

Staying ahead EdLive

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pwc

Message from the Sector leader



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Dear friends,

Welcome to the August edition of EdLive!

The Monsoon session of the Parliament so far has seen the HRD minister focus his attention on the troika of higher education reform bills-prevention of malpractices, setting up education tribunals and mandatory accreditation for institutions. The move, of proceeding with the less contentious bills to create momentum, met with little or no success thanks to Parliament deadlock. To side step these parliamentary road blocks, the HRD ministry has opted for changes in regulations rather than changes in the new laws. For instance, the Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations) Bill 2010, is pending before Parliament for the past two years, the UGC recently gave in principle approval to regulations on collaborative and joint courses between Indian and foreign universities under 'Promotion and Maintenance of Standards of Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign Educational Institutions Regulations' 2012, also called "twinning" arrangements.

Although a major development, the initial draft has had mixed reactions. The official copy of the regulation is not available in the public domain and information available through various media sources indicate that the new regulation stipulates:

- Only top 500 foreign institutions in Times Higher Education World University Ranking or Shanghai Jiaotong ranking will be allowed to collaborate with Indian educational institutions
- Only those Indian institutions that have got highest accreditation grade from NAAC or NBA are eligible for a tie-up with a foreign institution

- The Indian and the foreign institution will have to enter into an agreement that will have to be approved by the UGC before it is implemented
- Existing collaborations will have to get UGC approval in 6 months' time
- No franchise agreement will be permitted

These regulations are already facing some criticism, in particular with regard to the rule that only those foreign universities which are ranked among the top 500 in the two selected rankings will be accepted for dual degree collaboration. In addition, insisting on NAAC "A" Grade is very stringent. Any evolved institution, which has been in existence for a number of years and has received an A grade is mature, has public recognition and perhaps does not even need a Foreign Collaboration. It is the new institutions that need academic and technical collaboration which may not be possible as they may find it difficult to obtain high grading. Added to that, the requirement of obtaining prior approval of UGC before signing an MOU/ agreement with a foreign partner could be considered as a move that breaches the autonomy of higher education (HE) institutes and gives undue power to the UGC.

Academic collaborations will enhance engagement with reputed foreign education institutes. Such tie-ups undoubtedly help improve the standards of HE- benefitting faculty, students, academic administration as well as research. However the legalities involved may discourage a healthy and inclusive education pattern to be developed in India.

Technology enabled learning for education



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By profession an Electronics Engineering graduate and an MBA, Lokesh has had stints with other major companies like Intel, NIIT, Benchmark Microsystems, etc. He has over 22 years of experience in Education, Marketing, Product Management, Sales and Channel Development in the IT industry.

Every Government today believes in having a quality workforce that is knowledgeable with highly tuned thinking skills, which is able to use technology and new resources optimally to combine creativity and innovation effectively and with a diversity of skills and knowledge. Developing nations will not likely be able to provide the additional human capital required to achieve economic self-sufficiency in the context of a highly competitive global economy that is increasingly based on the electronic transfer and manipulation of information.

Improved efficiencies in the education systems, Online Distance Learning (ODL) holds promise for addressing critical problems facing Technical and Vocational Educational Training - the lack of qualified instructors, the need to greatly increase the delivery of skills training on a wide scale, and the need to deliver training at much lower unit costs.

ICT for education is often associated with achieving technology literacy (merely using computers and the internet in the classroom) rather than information literacy (proficiency to access, use, develop, create, and communicate information appropriately using ICT tools). Today's digital natives as students often feel disconnected from traditional teaching practices in schools that have changed little from days gone by. Unless outmoded approaches to learning change, the full potential of ICT is not realized - it becomes an expensive add-on.

Today software in classrooms includes the same kinds of tools that adults use in the work world namely – messaging, word processing, database programs and spreadsheet applications. Where the internet is available, teachers and students routinely employ search engines to look for information to complete assignments. Employers now demand that graduating students are equipped with these same ICT skills needed in the workforce. Like adults, students too need to become active researchers, searching the web for information to complete individual or group projects, communicating via email, blogs and social networking with their peers locally or globally and reaching conclusions on the basis of evidence gathered.

Technology Enabled Learning (TEL) can be broad based across 3 main categories

- a. Creation of innovative learning content,
- b. Deliver education anywhere and anytime and
- c. Manage learning outcomes.

Good use of TEL helps bring about changes in teachers' roles, from one where the teacher controls and directs all aspects of learning to situations where students are given more options and responsibilities for their own learning. Technology does enable economies of scale – for example the costs of simulation software offset the costs of constructing, maintaining and replenishing college laboratories. Unlike labs, the costs do not increase with the number of institutions adopting such software.

