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#Let'sBeatCoronaTogether

In This Issue

Operating Higher Education Institutions During COVID-19: The Road Ahead

Shirish Chindhade* and Anjali Patwardhan Kulkarni**

When a deluge dies down, the strongest trees lie uprooted and the roads run dilapidated. Sappers arrive and rebuild them. In the post-COVID-19 scenario, we the educationists and educational administrators have to be the sappers, the road builders. The Heads of the Institution, have a new responsibility now to shoulder as the head of a family. As Head of the Institutions, if one is feeling lonely at the top, an army can be raised for support to fight the pandemic! Our perception determines our response. We need to transform ourselves into a considerate, compassionate, caring supportive and yet firm facilitators on whose decisions depends the transforming of obstacles into opportunities.

It is undoubtedly an uphill task but it is a survival mechanism. Several seen and unseen difficulties and challenges waylay us. Often opportunities come in disguise; therefore, many of us fail to recognize and grab them. So, let us be alert and watch for the opportunities. Colleges will reopen in course of time but our planning should start now.

Renew and Refresh Communication

If we count our strengths, there are two main sources: Our staff and students. We must keep in touch with them regularly during the lockdown period. During this time when we are at home, we can contact our staff through online platforms, mails, messages or phone calls, inquire about their wellbeing, their family and discuss some of the major concerns that will arise post-lockdown. This is a good time to establish a one to one rapport with all the staff members and help create a 'feel good' situation.

In the present new normal situation in which retaining the student strength is slated to be a major concern, communicating personally or on any of the virtual platform meetings with students in groups will help convey to them that the institution considers them as part of the family. An additional benefit in such meetings will be a possible chance to interact with the parents of the students because a majority of them will be facing lock down too. Discussions with them, their suggestions will also be of great help as important stakeholders.

Ushering in Changes in Teaching Learning Methods

We can consider this as an opportunity to reinvent the education process. The journey from brick classrooms to click classrooms is not

*Principal (Retd), Flat 7, Neelambari, Erandwane, Pune: 411 004. Email:shirishvchindhade@yahoo.co.in

**Principal, NBMehta Science & Commerce College, Bordi, Palghar, Maharashtra: anjali.ptwrdhn@gmail.com

an easy one. Each of us will have to get accustomed to the role of technology in this process and prepare teachers and students for these changes. The process of unlearning, learning and relearning will have to be accelerated. The major change that the students will have to undergo is giving up the spoon-feeding received in conventional classes and will have to fend for oneself. This preparation will have to begin much beforehand.

The following Action Plan may be of use (although granted that you can surely devise a better one). Unusual times demand concerted and out of the way efforts. The first is the *challenge of health and hygiene*. As the custodians of the total wellbeing of staff and students. a serious thought to the following urgent preparation is advisable:

Preliminaries (First Week of Opening)

- Preparing the Academic Calendar;

- One/two-day teacher training for handling gadgetry, LMS, e-content writing;

- Collecting data/information (in the admissions forms) on the availability of android phones/laptops and internet connectivity with students;

- Updating the website.

SOPs for Health & Hygiene

- Disinfection, fumigation (frequent) of the entire campus;

- Temperature check at the gate;

- Masks checking at the gate;

- Water and Sanitizer supply at the gate;

- Strictly staggered (zigzag) seating arrangement;

- Medical help, at least on call;

- Psychological counseling may become a growing need. If there is Psychology Department with teachers specialized in Clinical Psychology, one can manage this task in-house. The teachers can be deputed for short training and can be of immense help both on and off the campus (as the facility can be extended to the society with some token fees.)

Obviously, this involves expenses but most of our coffers are empty! Enrolments may decline, tuition fees may be delayed, government grants will be a distant dream. In other words, easy and constant cash flow is going to be precarious. More than verb fore,

now is the time to team up to work as a cohesive group, courageously keeping under control differences and egos and generously awaken our human kindness. We need to form a scouting and contacting team of the staff for the conduct of the following tasks. The following may be some of the not-so- seriously-tapped-so-far sources (list not exhaustive) for obtaining equipment, material (masks, etc). We need to form a scouting and contacting taskforce of the staff for tapping the following avenues:

- Government/Collector/Tehsildar/Police;

- Corporation/Panchayat;

- NGOs (Lions, Rotary, etc);

- Charitable Trusts, Institutes;

- Philanthropic Institutions, Individuals;

- Alumni & Parents;

- CSR help;

- Help from the institutional Parent Body through Cooperative Stores, Cooperative Society;

- Staff, NSS, NCC volunteers for logistics.

Academic Planning

Our main responsibility is to complete the syllabi by reaching out unto the last. The following scheme may be useful *mutatis mutandis,* that is, permutations and combinations:

- *Advanced Learners:* face-to-face only once a week;

- *Average Learners:* face-to-face twice a week;

- *Slow Learners:* face-to-face four times a week;

- Online as per need and gadgetry available with the learners;

- Installing LMS for tracking and records & Formative Evaluation;

- WhatsApp group/s for QA;

- Online Document Sharing / Handouts for difficult areas Co-curricular and Extracurricular Activities.

A holistic approach certainly includes all relevant aspects and activities of cultivating the young minds. The co-curricular and extracurricular activities cater to these cultural and callisthenic needs. Winston Churchill once remarked that the battle of Waterloo was fought and won on the playfields of Eton and Harrow. However, all said and done, the post-COVID-19 year is an unusual, unnatural time for all and hence certain temporary sacrifices are inevitable. Here we have to include the Co-curricular and Extracurricular

Activities. In the semester system, we may have to face cramped and curtailed hours assigned for many activities and events. Additionally, the requirements of social distancing will necessarily impose a withholding / cancellation of them.

Expert lectures, plenary talks by eminent persons, specialists in various fields meant for all students may also have to be axed as they require a large audience sitting together, thus threatening the social distancing norms. Only small classroom activities are advisable.

