

# The Telegraph

## Teachers' appeal to end ad hoc hiring

New Delhi, Sept. 5: Teacher bodies today blamed the poor quality of higher education in India mainly on the growing trend of hiring ad hoc teachers.

In a Teachers' Day appeal, the Delhi University Teachers Association (Duta) and the All India Federation of University and College Teachers' Organisations (Aifucto) urged the government to appoint regular teachers.

Earlier in the day, President Pranab Mukherjee had rued the poor quality of education in the country as he addressed recipients of the national teacher awards here.

Senior teachers told this newspaper that ad hoc and temporary teachers are paid the lowest grade, can be sacked any time and are unaccountable for student performance, so they lack commitment.

Asok Barman, an Aifucto official, said that less than half the teachers in general higher education institutions were regular teachers.

Duta executive Vijaya Venkataraman said Delhi University used to hire ad hoc teachers only for brief periods in the past, to fill in for regular teachers who may have gone on extended leave.

But in the past 10 years, ad hoc appointments had become the norm, she said. Of the 9,000 teachers in Delhi University and its 60-odd colleges, 4,000 are ad hoc teachers.

"The government and the universities have dragged their feet and not recruited regular teachers in the past 10 years. The ad hoc teachers' contracts are renewed and extended after four months. They are perpetually vulnerable," Venkataraman said.

Miranda House, a leading Delhi University college, sacked 13 ad hoc teachers last week. Duta today demanded their immediate reinstatement, a change in workload norms, and the appointment of regular teachers.

It urged the higher education regulator to withdraw its ceiling on the creation of posts based on its 2004 formula of one teacher for 18 students.

Miranda House had fired these teachers saying they were "surplus" to requirement. Some of these teachers had left their jobs with other colleges to join Miranda House this year.

"I got an email last Monday saying my service had been terminated. The letter did not specify any reason. I had left a job with another college," said one of the 13.

Miranda House staff association president Nandini Dutta accused the principal of taking a "unilateral" decision without discussing it at a governing body meeting.

In 2004, the regulator had allowed 132 teaching posts at Miranda House based on its formula. After OBC reservation was implemented in 2008, it allowed another 62 posts, taking the total to 194.

Dutta says the workload had increased since last year after the human resource development ministry and the regulator compelled the central universities to implement the "choice-based credit system", which gives undergrads the freedom to study a few papers from a different stream or at a different university.

Most colleges have hired about 5 to 10 per cent more teachers than the regulator's formula allows.

AICTE official Barman said ad hoc or temporary appointments had become the norm in all the states. He said that private colleges in Bengal mainly hired part-time teachers, while colleges and universities in Odisha recruited contract teachers, paying them nominal salaries.

"The main reason for the poor quality of higher education is the lack of regular teachers. Institutions have in the past 20 years increased the hiring of part-time, temporary, ad hoc and guest teachers," he said.

Sohan Lal Yadav, principal of the Harish Chandra College in Varanasi, said that most government colleges and universities in Uttar Pradesh had begun offering self-financing courses. The teachers are paid from the revenue generated from the student fee, he said, accusing the government of ducking its responsibility.

"How can you expect quality teaching when teachers are underpaid and lack any sense of security?" Yadav said.