Some major challenges which institutions of higher learning face while implementing technology enabled learning

1. Infrastructure - Lack or minimal bandwidth, illegal software, no formal mechanism for ready IT service support
2. Content - hardware and software to develop required learning resources, minimal awareness of IPR and prevalence of cut/copy in the student's knowledge
3. Capacity Development - Faculty not trained to drive technology utilization, mismatch among syllabi of teacher training institutions and what is taught at student institutions, Leadership, Role & Use of ICT for curriculum integration, assessments, improved teaching and learning
4. Educational Governance & Administration - MIS and transparency, Institutions lacking software for tasks like timetabling, electronic reporting, behaviour tracking, student profiling, monitoring attendance and library management.

One major issue that has been seen across all educational institutions pertain to costs after the initial investment in hardware are either ignored or considered to be institutional responsibilities. Total Cost of Ownership includes initial investment costs (for example hardware, classroom refurbishment, rewiring, furniture provision); replacement costs (replacing hardware); recurrent costs (consumables, power, internet connection, annual licensing, maintenance, servicing); and associated costs (teacher training, possible additional human resources, software development and provision)

Some proposed recommendations -

1. Policy change – vision for ICT in education, localization, rubrics for summative assessments
2. Shift emphasis from rote memorization to conceptual understanding, synthesis and application – add min 30% hand on experience
3. There should be some emphasis on legal and regulatory systems supporting ICT development and usage in higher education- radio frequency allocation, e-commerce, online content, voice-over-internet protocol, satellite communications, intellectual property rights, tax breaks as an incentive for ICT development, special technology funds, etc.
4. Explore PPP models for delivering education anytime and anywhere with ability to manage learning outcomes
5. Infusion of technology based learning in capacity building/ professional development and ensuring quality assurance in the teaching delivery process
6. Competency standards for normal courses and ODL and mobility among them
7. Allocate budgets for monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

If India needs to raise its game, it needs to improve education all around, not just concentrate on the IITs and the IIMs. This can only happen with the help of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infusion via harvesting Technology Enabled Learning (TEL). The caveat is technology is only a tool - no technology can fix a bad educational policy or compensate for bad practices.

Future Learning seeks international tie-up

Future Learning, the education and skill development arm of the Future Group, is scouting for an international tie-up to run specific courses in visual management, sourcing, supply chain and even luxury retailing. The company, which was carved out as a separate entity four years ago, said it has identified 21 key sectors to impart skills in retail and services sector. Future Learning is affiliated to the Indira Gandhi National Open University and offers courses at four centres — Delhi, Bangalore, Kolkata and Ahmedabad. On its accreditation, Future Learning is interested in international tie-up as more international retailers are entering India. In places such as the US, the UK and Australia, where retail is highly developed, institutes are accredited and we are in talks for similar accreditation. According to industry sources, Future Group is understood to have an investment of 25 crore INR in Future Learning.

(Source: The Hindu Business Line)

AICTE to give 1 crore INR seed capital for research parks

The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) will fund institutes with 1 crore INR to set up research parks, in order to encourage research among students. An industry partner will also be tasked with setting up the research park, along with providing funds to the tune of 1 crore INR. The research activities to be carried out in the park will also include studies needed for the industry.

“This will be a perfect give-and-take deal. While the industry will participate in financial assistance, the institutes will conduct research on the basis of industry needs. Researchers will also get hands-on experience with real-time industry research activities,” said SS Mantha, Chairman, AICTE. The research park will be set up on the institute premises itself, which should make available at least a 3,000-square-foot area for it.

“We aim to open such research parks in at least one state each. However, more such parks would be welcome to provide ample opportunities to research scholars in India,” added Mantha.

Besides this, the AICTE is also going to offer other schemes to encourage research work. The top 100 research students will be placed at the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) laboratories. The scholars will be shortlisted through a competitive model of testing and the AICTE will give 15,000 INR per month to each student for three years.

(Source: DNA India)

Bihar government entrusts CORE Education to digitalise primary education within the state

India’s leading global education company, CORE Education & Technologies (CORE Education) has informed the stock exchange that the Bihar State Government has signed a letter of intent with the company to provide computer-aided learning solutions in 168 schools across eight districts, such as Nalanda, Jamul, Nawada, Lakhisarai, Sheikhpura, Khagarai, Saharsa and Begusarai. The total value of the project is 22 crore INR. With this project, CORE Education is providing education solutions to over 10,000 government schools in India. CORE Education will impart digital literacy training not only to over 10,000 students but also to over 1,500 teachers in the state. CORE is also mandated to develop physical infrastructure for training centres, supply hardware, software and manpower to install and maintain the establishments. To ensure smooth execution of the project and to uphold the high level of standards, CORE will put together a team of 177 people under the supervision of an experienced project manager.

