

## Government may ban institutes from opening franchises abroad

The central government is likely to pass a law banning Indian educational institutions from opening franchises abroad for running distant education courses.

The Distant Education Council (DEC) has advised the Human Resource Development (HRD) ministry to stop such practices.

'We know that several educational institutions, mainly private ones, are opening their franchises abroad. This is a bad practice and we are against it,' DEC chairman V.N. Rajasekharran Pillai told IANS.

'Let me clarify, we are not against opening of new institutes by Indian institutions. But giving permissions to a local party (abroad) by Indian institutions is not good,' said Pillai, who is also the vice chancellor of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU).

The council has asked the HRD ministry to incorporate all these 'points and concerns' in a proposed bill on distance education pending before it.

'We are not against Indian education going global but not franchises. This is affecting, and will affect, the quality of education and compromise with the necessary guidelines.'

Authorities said a number of Indian institutions are allowing local parties, especially in the Gulf countries, to start distant learning education centres.

Led by IGNOU, several state open learning universities were in Delhi earlier this week to deliberate on ways to strengthen distance learning programmes

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