 విద్యాసంవత్సరానికి అడ్మిషన్ ప్రక్రియ ప్రారంభించేందుకు సర్వాన్ ఖరారు చేస్తున్నది. ఏఐసీటీఈ నుంచి అధికారికంగా ప్రైవేట్ ఇంజినీరింగ్ కాలేజీల లిస్టు రాగానే, ఈ ప్రక్రియ చేపట్టనున్నది. దీనికి అనుగుణంగా ఈ నెలాఖరులో అడ్మిషన్ ప్రక్రియ ప్రారంభించేందుకు అధికారులు ఏర్పాట్లు చేస్తున్నారు. స్టేట్‌లో వివిధ వర్సిటీల పరిధిలో 175 ఇంజినీరింగ్ కాలేజీలు ఉన్నాయి. కాలేజీలు అఫిలియేషన్ కౌన్సిల్ ఫర్ టెక్నికల్ ఎడ్యుకేషన్ (ఏఐసీటీఈ)కి అనుమతి కోసం దరఖాస్తు చేసుకున్నాయి. ఒక్కో కాలేజీకి అనుమతి ఇస్తూ వస్తోంది. దాదాపు మెజార్టీ కాలేజీలకు ఏఐసీటీఈ అనుమతులు ఇస్తూ, అయా కాలేజీలకు వివరాలు అందించింది. అయితే రాష్ట్రవ్యాప్తంగా అన్ని కాలేజీల వివరాలను టెక్నికల్ ఎడ్యుకేషన్‌కు పంపించాల్సి ఉంది. ఈ నెలాఖరులోపు అన్ని కాలేజీలకు అనుమతులు ఇవ్వాలని ఏఐసీటీఈ డెడ్‌లైన్ అయింది. దానికి అనుగుణంగా అనుమతులు ఇస్తోంది. ఈ రెండ్రోజుల వారం పదిరోజుల్లోనే అన్ని కాలేజీలకు అనుమతులు ఇచ్చే చాన్స్ ఉంది. ఈ కాలేజీల్లోనే ఓయూ, జేఎన్‌టీయూ, కేయూ తదితర వర్సిటీలు అఫిలియేషన్ ఇవ్వాల్సి ఉంది. ఇప్పటికే అన్ని వర్సిటీలు అయా కాలేజీల్లో తనిఖీలు చేసి, రిపోర్టు సిద్ధం చేసుకున్నాయి. కొన్నింటికి షోకాజ్ నోటీసులూ ఇచ్చాయి. కాలేజీల్లో వసతులకు అనుగుణంగా వర్సిటీలు గుర్తింపు, కోర్సులకు అనుమతి ఇవ్వనున్నాయి. దీనికి అనుగుణంగా త్వరలోనే షెడ్యూల్ ఇచ్చేందుకు అధికారులు రెడీ అవుతున్నారు.

ఫీజులపై పెండింగ్..

ఇంజినీరింగ్ కాలేజీల్లో అడ్మిషన్లకు ఫీజుల నిర్ధారణ కూడా అర్థంగా మారింది. ఇప్పటికే తెలంగాణ అడ్మిషన్ బంధ్ ఫీజ్ రెగ్యులేటరీ కమిటీ (టీఏఫ్‌ఆర్సీ) కాలేజీల నుంచి వివరాలు సేకరించాయి. అయితే, వచ్చే సంవత్సరం అనుగుణంగా 2025-26, 2026-27, 2027-28 విద్యాసంవత్సరాలకు ఫీజులను ఖరారు చేస్తుంది. ఫీజుల అంశం కూడా చాలా చర్చలో ఉంది. ఏఐసీటీఈ నుంచి కాలేజీల లిస్టు వచ్చిన తర్వాత కూడా ఫీజులపై ఇంకా ప్రభుత్వం నిర్ణయం తీసుకోలేదట. కాస్త ఆలస్యమయ్యే అవకాశం ఉంది. అయితే, ఇప్పటికే అన్ని 140కి పైగా ఇంజినీరింగ్ పర్సెంటేజ్ కాలేజీలు ప్రారంభించాలని వర్సిటీలకు ఏఐసీటీఈ సూచించింది.

Education sector, state varsities lurching from one crisis to another

- Successive governments neglected the higher education sector over the last 20 years
- State universities lack the culture of developing schools of studies to conduct serious research studies

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File photo

IS the role of the state universities increasingly becoming irrelevant to society and the students?

Speaking to The Hans India, a senior professor who was also earlier a member of the Telangana Higher Education Council (then the Andhra Pradesh State Higher Education Council) said, "The good days of the state universities have lost their charm and importance about two decades ago. Since then, neither the political leadership nor the bureaucracy of successive governments has shown serious interest in higher education and state universities. Neither there is a vision nor a mission, resulting in the state universities fast losing their relevance."

Sharing out of 40 years of his experience being an activist, an academician and associated with the higher education council, he pointed out, barring science and technology, in most of the other fields, the syllabus and the teaching methods used by the faculty are outdated and irrelevant to the contemporary requirements of the society. Besides, the degrees awarded to the students neither give them the confidence to advance their knowledge nor get them gainful employment.

Seconding him, a former professor of Osmania University and who also served as former vice-chancellor pointed out, "Currently, it is a watershed moment in higher education. The days of teaching political science, sociology, history, and economics as core or independent subjects are a thing of the past."

For example, the incident of the Pahalgam terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir has not only a security issue. It has also led to changes in geopolitics, geoeconomics, international law, defence, security studies, and more.

Thus, if an economics teacher fails to teach and trigger his students to think about how all these developments are connected to the broader subject areas of economics, political science and governance, "he is teaching nothing relevant to the contemporary times."

Further, "We visited the Cornell University in the USA. We are intrigued to know that the university has in its position the record of the old editions of the Andhra Patrika Telugu Newspaper, till it ceased publication in the 1980's."

Students and researchers at these universities not only conduct serious research but also hold teaching positions; several think tanks are either founded by the universities or are associated with them. It was against this backdrop that universities are considered to become intellectual assets drawing funding from both the federal, state, industry and alumni networks from across the globe, he added.

Further, Central universities, national universities and even some private universities are developing schools of study (to conduct serious and focused studies) like prominent universities abroad in India.

However, the State Universities lack such culture, leading to them being stuck with the old practices that are leaving them to lose their credibility and relevance.

For example, establishing a School of Telangana Studies would help the political, economic, cultural, and internal security dimensions under the regional studies. This initiative would help to develop comprehensive case studies and build intellectual capital that the state government and state planning board can rely on for informed policy decisions, rooted in thorough independent research and data-driven analysis.

Yet, neither the political leadership nor the bureaucracy takes the initiative to develop policy decisions that strengthen higher education and state universities, as they continue to face one crisis after another.