



Press Releases

10th December, 2003

Ministry of Human Resource
Development and Science & Technology

**INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY TO BE USED
IN A BIG WAY FOR EXPANSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION: DR
JOSHI**

**PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES ASKED TO COMPLY WITH UGC
REGULATIONS WITHIN THREE MONTHS**

CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE OF HRD MINISTRY MEETS

Information and communication technology will be used in a big way to expand higher education and improve the quality of teaching in colleges spread all over the country.

This was stated by the Union HRD and S&T Minister Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi while addressing the parliamentary Consultative Committee addressed to his Ministry, here last evening.

Emphasizing that huge financial resources would be required to cater to the future needs and to create infrastructure for quality education and research, Dr. Joshi said that the only alternative available is to use modern technologies such as satellite communication, internet and electronics. He informed that a large number of initiatives have been taken in the recent years towards this, with promising results. Out of 309 universities, 124 have already been connected with the UGC Information Network and the rest would be connected by March next year. All over-15000 colleges will eventually become part of this network. To facilitate research and multi-media communication, the communication backbone is being expanded manifold from the present 8 mbps level. From 1st January this year, 120 journals in science and technology disciplines and 250 in humanities and other disciplines have been made available electronically to the universities at a low cost. A satellite devoted exclusively to education is proposed to be launched within the next few months to make quality study material available through television and other communication channels.

Dr. Joshi also informed that keeping in view the requirements of the

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globalised economy and also to provide employment to the rising population of educated youth, a dual education mode is being introduced at the under graduate level. Under it, UGC is asking universities and colleges to introduce utility-oriented programmes along with the traditional degrees. This will enable students to have utility-oriented certificates along with their undergraduate degree, or two degrees in a span of four years. While this would make higher education relevant and productive, it would also lead to better utilisation of available infrastructure, he said.

The meeting was also informed of the steps initiated to improve the quality of teaching and research. It was informed that at post-graduate level a credit-based, modular approach is being introduced. UGC has recently upgraded monetary support at individual, group and department levels and has opened for colleges such incentive schemes as were earlier confined to universities. While five universities were identified this year, with potential for excellence, viz. Chennai, Hyderabad, Jadhavpur, Pune and Jawaharlal Nehru Open University, five more universities will be identified next year to promote excellence among universities especially in matters of research. Four national-level institutes are also being established at Bhubaneswar, Chennai, Pune and Allahabad.

It was informed that UGC has started monitoring the health of universities using parameters for academic performance, research performance and governance. It intends to provide incentives to universities and colleges scoring high on these parameters.

Stressing that despite many recent initiatives, the quality of research still remains a matter of concern, Dr. Joshi asked UGC to promote scientific excellence in teaching institutions at a fast pace. While welcoming the exchange of students among countries, he said that if the quality of teaching and research in Indian universities is brought to top global standards, such exchanges of students would be economically beneficial to the country.

Dr. Joshi also expressed concern at the low interest shown by students in basic sciences. Arguing that today's technologies are the outcome of fundamental research undertaken in the past, Dr. Joshi called upon UGC to see how students' interest in basic sciences could be rejuvenated. He informed that the Government has decided to observe 2004 as the year of scientific awareness and a *vigyan rail*, i.e. science exhibition on wheels, is being flagged off by the Prime Minister next week.

In the presentation for the Members of Parliament, it was informed that a large number of private universities have come up in the recent past, especially in Chhattisgarh. Members expressed concern over mushrooming of institutions of learning without requisite infrastructure and faculty. UGC informed the Members that it has recently issued

regulations for establishment and maintenance of private universities and the Council has asked the private universities already established to comply with the regulations within three months failing which their degrees would be de-recognised.

Dr. Joshi also emphasised the need for promotion of sports in universities. He also agreed with the members that the working of UGC needs to be reviewed in the present context and informed that an amendment to the UGC Act is being drafted to give more teeth to the Council to enable it to usher in reforms in the higher education sector.

The following members were present from Lok Sabha : S/Shri/ Ms. Sharad Pawar, Savshibhai Makwana, Dr.Beatrix D'Souza, Vinay Kumar Sorake Ananta Nayak and Ramseth Thakur. The members present from Rajya Sabha were: S/Shri/Ms. Savita Sharda, Chandra Kala Pandey, Dr. A.K. Patel, Dr. Kumkum Rai, Dr. Faguni Ram, K.Rahman Khan, Jayantilal S. Barot and Dr. Bimal Jalan.

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