New Skills for Students

1) Switch to self-learning mode, research mode;

2) The expected change will lead to a movement away from rote learning, mastering, reproducing information and becoming a cog in some machine to experiential learning, reflecting and gaining knowledge and becoming wise;

3) Developing problem solving, crisis management, decision making skills;

4) Being able to distinguish between facts and opinions;

5) The college will have to redesign committees and their responsibilities; we will be required to rename the committees and their duties/roles. Therefore:

   * Instead of a Discipline Committee we will require a Health and Wellness Committee:

   * The Examinations Committee will have to bring about newer methods of assessment and testing whether the outcomes have been achieved.

   * The Time Table Committee will have to work out slots on virtual platforms to arrange online classes.

   * The Sports Committee will have to innovate and think of conducting new games to ensure that students continue with their sporting activities.

   * The Arts and Drama Committee will have to consider newer online methods of tapping the talents in students.

6) Preparing good quality reading material for students, writing blogs, encouraging students to write;

7) Encourage participation in local issues so that the institution receives the support of the local community (especially in rural areas). National Service Scheme (NSS) and National Cadet Corps (NCC) students can help during crises, they can help families facing unemployment, lend a helping hand by counseling the depressed.

Challenges and Opportunities

Forewarned is forearmed. After having identified the crucial activities and modalities in the beginning of the academic year, it is appropriate to pause to consider the challenges and opportunities we may have to encounter.

Opportunities

* Cluster approach, sharing (*Paramarsh*);
* Free wider choices: SWAYAM, MOOCs;
* International expertise available;
* Industry expertise available;
* Part self-assessment facility;
* Working (T-L) from home.

Challenges

* Resource, workforce and cash crunch/deficit;
* Salary cuts and delays/even no salary;
* Uncertain enrolment; absenteeism;
* High dropout; redundant hostel upkeep;
* Obsolescence: need to update new courses;
* Cramped schedules for co-curricular activities;
* Health issues: Psychological counseling for depression (in all stakeholders);
* Rescheduling, space crunch ("staggered" classes) due to social distancing, increased workload;
* Technology challenge (including disruptions);
* Increased demand for skills courses;
* Working from home & in shifts (for batches);
* Online modes of evaluation + Self-check (heavily objective type of testing);
* Mergers, cluster approach;
* Closures (God forbid!).

As mentioned above, several seen and unseen difficulties and challenges ambush and siege us. The going is going to get tough; so we have to be tough to get going. The most difficult thing is the decision to implement the necessary change and to continue spearheading that change with resolve. Peter Drucker has aptly warned, "The greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence – it is to act with yesterday's logic."   ❑

Digital Tools to Combat COVID-19 Pandemic

Haren B Gosai*, Nisheeth C Desai** and Bharti P Dave***

Since the detection of first case of COVID-19 in December 201 and thereafter its rapid spread globally, scientific community and physicians are trying to find effective solutions to this problem. World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared this crisis as pandemic. In this commentary we have discussed several digital tools such as Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), robots, big data etc. for monitoring and prevention of the crisis globally. Last decade has been an eyewitness of technology development in all walks of life and therefore, with the help of digital tools health authorities and health workers can tackle, prevent and manage the COVID-19 outbreak,. The views of authors will be helpful for strengthening future strategies in combatting COVID-19 and any other diseases that emerge.

Twenty first century will be considered as an exciting era in the field of Science and Medicine, for the development and maturation of digital healthcare systems which could provide better solutions for major clinical problems and diseases. Digital healthcare system includes the use of Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence(AI), Robot, Big Data, Deep Learning, Machine Learning, next generation network such as 5G, etc (Banerjee et al., 2018; Perkel, 2017; Pan, 2020).The use of these technologies if appropriately proliferated in healthcare system such as hospitals, testing and research laboratories etc. lead to the establishment of high throughput digital ecosystem. This ecosystem can be useful to collect real time data and to understand recent health care trends, model risk associations and predict the outcomes.

The socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 outbreak could be greater due to its global spread as compared to severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in 2003(Ting et al., 2020). Scientists and Technocrats are trying to encounter the spread of the virus and prevent this health emergency. Standard and established treatment for this deadly disease is not yet available and hence, all the affected countries have taken measures similar to those used for SARS in 2003. These steps include National lockdown as in India (World's largest affecting 1,369.56 million) to painstaking tracing of hundreds of contact tracers (South Korea, Hongkong, India etc.). These measures are not enough to prevent an outbreak of this magnitude of COVID-19. Hence, it is now the right time to think about digital technologies available at the finger-tip of the common people across the world. In this article, an attempt has been made to explore advanced and potential applications to tackle and manage COVID-19 using effective digital healthcare tools and techniques.

The goal of the digital healthcare system such as Internet of Things (IoT), AI, Robot, next generation telecommunication (5G) should be: (i) share and explore by known gaps and areas that focus on supply chain management, user-focused solutions, research and development support, applications supporting health workers, watch against spread of misinformation/communication (ii) collaboration of leading technology companies involved in healthcare system and innovative efforts for treatment of COVID-19 and (iii) collaborative and knowledge sharing approaches between developed and developing countries in finding solutions in facing this pandemic COVID-19. In order to achieve these goals, an amalgamation of conventional strategies viz. (i) monitoring and surveillance, (ii) diagnosis and detection to digital healthcare technologies is the only solution.

Monitoring and Surveillance

IoT is the first platform which allows real time updates to authorities of healthcare, research and development laboratories, social and public agencies for monitoring COVID-19 pandemic. The best example of this kind of platform is "Worldometer", which has

*School of Science, Indrashil University, Rajpur, Kadi - 382740, Gujarat, India

**Department of Chemistry, (DST-FIST sponsored), Mahatma Gandhi Campus, Maharaja Krishnakumarsinhji Bhavnagar University,
Bhavnagar-364002, Gujarat, India