(Source: The Hindu Business Line)

Bring government universities under new regulations

Academics have expressed reservations over the special exemptions granted to government-run institutions in the new regulations released by the University Grants Commission (UGC) with regard to collaborations with foreign universities. The UGC recently approved regulations through which foreign universities could venture into India and collaborate with Indian institutions. While this was widely seen as a backdoor measure, given the fact that opposition pressure in Parliament had kept the Foreign Universities Bill out of light, the governing body provided wide-ranging prescriptions for such partnerships. According to the regulations, only institutions with an ‘A’ rating from the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) would

be eligible for such an agreement. The institutions must also have at least five years of experience in providing post-graduate courses. However, government-run institutions, both at the state and central levels, have been exempted from both these clauses.

Chairman of the Board of Governors at IIT-Kanpur, M Anandakrishnan, said that the regulations, which were yet to be notified, would ensure that only respectable institutions could get into such collaborations. However, he opined that the clause exempting the government-run institutions from such minimum qualification, such as NAAC accreditation, should be dropped. "There is still scope for change as the norms are yet to be notified. Government institutions should not be excluded from such quality norms," he pointed out.

(Source: *The Indian Express*)

HC asks AICTE to probe if colleges running unapproved courses

The AICTE has been asked by the Delhi High Court to probe into an allegation that various engineering colleges are conducting unapproved courses. Disposing off a plea for direction to colleges to stop unapproved courses, a bench of Acting Chief Justice A K Sikri and Justice Rajiv Sahai Endlaw asked the AICTE, the regulatory body for technical education, to carry out a thorough probe and apprise it of its findings within four months. The court order came after the AICTE counsel told the bench that the statutory body would examine the allegations by conducting an in-depth enquiry into the matter.

(Source: *The Economic Times*)

Central varsities looking at PPP model to raise funds

The 40-odd central universities are mulling novel fund-raising mechanisms such as bringing in public-private partnerships (PPP) for infrastructure creation and permitting more supernumerary seats for foreign students. At a meeting of vice-chancellors of central varsities held in August, it was decided that they should tap external sources for financial support besides the UGC grants. The vice-chancellor of Central University of Himachal Pradesh has been deputed to draft possible options for PPP. Vice-Chancellors raised the issue of existing restrictions on offering of supernumerary seats for foreign students — an issue that the HRD ministry and the UGC have agreed to re-examine.

Meanwhile, the UGC has been asked to finalise norm-based grants for operating (non-plan) expenditure of universities with the right incentives for central universities to mobilise resources.

Norm-based funding process for central universities is likely to be adopted from the next academic session, 2013-14. In order to enhance the overall brand value of central universities, the UGC will assist them in establishing niche areas of excellence. To ensure the centrality of research at universities, 40-50 research parks will be set-up across the country and the vice-chancellor of Hyderabad University will coordinate these efforts. Following the Yale model of connecting research to public utilities is on the cards with vice-chancellors of the Central University of Jharkhand and University of Delhi working on it.

(Source: *The Indian Express*)

Bharti group exits education business

The Bharti group has exited the education business, selling group company Centum Learning to Everonn Education. The Bharti Family Office, which manages investments made by the promoters of the group in their personal capacity, will receive a combination of cash and equity

shares in Everonn. The Bharti group declined to reveal the deal size or their stake in the combined entity. The deal is part of the Bharti group's plans to exit non-core businesses. "This transaction is in line with our stated objective of focusing our energies on our core businesses," Centum Chairman Rakesh Bharti Mittal said. Everonn Education provides end-to-end training programmes and skill development solutions. "With this acquisition, Everonn will expand its reach in the Indian training space by adding corporate training, the flagship product of Centum, as a new vertical," Everonn Education Director and CEO of GEMS Education India Rakesh Sharma said. "Other business segments of Centum (skill development, employment generation, professional education and training) will seamlessly integrate with the existing verticals of Everonn," he added.

