

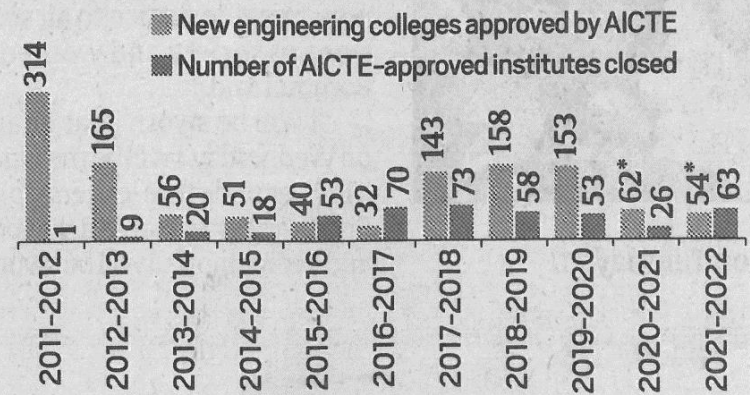
Engg seats down to lowest in a decade

lakh seats across all AICTE-approved institutions. The drop is being attributed to the consolidation that started seven years ago, with reduced demand forcing colleges to shut down. Since then, roughly 400 engineering schools have wound up operations. Except for last year, which is when Covid-induced disruption was first witnessed, at least 50 engineering institutes have closed every year since 2015-16. This year, 63 have got AICTE's nod for closure.

The technical education regulator's approval for setting up new engineering institutes is at a five-year low. In 2019, AICTE announced a two-year moratorium on new institutions starting 2020-21. This was done on the recommendation of a government committee headed by IIT-Hyderabad chairman BVR Mohan Reddy.

For the academic year

54 NEW INSTITUTES FOR 2021-22, A 5-YR LOW



* Includes institutes eligible as per APH 2020-21 only i.e (Govt institutes and previously rejected)
Some of the institutes are running multiple programmes

2021-22, AICTE has approved 54 new institutes. Chairman Anil Sahasrabudhe told *The Indian Express* that these approvals are for establishing engineering colleges in backward districts, requests that were already in the pipeline,

and in the case of state governments wanting to start a new institute. In the three years before the moratorium kicked in, the regulator has approved 143, 158, and 153 new institutes in 2017-18, 2018-19, and 2019-20, respectively.

In December 2017, The Indian Express had published the findings of its three-month-long investigation, 'Devalued Degree', which found there were no takers for 51 per cent of 15.5 lakh undergraduate seats in 3,291 engineering colleges in 2016-17.

The investigation found glaring gaps in regulation, including alleged corruption; a vicious circle of poor infrastructure, labs and faculty; non-existent linkages with industry; and the absence of a technical ecosystem to nurture the classroom. All this, it found, accounted for low employability of graduates.

A few weeks later, AICTE announced its decision to reduce intake in courses with poor admissions by half, starting academic year 2018-19. In 2019, it announced a two-year moratorium on new institutes.