***School of Science, Indrashil University, Rajpur, Kadi - 382740, Gujarat, India E-mail: bpd8256@gmail.com; bharti.dave@indrashiluniversity.edu.in

provided a timely update on the actual number of cases across the world. They have also provided disease distribution across various countries, new cases of the disease and its severity (https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/).Likewise, individual countries have also developed their COVID-19 dashboard to monitor actual number of COVID-19 infected patients, using IoT (https://www.covid19india.org/).India being the second largest populous country (1,369.56 million), IoT is the only solution to monitor and control COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, Government of India (GoI) has developed digital network model to combat COVID-19 outbreak such as (i) mobile application equipped with GIS and Geo Fencing technologies to alert healthcare and government authorities if the symptomatic persons roam outside of quarantined area (ii) nationwide database of healthcare professionals and volunteers to establish effective crisis management plans to help *S*tates and Union Territories which could be helpful for enforcement of social distancing at public places. (https://covidwarriors.gov.in) (iii) "AarogyaSetu", a mobile application, an initiative of Ministry of AYUSH, GOI uses highly skilled technology to combat coronaviruses such as tracking the speed and spread of COVID-19 infected individuals. It also gives information on boosting natural defence systems that could be helpful to fight COVID-19. Furthermore, it can also be used as an electronic pass for the essential services workers, government officers, security personnel etc.during lock-down.(https://www.mygov.in/aarogya-setu-app/?app=aarogya&target=browser). Due to IoT network model, India has so far been successful to combat this pandemic, despite facing a herculean task with 1.36 million population.

Moreover, the use of drones and robots are encouraging to monitor strict social measures, which can track individuals not using appropriate preventive measures as facemasks in public and surveillance of people in lockdown areas. Robots can be useful to broadcast information to larger audiences and also disinfect public places. Recently China has opened Smart Field Hospital on trial basis aimed at relieving exhausted health-care workers during an outbreak. All medical services were carried out by robots and other IoT devices. Furthermore, Micro Multi Copter, a Shenzhen-based technology company has developed robotics involved in the city-wide transport of medication and food delivery to reduce virus transmission risk without affecting health of people involved in the transportation facility (https://

www.entrepreneur.com/article/348368). Lincoln Laboratory, MIT, USA has developed PACT: Private Automatic Contact Tracing which can identify people at risk of infecting COVID-19 using bluetooth signals without revealing any private information to other individuals, Government, health care providers, or cell service providers(https://pact.mit.edu/).Two IT giants Google and Apple have joined hands to fight against COVID-19 pandemic by jointly sharing world class technology. They are planning to provide comprehensive solution by developing application programming interfaces (APIs) and operating system level technology to assist in enabling contact tracing (https://www.apple.com/in/newsroom/2020/04/apple-and-google-partner-on-covid-19-contact-tracing-technology/).

Big data also provide platform to perform modelling studies of viral activity, which could be helpful in monitoring the preparations implemented by policy makers and stakeholders of the country. For example, Wu et al., 2020 have modelled "forecasting" and "nowcasting" of COVID-19 outbreak activity within and outside China, which could be useful to health authorities of other countries to prevent this pandemic. Gilbert et al., 2020 have also modelled the importation risk of COVID-19 in the African countries. They have distributed African countries into three clusters based on their capacity to respond to outbreak which would raise the awareness of the respective authorities and sequentially increase the preparation to fight against pandemic. In Taiwan, with its single-payer health program, every citizen has their digital medical records loaded into the same system. In the coronavirus outbreak, the country has added travel records to their online medical file, so that the doctor can check whether their patients have visited an area affected by an outbreak (https://www.vox.com/policy-and politics/2020/3/16/21173766/coronavirus-covid-19-us-cases-health-care system). These data could be useful to healthcare planners and policy makers of the country to predict and control the outbreak of any disease.

Moreover, digital healthcare ecosystem could be an attractive approach to enhance public-health education and communication. Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India has developed "Aarogya Setu", an application, which includes fantastic use

of technology to combat coronaviruses. It tracks the speed of COVID-19 spread and COVID-19 infected individuals. It also gives information on boosting natural defence systems that could be helpful to fight this viral outbreak. Furthermore, it can also be used as an electronic pass for the essential services workers, government officers, security personals etc. during lock-down.(https://www.mygov.in/aarogya-setu-app/?app=aarogya&target=browser).

Detection and Diagnosis

AI and Deep Learning could be appropriate and efficient technologies to enhance the detection and diagnosis of COVID-19. In this viral outbreak, it is utmost important to provide accurate and cheap testing services for the detection of COVID-19. Even, the peripheral hospitals of the developed countries like USA, UK, Italy etc. do not have enough testing kits or resources to distinguish COVID-19 from the common flu. Therefore, it is a big challenge for the developing countries of Asia, Middle East and Africa for the appropriate diagnosis of the COVID-19. For Example, 2.5 million tourists visited India in December, 2019 to February, 2020 (https://tradingeconomics.com/india/tourist-arrivals). Despite substantial exposure of the international tourists, health authorities decided to test symptomatic Indian citizens only due to the higher cost of diagnostic kits. Hence alternative diagnosis and testing approaches for COVID-19 could prove as a major game changer.

In this context, developed countries like China, USA, UK have large datasets of positive cases for COVID-19 (>5,80000 cases). These ideal datasets can be useful for the initial screening using AI and deep learning technologies. Using these datasets along with artificial algorithms, health authorities can proceed with initial screening by confirming travel history, community exposure, other medical conditions of the patient etc. This information could play a vital role in patients at higher risk to undergo confirmatory laboratory testing for further necessary quarantine measures. In Asian countries like India, Pakistan, Japan, South Korea etc. due to higher atmospheric temperature and immunity, majority of the population do not require intensive care (Du et al,, 2008). AI algorithms could be developed to scrutinize patients into the 3 groups such as patients with (i) mild infections (ii) moderate infections (iii) severe disease including patients at high risk of mortality.

Thus, AI-based algorithms could be useful to provide information about patients diagnosed with COVID-19 or suspected of being infected and monitoring these patients with clinical-grade sensors along with procurement of data on various physiological signals. Moreover, this information could be combined with other information like laboratory and imaging tests to create a composite mechanism that could help clinicians understand the disease better, and ultimately lead to better detection or prediction of the early signs of infection.

