

Letter to political parties [18.05.10]

To

The President/General Secretary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Greetings!

The All India Federation of University and College Teachers' Organisations (AIFUCTO) deems it a pleasure and at the same time a national responsibility to discuss with you certain issues of national importance. The AIFUCTO is the only all India Federation of organisations of teachers working in State Universities and colleges affiliated to them. Around 5 lakh teachers from Kashmir to Kanyakumari are members of the AIFUCTO.

The recent developments in the field of higher education in India is a matter of serious consideration and needs effective intervention from you, your party and the people of this glorious country.

Since Mr. Kapil Sibal took over as Minister for HRD, he has been taking certain concerted and drastic decisions which we feel are serious threats to the future of this country and the fundamental principles enshrined in the Constitution of India. These decisions are taken without any consultations with the stakeholders of education, the State Governments, teachers or students or even the Parliament.

Since Independence, because of the visionary planning of our elders, higher education has spread rapidly so much so that it is the third largest system in the world next only to the US and China. This system has contributed tremendously to the development of the modern India providing the necessary human resources for the economic, social and intellectual and cultural development of the country. This has enabled a section of the hitherto oppressed communities to free themselves from the shackles of social and economic oppression and achieve social mobility. It has also contributed to making this country the services hub of the world today.

Yet we are not blind to the weaknesses pervading the system. We could provide higher education to only around 12% of our children. There is also a huge quality gap among the institutions, the States and also among the various social groups. We have to address these issues at the earliest.

These require the intervention from every section- from the Governments for adequate funding, academicians for finding the right solutions, committed teachers to implement them and motivated students to achieve quality. This needs a serious debate.

But, we are afraid that the solutions offered by the MHRD might aggravate the conditions than solving the issues.

Of late, the cost of higher education has escalated to such an extent that students from poor families can't even dream of quality professional education. On the other hand, we get reports of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and others at the AICTE suspended for indulging in various corrupt practices and the Chairman of the MCI being caught red-handed while receiving bribe and amassing crores of rupees in consideration for granting affiliation to private medical colleges. Privatisation has not only increased the cost of education but has corrupted the whole system. But Mr. Kapil Sibal's solution to this is more privatisation and not regulating private institutions. He wants to do away with Deemed Universities, but wants to create new private universities. In what way, this will be different? AIFUCTO accepts the need for private participation in higher education. At the same time we strongly feel that university status should not be given to private agencies and that regulatory powers should always be vested with public institutions.

To achieve his mission of total privatisation, the MHRD now has decided to do away with all the existing academic structures and instead create an overarching authority called the National Commission for Higher Education and Research. This NCHER will be a body of 7 wise men that would have powers like that of the Election Commission. After seeing what happened at the AICTE and the MCI, we strongly feel that giving such wide ranging powers to such a small body would be a totally suicidal decision. Instead we should have thoroughly decentralised, transparent, democratic, autonomous and accountable institutions.

The proposed NCHER would take away the rights of even State Governments. Even to start universities, the state governments would require authorisation from the NCHER. The State Governments could appoint vice-chancellors only from among the names recommended by the NCHER. This is abject centralisation and is an attack on the constitutional rights enjoyed and exercised by the State Governments. This is an attack on the Federal character of our Constitution itself.

Now the MHRD has introduced the Bill for the Entry and Regulation of Foreign Education Providers. The Minister is misleading the country by saying that this would enhance the gross enrolment ratio, enhance the quality of Indian higher education and that it would stop Indians going abroad for Higher Education. The entry of foreign educational institutions will solve none of these problems. The cost of education in these institutions will be so high that its doors would always be shut for the poorer sections. How can this increase access? The Indian youth are going abroad not for quality education but for getting jobs which could fetch them a very high salary. Further, quality cannot be imported. It can be developed only by

