
1. Online Education: Ending an Apartheid

Context:

- Just seven of India's 993 Universities have online-education licenses; meanwhile, as the Lockdown shows, foreign varsities make hay of the Indian demand for Online Courses.

Brief Background:

- India's current Online University Regulations create Discrimination by allowing **only seven of our 993 universities to Launch Online Courses;**
- During the Covid-19 lockdown overseas universities have signed up 100,000+ students in India for online courses.
- The lockdown exposes the folly and unfairness of the UGC 2018 online regulations. We must immediately allow all accredited universities to launch online courses with full flexibility in design, delivery, and assessment.
- **India's Universities have Delivered Quantity, but Uneven Quality and Employability.** We have roughly 38 million university students; of these, 34 million are on campuses, 4 million are in traditional distance education, and only 25,000 students have opted for online education
- UGC banned online education in 2015, but notified new licensing guidelines in 2018. Since then, UGC has only licensed seven universities for online courses.

Pre-existing Challenges:

- The Global Higher Education system has ten multi-decade, pre-existing challenges.
- **The Crisis of Affordability** - many US college classrooms now cost \$200 per hour
- there is a crisis of education returns - 50% of the \$1.5 trillion student debt) was slated to default
- A Broken Promise of Employability
- The **Differential needs of Adult Learners;** they need anytime, anywhere, and affordable learning that they can do concurrently with their jobs
- **A Massive Shortage of Quality Faculty**
- there is a Problem of Diversity; the Typical University Student is no longer an 18-year old privileged urban male studying full-time; today's students are just as likely to be female, poor, older, from rural areas, or studying part-time.

- These **Education Outsiders need more Flexible Admission Criteria, Rolling Admissions, continuous Assessments, on-demand, on-the-go, always-on, qualification modularity and multi-modal delivery**
- **Change in the Definition of Employability;** knowing is useless in a world where Google knows everything; the most important 21st-century skill is learning how to learn.
- A new world of work where employment shifting from a lifetime contract to a taxicab relationship needs a new balance between repair, prepare and upgrade blurring of the **line between Corporate Training and Higher Education;** research suggests that employed-learners are expected to cross traditional learners within five years
- The attractive self-financing, employability and signalling value of degree linked apprenticeships
- Online higher education not only addresses these ten challenges, but the lockdown has brought forward its destiny from 2030 to 2020 in one month
- UGC 2018 regulation – need modifications
- Remove **clauses that restrict licensing, and Prescribe a Discretionary Approval process** and replace them with something that authorises all accredited universities to design, develop and deliver their own online programmes
- **to allow Innovation, Flexibility, and relevance in an online curriculum that allows universities to work closely with industries** on their list of courses, and ensure the integrity of purpose
- to allow universities to work with the best technology platforms without holding them hostage to a state sponsored system
- To allow technology-driven, on-demand, and Credible Online Assessments.

Conclusion:

- In 1948 Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, said: “When we think we know, we cease to learn”. Dr Radhakrishnan would surely be disappointed by any regulations discriminating against Indian universities in favour of foreign ones.

Source: Financial Express