In summary, when the world is completely relying on the conventional health measures to fight against COVID-19 pandemic, wide range of digital ecosystem measures could also play a major role to adapt and enhance public health strategies (Fig. 1). Moreover, the use of these technologies will have longer term goal and public-government acceptance to fight chronic diseases in future.
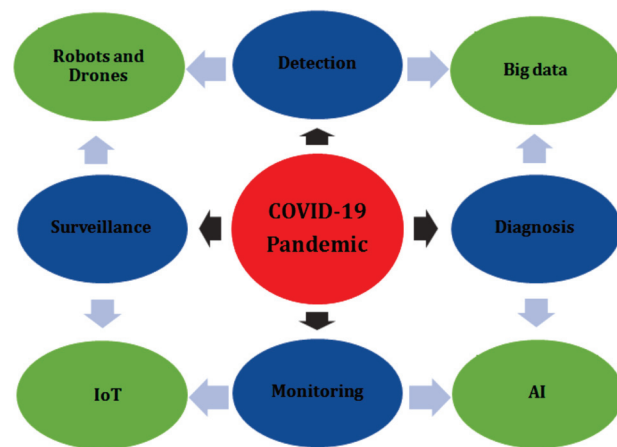
Fig. 1 Digital ecosystem to fight against COVID-19

As the saying goes, "There is no longer such a thing as strategy; there is only crisis management." The crisis of 2020 has provided a global opportunity to develop new strategy in the public health care system for effective management of COVID-19. Every crisis will create new opportunities and challenges. In continuation to this, now is the time for stake holders to frame their own strategy according to the situation and circumstances.

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Alternative Models of Curriculum for Increasing Employability and Entrepreneurship of B.Com Graduates

Brijmohan Dayma* and M Shrikant Pandya**

National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM) Report on Education and Employability highlighted low employability of existing talent, with only 10-15 per cent employable graduates in business services and 26 per cent employable engineers in technology services. To bridge these skill gaps and also promote entrepreneurship, academia-industry tie ups need to be strengthened, along with policy reforms to improve faculty training, encourage research and integrate changing global perspectives into academic courses. The academia also needs to transform from pure learning institutions to centers of growth through partnerships with community, industry and economy (Public & Social Policies Management Group (PSPM), 2014).

There is a need of strategic and institutional planning for bridging the gap between education and employability through skill development needs. This research project, presented by the second Author has secured the second rank at 14th Maharashtra State Inter-University Research Convention, Avishkar: 2019-20 organised by University of Mumbai on 28-31st January 2020.

Curriculum Design and Development

As per the Cambridge dictionary, 'Curriculum' means the subjects studied in a school, college, etc. and what each subject includes. In Latin the term 'curriculum' means a race course used by chariots. Thus, it implies any path or course of study to be undertaken by an educational institution, to be covered in a specified timeframe. The course of events can take place inside the school/college and also outside it. A curriculum consists of several components/events like plan for learning, study periods, sports activities, cultural events, etc. Hence, defining Curriculum as 'course of events' would be a very simplistic understanding of the term. According

_____
IQAC Coordinator, Associate Professor and Research Supervisor, Dayanand College of Commerce, Latur (MS), Email: brijdayma@gmail.com
**Research Scholar, Dayanand College of Commerce, Latur (MS), Email: shrikantgpandya@gmail.com*

to Stotsky (2012), Curriculum is a plan of action that is aimed at achieving desired goals and objectives. It is a set of learning activities meant to make the learner attain goals as prescribed by the educational system. Generally, it includes the subjects and activities that a given school system is responsible for. Moreover, it defines the environment where certain learning activities take place.

As per NAAC manual, academic flexibility refers to the choice offered to the students in the curriculum offering and the curriculum transactions. Curriculum Design and Development refers to the process of defining the contents of units of study usually obtained through needs assessment, feedback from stakeholders and expert groups. Curriculum design and curriculum development are procedures which are closely linked to the description of learning outcomes (NAAC Institutional Accreditation Mannual for SSR, 2020). There are seven criteria, which curriculum designers must consider --Relevance, Geographical Location, Developmental Stages of the Learners, Coherence, Connectivity, Equity and Excellence (Meaning and Concept of Curriculum).

Experts have opined various reasons attributing to poor employability ranging from K12 education, selection procedure in our graduate colleges, curriculum and quality of teaching, student interest and lack of corporate involvement. Unfortunately, most of these reasons have some part to play in this huge challenge. As per the estimates of various research firms, almost 40 to 50 per cent of existing jobs which are transaction heavy would get automated. The key sectors which would see this change are IT, financial services, manufacturing, transportation, packaging and shipping etc. Roles of a data-entry clerk, cashier, financial analyst, telemarketer, customer service executive, factory worker, computer support specialist, retail salesperson and advertising salesperson are constantly getting disrupted.

The Government of India, various state governments and the private sector has taken a number of initiatives to skill India. There is a growing demand from skilling to re-skilling with the changing

times. The employability of B.Com. graduates is between 20 per cent to 38 per cent as per the India Skills Report 2019. For increasing the employability of B.Com graduates, there is need to update the curriculum. Keeping this in view, an attempt has been made to draft a model curriculum for B.Com. First objective of this attempt is to increase the scope of employability of B.Com graduates. Models 1 and 2 have been devised for this purpose. Second objective is to develop entrepreneurial skills among B.Com graduates. Model 3 has been devised for this.

Policy framing as well as action oriented research methodology has been followed for this purpose. Primary sources like participant observation, personal interviews, telephonic interview, collaborative events with industries and various secondary sources were explored for the purpose. The scope of the study is related with the existing curriculum of B.Com programme in universities. It is limited to drafting 3 models of B.Com curriculum, 2 for increasing the employability and 1 for developing the entrepreneurial skills among B.Com graduates. The models can be operational within the existing UGC guidelines for developing the curriculum under the CBCS.

Choice Based Credit System

Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) refers to a mode of learning in higher education which facilitates a student to have some freedom in selecting his/her own choices, across various disciplines for completing a UG / PG program. All UG and PG programs, as per UGC, have to implement CBCS. 'Learning Outcomes' refer to specific intentions of a programme or module, written in clear terms. They describe what a student should know, understand, or be able to do at the end of that programme or module. The CBCS provides an opportunity for the students to choose courses from the prescribed courses comprising core, elective/minor or skill based courses. The courses can be evaluated following the grading system, which is considered to be better than the conventional marks system.