(Source: *The Economic Times*)

UGC to remain headless for few more months

The UGC, which hasn't had a full-time chairperson for more than a year and a half, will remain headless for a few more months. Appointment of a new chairperson has now gone back to the drawing board with the search-cum-selection committee being requested by the HRD ministry to expand the panel of shortlisted names. A source said, "It is an unprecedented case. Asking the search-cum-selection committee to rework the shortlist means the government does not have faith in its choice. This has happened in the wake of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) raising serious objection to empanelment of only two names — Pankaj Chandra, Director, IIM-Bangalore and Syed Hasnain of IIT-Delhi." Sources said, despite reservations by a few members of the search-cum-selection committee, it agreed to expand the shortlist. But there could be a technical hitch in what the ministry is planning.

An official of Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) pointed out that any change in the panel recommended by the search-cum-selection committee has to be accepted by the ministry. Any deviation will require prior approval of the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC). “The HRD ministry’s request to the search-cum-selection committee to rework the shortlist is a deviation. We are yet to receive any formal request from them,” a DoPT official said. He explained that the ACC’s clearance is as per the DoPT office memorandum of 2007 on the setting-up of search committees and search-cum-selection panels. The appointment of the UGC chairperson has assumed political colours after several MPs openly canvassed in favour of one particular candidate with the PMO. The PMO has, however, maintained that any panel with less than three names should be revisited.

(Source: *The Times of India*)

Victorian government ties up with Bangalore schools

The State Government of Victoria, Australia, in collaboration with the Asia Education Foundation has initiated a two-week study programme to India where 24 educators from eight Victorian schools will be paired with eight Bangalore schools. This Sister School Partnership Programme is to identify gaps and provide alternative solutions to enhance the quality of the Indian school education system. During the programme, the delegates will interact with their respective sister schools and spend two days there to share perspectives on both countries’ education systems. The programme seeks to discuss curriculum, teaching and learning methodologies, assessment models, the use of technology in education and the establishment of regional and international student exchange programmes. Geoffrey Conaghan, Victorian Commissioner to India said, “The programme will serve as a knowledge sharing platform for the Indian and Victorian delegates to

brainstorm and develop opportunities to create a holistic school education system.” The Karnataka and Victorian State Governments already have tie-ups on vocational education.

(Source: *The Times of India*)

CII launches educational excellence forum

The Confederation of Indian Industry, Tiruchi Zone, has launched its Education Excellence Forum (EEF) constituting eight member institutions in the region. R Nandini, Chairperson, CII Southern Region Education Sub-Committee, launched the forum as part of the CII’s Southern Region Education Initiative. As a follow-up to the EEF’s maiden launch at MAM College of Engineering, the initiative will be extended to other zones, she said. The objective of EEF is to address core components of education: faculty, student and curriculum, through the prism of industry to improve the employability quotient. A year-long activity with a top-to-bottom approach will provide tailor-made solutions and recommendations for a synergised outcome. The approach will enable students to align their learning practices with industry requirements and equip themselves to meet dynamic changes in the economy directed at reviving the nation’s growth trajectory, a CII press release said.

(Source: *The Hindu*)



Regulatory news

02

Government amends Central Universities Act

A proposal to bring an amendment to the Central Universities Act for enabling the setting-up of two central varsities in Bihar was cleared by the government recently. The Union Cabinet approved amending the Act after the HRD ministry took a decision to set up a central university in Motihari in addition to the one already proposed in Gaya. This is only the second exception made by the union government for setting up two central universities in a particular state, the first being Jammu and Kashmir. The Act had the provision for setting two central universities in Jammu and Kashmir as a special case. The government's decision for setting up a central university in Motihari had put an end to a prolonged slugfest over the issue. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and other political parties had been insisting that the central university should be established in Motihari to end regional disparities.

(Source: The Indian Express)

Take a call on setting up body to look into affairs of educational societies: HC

The Punjab and Haryana High Court on Wednesday asked the Centre, Punjab government and the UGC to take a decision on constituting a body to look into the affairs of educational trusts and societies, along with non-government institutions dealing with education. A division bench comprising acting Chief Justice Jasbir Singh and Justice Rakesh Kumar Jain asked the three bodies to decide on the representations filed in this regard by NSUI Punjab unit's former state coordinator Dinesh Chadha.

(Source: The Indian Express)



International news

03

Education: 2,000 students facing deportation'

More than 2,000 students could face ejection from the country after the Government stripped a university of its right to admit foreigners.

