Ban on National Online Higher Education

Why in news?

\n\n

India’s higher education regulators banned Indian universities from launching national online campuses.

\n\n

Why is the ban unjust?

\n\n

\n
- The ban is unjust because while Indian universities are prohibited from offering online degrees via online campuses, the world of internet makes it possible for MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) such as Coursera, Edx and Udacity, besides many traditional US and European universities, to sign up Indian students online.
\n
- Online learning is obviously behind the physical classroom in terms of student experience and learning outcomes but is rapidly catching up.
\n
- **Level Playing Field -** Indian universities are not asking for protection against foreign universities but the current ban must be lifted to create a level playing field. The longer Indian universities are prohibited from developing online capabilities, the further they fall behind global players.
\n
- **Need to increase employability -** The massification of higher education requires the vocationalisation of higher education. Allowing Indian universities to launch national online campuses will see universities creating programmes that combine certificate and diploma programmes with apprenticeships and higher education to create new life forms that substantially attack the problem of graduate unemployability.
\n
- **Dynamic conditions -** The ban assumes to know what is possible, what people need, and what people want. College isn’t what it used to be; the world has produced more graduates in the last 35 years than the 800 years before that. Consequently, 60% of taxi drivers in Korea, 31 per cent of retail

sales clerks in the US and 15 per cent of high-end security guards in India now have a degree. Education, skills and the wage premium are changing so rapidly that the current higher education regulator model is no longer be acceptable.
\n

- Higher education is over-regulated and under-supervised. Making a distinction between distance education and online education is meaningless and out-dated.
\n
- **Coverage -** These reasons to lift the ban are amplified by the scale of India's demographic dividend where one million kids joining the labour force every month. India has 20 million kids in physical college classrooms, 5 million kids in distance education and 0.3 million kids in apprenticeship classrooms. While the expansion of physical classrooms must continue, Indian higher education faces the impossible trinity of cost, quality and scale while simultaneously facing a huge speed limit arising from the lack of quality faculty.
\n
- Recent amendments to the Apprenticeship Act have set things up for a massive expansion but this could be greatly accelerated if we could marry the low-cost, 24X7 and anywhere-availability features of online higher education with the learning-while-earning and learning-by-doing of apprenticeships.
\n
- Education needs to reinvent itself because the world of work is changing rapidly and institutions are no longer permanent. Rote learning is less important in a world of always-on-internet, and progress in understanding the brain has led to important second-order effects for education.
\n
- **Automation era** - Rapid progress in automation means that the most important vocational skills for the future will be reading, writing, arithmetic and soft skills. Removing the ban on national online higher education will create an explosion of innovation in linking skills to degrees.
\n

\n\n

\n\n

Category: Mains| GS-II| Government Policies

\n\n

Source: Business Standard

\n\n

\n