The main feature of the CBCS is to make undergraduate education student centric rather than system centric or teacher centric. For achieving these objectives, the CBCS strives to create a holistic syllabus. Thus in addition to dedicated focus on a discipline through core papers whether in an honors curriculum or a regular curriculum, elective papers have been added which will give students the freedom to choose the allied/applied/broad areas of their discipline and also the areas of other disciplines of their interest. Further in keeping with the vision of the Government, special emphasis has been given to ability enhancement and skill development of students through elective courses under these domains which every student is required to study (Instructional Template for Facilitating Implementation, 2015).

As per the UGC guidelines for UG programmes under CBCS, B. Com. is a three-year (6-Semester) CBCS Programme with 128 total credit hours and

Table 1: Employability Across Domains

WHICH DOMAINS HAVE MORE EMPLOYABLE TALENT?

YEARS

SKILLS	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
B.E/B.Tech	51.74%	54.00%	52.58%	50.69%	51.52%	57.09%
MBA	41.02%	43.99%	44.56%	42.28%	39.4%	36.44%
B.Arts	19.10%	29.82%	27.11%	35.66%	37.39%	29.3%
B.Com	26.99%	26.45%	20.58%	37.98%	33.93%	30.06%
B.Sc	41.66%	38.41%	35.24%	31.76%	33.62%	47.37%
MCA	43.62%	45.00%	39.81%	31.36%	43.85%	43.19%
ITI	46.92%	44.00%	40.90%	42.22%	29.46%	NA
Polytechnic	11.53%	10.14%	15.89%	25.77%	32.67%	18.05%
B.Pharma	54.65%	56.00%	40.62%	42.30%	47.78%	36.29%

Source: (Wheebox, 2019)

B.Com. (Honours) have 144 credit hours. The ideal lecture class size is 40 to 50 students. The ideal tutorial group size is 10-12 students and the ideal laboratory practical batch size 15-20 students. In reality, the actual lecture class size varies from 100 to 144 students. The actual laboratory practical batch size almost doubles the norms.

CBCS Outlines

Core Course

The papers under this category are going to be taught uniformly across all universities with 30 per cent deviation proposed in the draft. The purpose of fixing core papers is to ensure that all the institutions follow a minimum common curriculum so that each institution/university adheres to common minimum standard. Also the course designed for papers under this category aim to cover the basics that a student is expected to imbibe in that particular discipline. A course, which should compulsorily be studied by a candidate as a core requirement is termed as a Core Course.

Elective Course

Generally a course which can be chosen from a pool of courses and which may be very specific or specialized or advanced or supportive to the discipline/subject of study or which provides an extended scope or which enables an exposure to some other discipline/subject/domain or nurtures the candidate's proficiency/skill is called an Elective Course.

Discipline Specific Elective (DSE) Course

Elective courses offered under the main discipline/subject of study is referred to as Discipline Specific Elective. Each University has complete freedom to suggest their own papers under this category based on their expertise, specialization, requirements, scope and need. The university/institute may also offer discipline related elective courses of interdisciplinary nature.

Dissertation/Project

It is an elective course designed to acquire special/advanced knowledge, such as supplement study/support study to a project work. A candidate studying such a course on his own with an advisory support by a teacher/faculty member is called dissertation/project.

Generic Elective (GE) Course

An elective course chosen from an unrelated discipline/subject, with an intention to seek exposure beyond discipline/s of choice is called a Generic Elective. The purpose of this category of papers is to offer the students the option to explore disciplines of interest beyond the choices they make in Core and Discipline Specific Elective papers. Each University has complete freedom to suggest their own papers under this category based on their expertise, specialization, requirements, scope and need.

P.S.: A core course offered in a discipline/subject may be treated as an elective by other discipline/subject and vice versa and such electives may also be referred to as Generic Elective.

Ability Enhancement Courses (AEC)

The Ability Enhancement (AE) Courses may be of two kinds: Ability Enhancement Compulsory Courses (AECC) and Skill Enhancement Courses (SEC). 'AECC' courses are the courses based upon the content that leads to knowledge enhancement; These are mandatory for all disciplines.

Ability Enhancement Compulsory Courses (AECC)

Environmental Science, English Communication/Hindi Communication/MIL Communication.

Skill Enhancement Courses (SEC)

These courses may be chosen from a pool of courses designed to provide value-based and/or skill-based knowledge and should contain both theory and lab/hands-on/training/field work. The main purpose of these courses is to provide students life-skills in hands-on mode so as to increase their employability. Each University has complete freedom to suggest their own papers under this category based on their expertise, specialization, requirements, scope and need.

Practical/Tutorials

Each university has the freedom to add/subtract/edit practical from the list depending on their faculty and infrastructure available. Addition will however be of similar nature. (Instructional Template for Facilitating Implementation, 2015)

Process of Implementation

The researcher suggests the 3 models, Model 1-B.Com.(General), Model 2-B.Com.(Honors) and Model 3-B.Com.(Entrepreneurship). The models are to be operational within the existing UGC guidelines for developing the curriculum under the CBCS. Process of implementation involves following steps:

Aptitude Test

An Aptitude Test may be conducted at B.Com entry level to judge IQ, EQ and SQ of students. Depending upon the results, personal career counseling sessions may be organised for them as a result of which they can make an informed choice out of the given programmes/ courses.

Mentor System

As per the NAAC guidelines, apt ratio of students to mentor for academic and other related issues is important. There is need of counseling to students individually or collectively for academic, career, personal and financial decision-making. Mentor-Mentee System (General guidance) with a mentor-mentee ratio of 10 to 50 mentees is desirable.

Internship / Project Supervisor

Internship is a designated activity that carries some credits involving more than 25 days of working in an organization under the guidance of an identified mentor. Usually 5 to 10 project of students (Special or Particular guidance) may be assigned to a mentor.

CBCS Credit Transfer Committee at University Level

The University need to constitute a CBCS Credit transfer committee at university level to formulate the credit transfer policy. The scope, process, methodology, anticipatory measures should be decided by the committee. Its recommendations will be applicable across all disciplines in the university system.

