

Govt plan to replace UGC, AICTE hits a roadblock

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The government's plan to replace the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) with a single higher education regulator seems to have hit a roadblock with the human resource development (HRD) ministry putting the idea on hold.

The plan to introduce Higher Education Empowerment Regulation Agency or HEERA with an aim to eliminate overlaps in jurisdiction and remove irrelevant regulatory provisions is in limbo.

While the ministry and the Niti Aayog were earlier working to bring technical and non-technical education institutions under one umbrella, there has been no headway yet on the same.

The issue was raised in Parliament last week where Minister of State for HRD Upendra Kushwaha said no proposal has been considered at present in this regard.

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PLAN IN LIMBO

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University Grants Commission (UGC) and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) into a single higher education regulator," Kushwaha had informed the Rajya Sabha.

Ministry officials remained tightlipped when asked about the rea-

sons behind it.

The officials had earlier claimed a detailed blueprint of the proposed regulator and its legislation is being worked upon. It was felt that multiple regulatory bodies led to excessive and restrictive regulation and hence contributed to the lack of institutional autonomy, they had said.

The idea to have a single higher education regulator is not a new one, but has been recommended by various committees set up by previous governments.

While the National Knowledge Commission (2006) had recommended an independent regulatory authority for higher education, the Committee on Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education (2009) had also advocated an apex regulatory body by converging multiple agencies in the field of higher education.

The UGC Review Committee in 2014 had also recommended the commission be replaced with an apex institution named National Higher Education Authority.