

AICTE's new norms bring admission worries

Colleges in Karnataka fear lower intake as AICTE increases minimum marks for engineering seats.

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Will the number of admissions to engineering courses in Karnataka come down this year? This is the common question haunting both the State government as well as the managements of private engineering colleges.

The cause for this apprehension is the new norm introduced by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), which has increased the minimum marks to be obtained by the students in the qualifying exam from this academic year to become eligible to join engineering degree courses.

As per the new norm, students seeking admission to engineering courses under the general category across the country need to score a minimum of 50 per cent in the qualifying exam, that is, in the second year pre-university or Class XII exam, instead of 45 per cent.

Students belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes will have to secure 45 per cent marks instead of the existing 40 per cent.

The statistics available with the Higher Education Department show that nearly 10,000 students, who secured marks between 40 per cent and 50 per cent in the qualifying exam held in 2010, had become eligible to join engineering courses.

According to the statistics, 1,947 students who had scored less than 50 per cent and more than 45 per cent marks in the qualifying exams in 2010, were allotted ranks as they had

become eligible to seek admission to engineering courses based on the minimum marks prescribed then. Of these, 269 had joined various engineering courses in private colleges.

Similarly, 7,802 students belonging to Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Other Backward Classes, who had scored more than 40 per cent and less than 45 per cent marks in the qualifying marks in 2010, had become eligible to join engineering courses. Of these 1,890 had joined engineering courses.

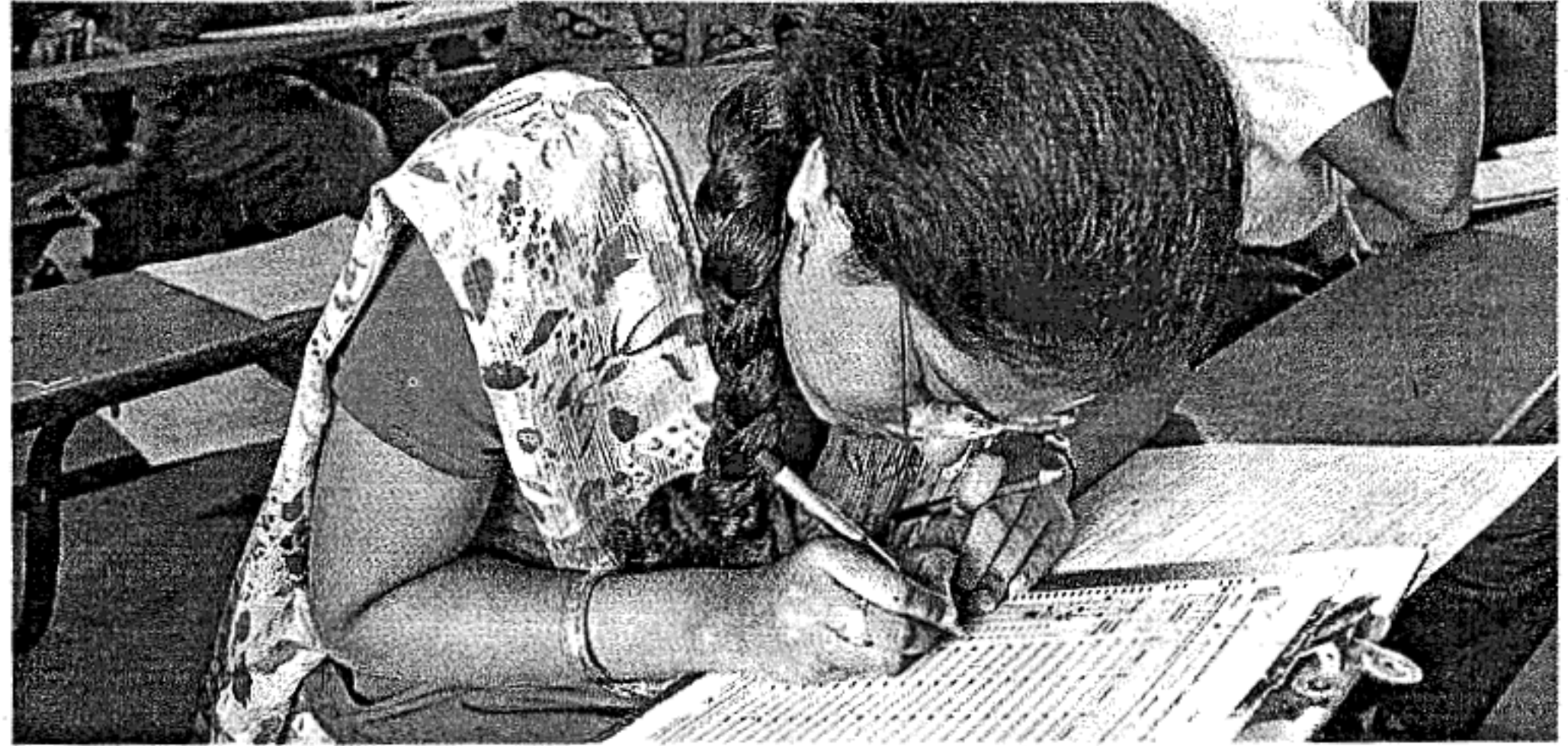
The new norms are likely to make at least 10,000 to 15,000 students ineligible to seek admission to engineering courses in the State this year. As a result, more number of engineering seats are likely to remain unfilled this year compared to the previous year.