Internship is an opportunity for both employer and candidate to assess each other before getting into an actual employer-employee agreement. Being an employer, corporate have an opportunity to test skills, train the intern and assess before making him/her a full time employment offer. On the other hand, candidates also have an opportunity to get sense of corporate environment, wok culture, assessment of skills and gaps without worrying about the full time employment. This is a win-win situation for both the parties, but here the road block is number of internship seekers are high and opportunities are handful. This could be one of the reasons of lower employability at graduate and post graduate level. Hence, in the suggested model of B.Com 1 and 2, a choice of internship is provided for minimum 12 credits and maximum 24 credits. In the Model-3, Entrepreneurship Awareness Programme (Level-1),

Entrepreneurship Development Programme (Level-2) and Entrepreneurship Technical Training (Level-3) of ESDP / EDII / DIC are included.

There is a need to set up career counseling centres in colleges. Due to NAAC requirements many colleges have set up these centres, however, sufficient funding and human resources are not provided by the college administration. A lot of students are unable to take benefit of it.

Suggestions and Recommendations

Weightage of Marks

Models 1 and 2 (Table---1 &2)

(a) Industry- Academic networking: 60 per cent core subjects

(b) *Summer and winter internship*: 03 Months: Max 20 per cent Weightage

(c) Enrollment in SWAYAM courses: Max 20 per cent elective subjects

(d) Collaborative (Team) projects among the students: 05 per cent Weightage in core subjects

Model 3 (Table-3)

(a) Industry- Academic networking: 60 per cent core subjects

(b) *Entrepreneurship Development Programmes*: 03 Months: Max 20 per cent Weightage

(c) Enrollment in SWAYAM courses: Max 20 per cent elective subjects

(d) Collaborative (Team) projects among the students: 05 per cent Weightage in core subjects

Process of Implementation

As described above, it covers Aptitude Test at B.Com. Entry level, Mentor-mentee system, Project supervisor system, CBCS Credit transfer committee at university level etc.

Multiple Teaching Methods

Lecture method is still the predominant method used in colleges and universities. It can be supported with Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), Blended Learning, Case Study, Collaborative Learning, etc.

New Assessment Methods

In addition to the traditional modes of assessments related with the continuous internal

Suggested Models 1and 2

Sr. No.	Course type	UGC CBCS - B.Com. (General)		UGC CBCS - B.Com. (Hons)		Suggested Model 1-B.Com. (General)			Suggested Model 2-B.Com.(Hons)		
		Course Papers	Credits	Course Papers	Cr.	Course Papers	Suggested Courses	Cr.	Course Papers	Suggested Courses	Cr.
1	Ability-Enhancement Compulsory Course (AECC)	2 Papers of 2 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 2X2)	4	2 Papers of 2 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 2X2)	4	2 Papers of 2 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 2X2)		4	2 Papers of 2 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 2X2)		4
2	Skill-Enhancement Elective Course (SEC)	4 Papers of 4 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 4X4)	16	2 Papers of 4 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 2X4)	8	**4 Papers of 4 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 4X4) #SEC1**	**1) Traditional group OR 2) NISM Certifications OR 3) NSDC SSC QPs OR 4) Any 4 Course Combinations from above**	16	**2 Papers of 4 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 2X4) #SEC2**	**1) Traditional group OR 2) NISM Certifications OR 3) NSDC SSC Courses**	8
3	Core Course	12 Papers of 6 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 12X6)	72	14 Papers of 6 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 14X6)	84	12 Papers of 6 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 12X6)	Including Collaborative Projects	72	14 Papers of 6 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 14X6)	Including Collaborative Projects	84
4	Discipline Specific Elective (DSE)	4 Papers of 6 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 4X6)	24	4 Papers of 6 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 4X6)	24	4 Papers of 6 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 4X6)	1) Traditional group OR 2) SWAYAM DS courses	24	**4 Papers of 6 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 3X6) #DSE2**	1) Traditional group OR 2) SWAYAM DS courses	24
5	Generic Elective (GE)	2 Papers of 6 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 2X6)	12	4 Papers of 6 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 4X6)	24	**2 Papers of 6 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 2X6) #GE1**	1) Traditional group OR 2) Internship OR 3) YCB courses OR 4) NSDC SSC Courses	12	**4 Papers of 6 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 4X6) #GE2**	1) Traditional group OR 2) Internship OR 3) YCB courses OR 4) NSDC SSC Courses	24
			128		144			128			144

NISM Certification Courses are being developed by NISM as mandated under SEBI Regulation, 2007. One course will be of 4 credits.
NSDC Board has approved 38 Sector Skill Councils. Eg. BFSI SSC has 13 QPs. There are over 600 Corporate Representatives in Governing Councils of these SSCs.
SWAYAM is a programme initiated by GOI with 9 NCs.
Yoga Certification Board, established by Ministry of AYUSH, GOI, is the only Board set up by any Government for certification in Yoga.
For internships 30 hours=1 credit eg. If an intern works daily 6 hours x 5 days=1 credit
Entrepreneurship Skill Development Programme (ESDP) by Ministry of MSME, GOI
District Industries Centre (DIC) by Directorate of Industries, GOM
Entrepreneurship Development institute of India (EDII), Gujarat by IDBI Bank, ICICI Bank, SBI, IFCI etc

Suggested Model 3-B.Com.(Entrepreneurship)

Course Papers	Suggested Courses	Credits
2 Papers of 2 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 2X2)		4
3 Papers of 4 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 3X4) #SEC1	**1) Traditional group OR 2) NISM Certifications OR 3) NSDC SSC QPs OR 4) Any 4 Course Combinations from above**	**16**

1 Papers of 4 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 1X4) #SEC1	**Entrepreneurship Awareness Programme (Level-1) of ESDP / EDII / DIC**	
12 Papers of 6 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 12X6)	Including Collaborative Projects	72
3 Papers of 6 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 3X6)	**1) Traditional group OR 2) SWAYAM DS courses**	**24**
1 Papers of 6 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 1X6)	**Entrepreneurship Development Programme (Level-2) of ESDP / EDII / DIC**	
2 Papers of 6 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 2X6) #GE1	**Entrepreneurship Technical Training (Level-3) of ESDP / EDII / DIC**	**12**
		128

