

Teacher education reforms begin

SAHIL MAKKAR
New Delhi, 20 June

The government thinks it is easier to clean up the mafia in the mining sector than in education — but is determined to succeed.

A few days ago, Anil Swarup, secretary in the Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), posted on Facebook: “Underground mining and overground mafia in the coal sector were easier to handle. Battle now on to tackle the more difficult underground mafia in the education sector”.

Swarup, who oversaw the auction of mines as coal secretary, was perhaps alluding to hundreds and thousands of Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs), providing substandard teacher education in the country.

In the past few months, his department has issued show cause notices to around 4,000 institutes, threatening to cancel their accreditations for allegedly failing to comply with the gov-

ernment’s norms. Several other TEIs have also been asked to file a “quality affidavit”, giving information about their infrastructure, faculty, students and classroom training.

The MHRD says there were over one million untrained teachers, including 50 per cent in private schools, in the country, mainly on account of unscrupulous TEIs running DEd (Diploma of Education) and Bed (Bachelor of Education) courses.

“These institutes don’t have faculty. They take money from students and allow them to not attend classroom training and practical classes. Most TEIs have turned into shops. They are selling diplomas and degrees for a few thousand rupees,” said a senior MHRD official. The system of selling degrees ran unabated as government agencies, mainly the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) — which regulates teacher education in the country, failed to crack down on institutions flouting regulations.

“The NCTE had failed to



5 REFORMS IN THE SYSTEM

- Restructuring of NCTE, which regulated the teacher education in the country
- Redesigning of Central Teacher Eligibility Test
- Ranking of top 100 Teacher Education Institutions
- Integrated data management system to maintain record of each TEI, teacher and student, mobile app for untrained teachers
- Accreditation to be renewed every five years

control the proliferation of sub-standard teacher institutions,” Justice Verma Commission on teacher education stated in its report in August 2012. “The

NCTE failed to continuously supervise the institutions recognised, despite having statutory powers. This has led to commercialisation of teacher edu-

cation in the country, thereby adversely affecting the quality of teacher education,” the Supreme Court appointed commission said.

Another MHRD official said the ministry was aware of the problems and it was working to overhaul the entire system, which includes the restructuring of the NCTE. The government was planning to centralise the accreditation process, meaning it would take away powers from officials in NCTE’s four regional offices at Jaipur, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar and Bengaluru, he added. These officials were earlier supposed to visit colleges and verify whether the institutes had adequate infrastructure and faculty before issuing them accreditation certificates. “Now it will be an online centralised process. The institutes will have to seek renewal after every five years. We are also requesting affiliating state universities to share the outcome of their monitoring of TEIs at least once a month,” the official said.

Besides, the NCTE is plan-

ning to rank the TEIs based on various parameters to promote competition. “We are developing a web portal where TEIs will be asked to upload their data. Our teams will visit the campuses to validate them. Videos of students teaching in classes will be recorded for assessment purposes. The high-performing TEIs will be given assistance to scale up and low-performing ones will be derecognised,” the official said.

The officials in the MHRD said they were working on two other aspects, including restructuring of Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) and developing an integrated data management system, to improve the school education system.

“The current TET is poorly designed. Since its introduction in 2011 following the passage of Right to Education Act 2009, barely 10 per cent candidates have cleared the exam. This was mainly because of technically incorrect questions and multiple correct answers,” says a paper reviewed by *Business Standard*.