creating a system which is quality conscious. Quality can be achieved only through a process of internalisation. We are not against cooperation with best foreign institutions. Suitable mechanisms have to be built up for academic and research collaboration with leading institutions of the world. But the move of the MHRD to permit FEPS will only further commercialise higher education and the exploitation of gullible and affordable youth of our country. It will seriously erode our culture and also social justice. Education cannot be seen merely as a provider of skills for employment in modern industries. It is also an engine of cultural development and an organ for the inculcation of values. Can we expect this from the foreign institutions? We request you to intervene and stop this foreign phobia in higher education. The MHRD has introduced another Bill for creation of independent accreditation agencies. The entry of private accreditation agencies will again complicate the issues and corrupt the whole system. Another important Bill is the Bill on Unfair Practices in Professional education. The Bill deliberately restricts the scope of Unfair Practices. The Supreme Court has given directions that the governments could constitute committees which could decide on the fees to be collected by the institutions. Even recently the SC has dismissed a petition of Private school managements against the order of the TN Govt. in prescribing fees to be collected in schools. The Court has held that Governments are competent to fix fees. But the Bill on Unfair Practices authorises the managements to fix the fees. It is an attempt to legalise the exorbitant fees collected by the managements and is also an attempt to nullify the judgements of the courts.

Thus every Bill and every decision of the MHRD in the recent days has the potential of harming the interests of the students, the people and the future of the country. The AIFUCTO is opposed to these decisions in the national interest. We seek your support to our movements to safeguard the Indian higher education system. We request you to oppose these Bills when they come for discussion in the Parliament. We also request you to impress upon the Govt. of India to rescind these decisions and take steps to formulate appropriate educational policies that would suit our country based on the triple pillars of access, equity and excellence.

We are ready for a further discussion with you on the consequences of the Bills or any other issues or changes that could be proposed in the Bills. We hope to hear from you.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Asok Barman
General Secretary

James William
President

Letter to Shri Kapil Sibal , Hon. Minister for Human Resource Development

Prof.A.K.Barman
General Secretary

Date: 17.05.2010

Shri Kapil Sibal
Hon. Minister for Human Resource Development
Shastri Bhawan
New Delhi

Respected Sir,

Greetings from the All India Federation of University and college Teachers' Organisations, the apex body of teachers associations of universities and colleges across the country.

1. Notification of UGC regulations

We are extremely worried over the delay in the notification of UGC Regulations without which the total implementation of the revised pay scales is not possible. New appointments are held up and Career Advancement is denied for want of notification of regulations. These regulations with the final endorsement of the UGC have been under the active consideration of MHRD since January. It should be notified without further delay in the interest of higher education in our country.

While finalising the Regulations, we want the MHRD to take into consideration the genuine concerns of the teachers. The quantification and the point system proposed in the regulations do not take into consideration the reality, the conditions prevailing in most of the institutions, the infrastructure, the library, the campus atmosphere etc. Such conditions, instead of enhancing the quality of education would only be aimed at denying CAS to teachers.

Hence, we request the Hon. Minister to intervene and do away with the unrealistic point system and see that the regulations would be scientific, realistic, justified, equitable and inclusive.

2. Payment of Central Govt. share of revised pay scales to the States

You are aware that a number of states have implemented the pay scales. But the process of the payment of central government share is yet to begin. We request the MHRD to ensure expeditious payment of the Centre's quantum immediately so that teachers could get their arrears.

In this connection we wish to point out that the Central Govt. employees have already got both their installments of arrears, whereas in most of the states teachers haven't got even a single installment. Hence, there is a sense of uneasiness among the university and college teachers through out the country. Hence, we urge you to expedite payment of the central share.

3. Implementation of AICTE pay scales for teachers in Govt. as well as private colleges through out the country

The AIFUCTO is much relieved to know that the teachers in engineering colleges are going to get revised AICTE scales thanks to the MHRD announcement. It is our position that all States must be advised to implement the order uniformly and without any dithering. The Self-financing college managements must be made to fall in line in implementing the new scales.