Suggested Optional Courses as per the Model 3 B.Com. (Entrepreneurship)

Courses / Papers	Levels	Institutes and their Programmes	Equivalent Credits
1 Papers of 4 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 1X4) #SEC1	Entrepreneurship Awareness Programme **(Level-1)** of ESDP / EDII / DIC	Entrepreneurship Skill Development Programme (ESDP) by Ministry of MSME, GOI - Entrepreneurship Awareness Programme (Level- 1), Sponsorship and Stipend	4
		District Industries Centre (DIC) by Directorate of Industries, GOM - Entrepreneurship Introductory Programme (Level- 1), Sponsorship and Stipend	4
		Entrepreneurship Development institute of India (EDII), Gujarat by IDBI Bank, ICICI Bank, SBI, IFCI etc. - Entrepreneurship Awareness Camps (Level- 1)	4
1 Papers of 6 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 1X6)	Entrepreneurship Development Programme **(Level-2)** of ESDP / EDII / DIC	Entrepreneurship Skill Development Programme (ESDP) by Ministry of MSME, GOI - Entrepreneurship Skill Development Programme (Level- 2), Sponsorship and Stipend	6
		District Industries Centre (DIC) by Directorate of Industries, GOM - Entrepreneurship Development Training Programme (Level-2) in collaboration with MCED, MITCON and other Approved NGOs, Sponsorship and Stipend	6
		Entrepreneurship Development institute of India (EDII), Gujarat by IDBI Bank, ICICI Bank, SBI, IFCI etc. - National Summer Camps for Youths (Level-2)	6
2 Papers of 6 Credit Hrs. each (Total Credit Hrs. 2X6) #GE1	Entrepreneurship Technical Training **(Level-3)** of ESDP / EDII / DIC	Entrepreneurship Skill Development Programme (ESDP) by Ministry of MSME, GOI - Entrepreneurship Management Development Programmes (Level- 3), Sponsorship and Stipend	12
		District Industries Centre (DIC) by Directorate of Industries, GOM - Entrepreneurship Technical Training Programme (Level-3) in collaboration with MCED, MITCON and other Approved NGOs, Sponsorship and Stipend	12
		Entrepreneurship Development institute of India (EDII), Gujarat by IDBI Bank, ICICI Bank, SBI, IFCI etc. - Specially Designed Skill Development Programmes (Level-3)	12

evaluations and end semester evaluations, new assessment methods may be used such as Open Book Examinations, On Demand Examinations, Crossword, Case Study, Library Exercise, Field Work etc.

Choice of Internship or EDP in Last Semester

Depending upon the aptitude and willingness of the student, a student may be given the choice to go for internship in selected enterprises or he can choose entrepreneurship related 3 levels of training programmes.

Perspective Planning

Vision Documents or Perspective Plan be developed at college, university, state and national level. Perspective plan is a blue print regarding the objectives and targets of long term growth of an institution. As per the NAAC Manual, the activities should be successfully implemented based on the strategic plan. The strategic plan and deployment documents should be available on the college/university website. In fact, very few institutions have complied with this.

Conclusion

There is a need to revisit the curriculum time to time. Organisations across sectors have dropped their fresher hiring numbers. One of the key reasons as per them is the kind of investment that is needed to make the newly recruited personnels job ready. While large enterprises have the resources to invest in fresh appointees, same is not possible for startups, small and medium enterprises. Steps are needed to first revalidate the curriculum for it to meet the industry demands and then work with companies to put them into use.

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Commonwealth of Learning Guidelines on Distance Education during COVID-19*

Over 90 per cent of the world's student population is out of school due to the COVID-19 pandemic. No one was prepared for the unprecedented learning crisis that needs to be addressed immediately. Distance and online learning have become the only means for educational institutions to keep the doors of learning open. For some of them, this is an entirely new experience and uncharted territory. How can we help them and each other tide over this crisis?

As an intergovernmental organisation mandated to promote the use of Distance Education to improve access to quality education and training, the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) has been supporting governments and educational institutions in the Commonwealth since 1987. COL has developed the 'Guidelines on Distance Education during COVID-19' to help governments, educational institutions, regulatory agencies, parents, and students effectively deal with this crisis so that no one is left behind.

This is not the time for too much planning; concrete action is needed on the ground to help ministries, teachers and students to continue the teaching-learning process with the least disruption possible. COL has initiated several joint activities aimed at building the capacity of staff in distance and online provision and harnessing the potential of Open Educational Resources (OER) to offer quality content. COL's extensive knowledge and expertise in the field of distance and technology-enabled learning underpin these Guidelines and provide a practical roadmap for both policy makers and practitioners. The Guidelines have been reviewed by experts in the field from around the Commonwealth and I thank each one of them for their generous support. COL believes that knowledge is our common wealth and now is the time to support each other and work for our common future.

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Asha Kanwar,
President & CEO, Commonwealth of Learning

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Introduction

The recent closure of campuses due to the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted a challenge that has existed for many years. An education system that assumes the physical presence of teachers and students in the same space at the same time automatically excludes some students and cannot respond easily to circumstances that force closure, whether this is due to a pandemic, conflict, floods, fires or some other disaster. When institutions closed as a result of the pandemic, open universities and open schools could still remain open. This is because distance education (DE) does not require teachers and students to be in the same place at the same time for learning to happen.

Because learners and teachers are separated by time and space, some kind of technology or media must be used for communication between them. Learners receive self-learning materials in various formats – print, audio, video and computer – and are provided ongoing tutorial support with optional face-to-face interaction. DE embraces a range of possibilities from offline (print only) to fully online provision, and a blend of both. Recently, the term 'remote learning' has come into wide use. Remote learning is an emergency measure which attempts to replicate the classroom teaching and learning process in an online mode and can also be considered a form of DE.