London Metropolitan University has had its Highly Trusted Status (HTS) for sponsoring international students revoked and will no longer be allowed to authorise visas, according to the institution's website. The move could mean more than 2,000 students being deported within 60 days unless they find another sponsor, according to the National Union of Students (NUS). In response, Universities Minister, David Willetts announced the formation of a task force to help overseas students affected by the decision. He said: "It is important that genuine students who are affected through no fault of their own are offered prompt advice and help, including, if necessary, with finding other institutions at which to finish their studies. London Metropolitan University's HTS status was suspended last month while UKBA examined alleged failings. A statement posted on the university's website read: "The implications of the revocation are hugely significant and far-reaching, and the university has already started to deal with these. It will be working very closely with the UKBA, Higher Education Funding Council for England, the NUS and its own Students' Union.

Law aims to strengthen bilingual education in Illinois

Governor, Pat Quinn recently signed a law to strengthen bilingual education in Illinois and, among other things, it will foster the creation of so-called "parents academies" and cultural programs for immigrants. "School is challenging enough for students and parents alike without having to struggle with a new language," said Quinn at an event held at the Inter-American Magnet School in Chicago. The law enacted recently sets forth that the Illinois Advisory Council on Bilingual Education, created in 1992, will recommend the creation of "parent academies" where immigrants will learn about the educational system in the state and strategies to help their children with their homework.



Indian Angel Network acquires Aurus Network Infotech

Private equity investor Indian Angel Network has acquired a minority stake in an Indian virtual classroom solution provider Aurus Network Infotech, the Mint newspaper reported. Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed. With this investment, Aurus will develop a better R&D centre and ramp up its sales and marketing team. It will also expand its presence in global market, starting with Africa. Aurus Network was founded by Piyush Agarwal in 2010. The company is specialist in providing distance and online education across the country. The platform can also be used as an automated solution for large scale, university wide lecture capture and publishing, with in-built features like web based lecture video editing, social networking, online testing, performance tracking, search and analytics. Indian Angel Network was founded in 2006. The venture, in addition to money also provides constant access to high quality mentoring, vast networks and inputs on strategy as well as execution. It invests in a wide range of industries including agriculture, food processing, banking and financial services biotech, pharma & life sciences clean tech and water education healthcare, etc.

(Source: Emerging Market Securities)

Kaizen acquires stake in Altus Learning

Private equity investor Kaizen has acquired a minority stake in an Indian school management firm Altus Learning for INR 250mn (USD 4.5mn), the Mint newspaper reported. The fund raised will be utilised by Altus in enhancing and expanding its services in the country. In June 2012, Kaizen Management had invested INR 200mn in a local child care service provider Your Kids 'R' Our Kids. Altus Learning provides services for preschools and schools. It has already worked with seven green-field schools and nine preschools and currently in talks

with 10 more schools and preschools. Kaizen is a growth capital fund, focused at investment in India's education sector. The company has two pools of investments under management wherein the domestic pool has INR 3bn and the second pool has USD 120mn.

(Source: Emerging Market Securities)

Indo US Venture Partners and India Venture Partners invest in Simplilearn.com

Venture capital investors IndoUS Venture Partners and India Venture Partners have jointly invested an undisclosed amount in an Indian online training and education solution Simplilearn.com, the VCCircle news portal reported. Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed. With this investment, Simplilearn will expand its current portfolio of certification courses and will enter in new geographical location. The investment would also utilise in expanding company's workforce. Simplilearn offers a wide range of professional certification courses for working professionals. It offers courses in project management, IT services management, IT security management, quality management, financial management and technology certification. IndoUS Venture provides early and mid stage funding to growing business of India. India Venture Partners is an investment vehicle to the U.S. private equity, stock and real estate markets. The venture mainly focuses on companies that have a business model and low intellectual property (IP) risk, which need capital to grow to the next level.

(Source: Emerging Market Securities)

Everonn acquires Centum Learning

Indian educational solution Everonn has agreed to acquire its local peer Centum Learning for an undisclosed amount from Bharti Group, the buyer reported. Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed. The acquisition is subject to necessary regulatory approvals. Following the acquisition of Centum, Bharti Group will obtain the combination of cash and equity shares in Everonn. With this acquisition, Everonn will expand its presence in Indian training field by adding Corporate Training product from Centum. The acquisition would further provide an opportunity for Everonn to enter into African Continent. The transaction is in line with Bharti Group's strategy to exit its noncore businesses and focus towards its core activities. Centum Learning provides a complete range of training programs and skill development solutions to more than 350 global firms. Its offerings widen across four main verticals which include corporate training, skill development, professional education & training and employment generation. The institution has set up more than 278 learning centres in rural and urban locations to provide employment opportunity. Everonn Education was founded in 1986 as a education and training company. Its services include knowledge resources management, designing & delivering learning and training programmes. Currently the company has presence in 27 states of India with 9897 learning centres.

(Source: Emerging Market Securities)

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