4. Anomaly of juniors getting more pay than seniors due to advance increments

In the MHRD Scheme dated 31-12-08 the benefit of three increments is given to teachers who acquire Ph.D. while in service. That is, those Associate Professors who are awarded Ph.D. after 01.01.2006 will get three increments in the Scale of 37,400-67,000. At the same time, such of those pre-2006 Ph.D. holders

- 1) Who have not availed of any incentive for their Ph.D. in the existing Scheme and those
- 11) who have availed Ph.D. incentive but which got merged subsequently during the fixation of Pay at Senior Scale/LSG/Reader in Rs 12,000 to Rs./14,940/-/18,300/- fixation and those who
- 111) have availed Ph.D. incentive and continued to get till the time of moving into Associate Professorship in PB-4 at the minimum of the Pay Band of 37,400-67,000 and got bunching benefits are **all fixed at a lower pay than their juniors who acquire Ph.D. post-2006.**

To rectify this anomaly, a clause should be introduced granting **three advance increments** for all those Ph.D. holders after fixing their scale in PB-4, irrespective of whether they have availed the incentive benefits or not. A provision can be made to adjust one bunching benefit, if obtained by certain teachers covered under (iii) category for their two Ph.D increments in the pre revised scheme.

To support this demand, we bring to your notice that in the earlier pay revision (27-7-98 notification) a specific clause was introduced under 'incentives' granting two advance increments for those Lecturers with Ph.D. when they moved into Selection Grade as Reader. At that time UGC further clarified that the two incentive increments can be availed even by those who have benefited by four incentive increments at the entry level. Introduction of a similar clause in 31-12-2008 notification alone can rectify this anomaly.

Illustration

Particulars	Teacher X	Teacher Y	Teacher Z
Year of appointment	1980	1980	1980
Qualification	M.Phil	M.Phil	M.Phil
LSG	1995	1995	1995
Acquired Ph.D (X)	1997(availed 2 increments	-	-
14,940/ fixation	2000 and merged)	2000	2000
Acquired Ph.D.(Y)	-	2002	-
Pay as on 1.1.2006	17,040	17,880	17,040
Revised Pay on 1.1.2006	37,400 + 3 Bunching	37,400 + 4 bunching	37,400 + 3 Bunching

Note: If Teacher Z acquires Ph.D after 1.1.2006 his pay will be raised to 37,400 + 3 bunching and 3 increments. Hence Z gets more than X and Y. To rectify this anomaly 3 increments to teacher X and 2 increments to teacher Y (after adjusting 1 bunching benefit he/she got for his/her 2 Ph.D. increments are to be sanctioned.

5. Anomalies in the 1996 pay revisions

In the last pay revision the new career advancement scheme was implemented from 22-07-98 instead of from 01-01-96. More over those who got career advancement between 01-01-96 and 27-07-98 were not paid 14940/- after 5 years in the SG scale.

Thus in the last pay revision, young college teachers were given a raw deal when the new career advancement scheme was implemented from 22-07-98 instead of from 01-01-96. More over those who got career advancement between 01-01-96 and 27-07-98 were not paid even the higher start of 14940/- on the specious plea that they were not SG Lecturers as on 1.1.1996.

The Chadha committee noted the injury inflicted on this segment of teachers and recommended that this be rectified before fixation of pay in the revised scales of Pay.

The MHRD notification also directed the UGC to formulate necessary procedures in consultation with the MHRD.

The Kerala High Court directed that the CAS should be given from 1.1.1996 and those whose date of career advancement fell between 01-01-96 and 27-07-98 be placed in 14940/- five years after service as SG lecturer. In spite of all these interventions by MHRD and the higher judiciary, this anomaly has not been rectified, which has caused a lot of heart burn among young teachers. Hence we request you to intervene to rectify this anomaly at the earliest.

We draw your attention to these problems and request you to take appropriate steps as early as possible.

6. The Govt. of India is initiating many far reaching reforms in the field of Higher education. AIFUCTO, as the only Federation of organizations of University and college teachers of the country representing more than 5 lakh teachers, requests that its views should be heard before such reforms are formulated.

Thanking you,
Greetings

Asok Barman
General Secretary

James William
President