About 17,000 engineering seats remained vacant in 2010. In some colleges, the number of vacant seats was in the range of 250 to 278.

Director of Technical Education H.U. Talawar said that the State government has written to the AICTE that the decision to increase the minimum marks for eligibility is unilateral, without taking into consideration the local needs.

He said that the students hailing from rural areas will lose an opportunity to join engineering courses.

The State has no option but to follow the AICTE norms as it applies to all engineering colleges across the country, said Mr. Talawar, while pointing out that many new engineering colleges, those situated in



NEW NORMS: You have to score more now to study engineering. PHOTO: M.A.SRIRAM

north Karnataka region, and those not ranked high among the colleges would find it difficult to get students.

M.K. Panduranga Setty of Karnataka Unaided Private Engineering Colleges Association said that the revised eligibility norms will increase the number of vacancies in many colleges as already thousands of seats are unfilled.

"It is certain that the number of admissions to engineering courses will reduce further. We hope that the increase in the intake into engineering courses under lateral entry scheme for those with a diploma and Bachelor of Science degree will attract some students," said Mr. Setty.

The new AICTE norms may see increase in the number of admissions to regular undergraduate courses in the science stream and other equivalent courses, and many engineering colleges around Bangalore city too may witness more va-

cant seats, Mr. Setty pointed out.

Good move

He, however, felt that the increase in minimum marks for eligibility is a good move as it is aimed at improving the quality of engineering graduates.

"In fact, I feel that the minimum eligible marks should be 60 per cent in the interest of maintaining the quality of engineering graduates," he added.

Ramesh R., a teacher in a private engineering college, pointed out that some students who had joined engineering courses by securing only 40 to 50 per cent marks in the qualifying exams, had done fairly well later and completed the degree in first class.

"What is the point in keeping a large number of engineering seats vacant? The quality of education in rural areas required to be improved

so that more number of students succeed in the qualifying exam by scoring more than 50 per cent marks," he said, adding that some private engineering colleges may opt for reducing their total intake.

Sudhakar Manjunath, a final-year engineering student, said that there was no harm in increasing the minimum marks. "I am unable to understand why AICTE is giving permission to new engineering colleges or permitting opening of new courses or enhancing the number of seats in the existing colleges if the AICTE is concerned with quality of engineering education."

This year's pre-university examination results and completion of the admission process to engineering courses will decide the next course of action by the engineering college managements and the State government.