

On management

This is in reference to the report "AICTE shuts door on part-time MBA courses" (March 7) and the editorial "Mindless regulation" (March 8). The two are based on incomplete information about B-schools and their operation and an unreal interpretation of the regulator. The statement that the All India Council For Technical Education (AICTE) has imposed a blanket ban on part-time programmes is erroneous. New part-time programmes will be considered for approval with norms that preserve utmost transparency and accountability in the conduct of such programmes. These are currently being processed and when completed, will be brought into effect. This means no fresh admissions to part-time management programmes can take place till the new norms are in place. However, it is made amply clear that the existing part-time programmes for which admissions are already made will continue.

There are 3,400 MBA programmes and 551 Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) programmes in the country out of which 100 are part time in MBA with an intake of 5,990 and 35 are part time in PGDM with an intake of 2,120. Until AICTE came up with the new regulations, there were no rules existing for the conduct of PGDM programmes or for the conduct of part-time management programmes. Some institutes conducting these programmes were admitting students with no standard criteria conducting their own examinations, putting students to great inconvenience, charging fees that was not approved by any authority unlike all other disciplines where very established criteria exist for both admissions and fee to be charged. These practices resulted in several public interest litigations being filed. In the case of part-time programmes, even the so-called Institute-decided norms of full-time programmes, were given the go by. No faculty norms existed or were followed creating a poor-quality paradigm. The low quality part-time programmes were being run like mere extensions of the full-time programmes and looked at as pure revenue models. These programmes came in all sizes like one year, two years or even three years without any quality or academic criteria. Students were put to difficulty since employers were seeking clarifications on the equivalence and validity of such programmes.

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