Many countries and institutions have sought to move directly to online provision in the face of campus closures. Given the uneven development of technologies in various countries, online learning cannot be seen as the only solution for remote, rural and resource-poor communities. Over the last fifty years, institutions engaged in DE have shown that quality teaching and learning can be offered at a distance using a range of technologies – print, radio, television, computer and the Internet. Developments in web technologies and increased access to mobile applications open new possibilities, but solutions must be tailored to specific contexts.

1.1 Purpose of the Guidelines

The Guidelines provide practical directions for the use of DE tools and practices to support teaching and learning and offer suggestions on the use of appropriate technology to address the social and pedagogical issues of learning in a crisis situation. The purpose is to provide a road map for decision makers in governments and institutions to invest in the systematic integration of good DE practices in their specific contexts, keeping in view the challenges of equity and inclusion. Parents and students can benefit from the *Guidelines* by adopting appropriate practices that will facilitate the learning process.

These *Guidelines* are generic and need to be adapted for different situations. DE can be applied effectively in secondary, post-secondary and technical education contexts. The *Guidelines* may be used along with resources and toolkits available from COL's institutional repository (http://oasis.col.org) and elsewhere.

1.2. Distance Education as an Appropriate Innovation

Distance Eduction (DE) as an innovation in education has evolved to serve the needs of different contexts and constituencies. It has proved effective in secondary education, teacher training, higher education, and skills development — reaching students from the remote deserts in Africa, to small a tolls in the Pacific, to large numbers of rural learners in Asia. In a pandemic, DE allows learning to continue while observing travel restrictions and physical distancing requirements. The social mission of education has been central to DE which has always catered to marginalised students and those in remote locations. As an innovation, it is built around sound pedagogical principles and leverages the power of technologies. With advances in technology, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), which is another form of DE, have become popular. COL's *MOOC for Development* provides simple technology solutions such as a basic mobile phone interface, social media integration and delivery in low bandwidth situations to reach grassroots communities.

1.2.1 Benefits of Distance Education

Research shows that DE can increase access to education, improve quality, reduce costs, support inclusion and lower the carbon footprint of the education sector.

a) *Access*: DE can increase access to learning for large numbers of students. Open universities in the Commonwealth alone cater to more than 4.4 million students (COL, 2017), while the National Institute of Open Schooling (India) reports a cumulative enrolment of 2.71 million (NIOS, 2020). Because of its flexibility, DE is beneficial to students who have familial or social responsibilities that prevent them from accessing campus-based education (Tait, 2018). DE can reach many marginalised groups, including women and persons with disabilities (PWD), helping them access learning from any place, at any pace and at the times convenient to them (UNESCO, 2016).

b) *Cost*: DE achieves economies of scale which makes it possible to reduce the cost for both students and institutions. In mega open universities and open schools, the costs per student can be anything from one half to one third of the costs of a campus institution (NKC, 2009). Online provision too can result in significant cost savings. One study revealed that the cost per unit of online training was 55 per cent less than face-to-face training, with comparable outcomes (Jung, 2005). In technical and vocational education and training (TVET), blended approaches to DE combined with workplace learning reduce costs. Practical activities can be held in existing physical infrastructure on weekends and during evening hours.

Adoption of Open Educational Resources (OER) further reduces the cost of course development (Butcher, & Hoosen, 2012) and improves access to learning materials.

c) *Quality*: Research shows that there is 'no significant difference' between distance and traditional classroom instruction in terms of learning outcomes (Russell, 1999). If done well, ODL is as effective as campus provision in leading to learning outcomes and satisfaction (Bernard et al., 2004, Means, Toyama, Murphy, & Baki, 2013). Moreover, distance learning is based on a student-centred approach to education, facilitating lifelong learning skills such as self-directed learning, discipline and critical thinking. A recent rapid research brief from Australia also suggests that 'blended learning', combining face-to-face and remote learning, may be as effective as classroom learning for many students (Finkel, 2020).

d) *Inclusion*: With 15 per cent of the world's population experiencing some form of disability, the participation of PWD in education remains dismally low (WHO, 2011). Persons with disabilities prefer ODL because of its flexibility, affordability, ability to study at home and the degree of anonymity that it provides. Assistive technologies and resources can accommodate specific learning requirements in different contexts (Boskic, Starcher, Kelly, & Hapke, 2008).

e) *Environment*: The education sector contributes to both direct and indirect emissions, with an impact on environmental degradation. Studies show that distance teaching models have a significantly lower environmental impact than face-to-face teaching modes (Caird, Lane, Swithenby, Roy, & Potter, 2015). Following research by the Open University, UK, COL conducted a similar study in Botswana, which found that the average carbon footprint of the face-to-face group was nearly three times greater than that of the distance learning group (Carr, Modesto, Balasubramanian, Ortlieb, & Lesperance, 2019).

1.2.2 Key Elements of Distance Education

While DE can be implemented through various technologies and approaches, the learner must be at the centre of planning and implementation. Key considerations for the effective design and delivery of a DE programme are:

a) *Learning Resources*: Content is designed to support self-learning and made accessible to students using a variety of media and technology, including print, radio, television, computers, mobiles and the Internet. When there are clear objectives and support to achieve specific learning outcomes, effective teaching and learning can happen without students and teachers being in the same place at the same time.

b) *Pedagogy*: Teaching and learning is based on sound pedagogical principles of guided-didactic conversation (Holmberg, 1983), and appropriate use of two- way communication tools and technologies that help support dialogue and communication. Interaction between students and other students, students and teachers and students and content results in deeper understanding and is an integral part of DE. In order to benefit maximally from DE opportunities, students need to be guided to develop self-directed learning skills.

c) *Learner Support*: Providing psychological and emotional support to learners at a distance alongside continuous academic interaction are keys to student success. Caring human support at a distance facilitates self-directed learning, reduces student isolation, and creates an environment for student engagements in learning (Simpson, 2013).

d) *Administration*: DE is an industrialised form of teaching and learning characterised by division of labour (Peters, 2001). In order to implement effective teaching and learning at a distance, planning and organisation of the teaching and learning process from curriculum development to assessment of student learning needs to be managed by an efficient and accountable administration.

2.1. Guidelines for Governments

To support a move towards DE, there is a need for policy directives as well as financial assistance for educational institutions. Governments are responsible for setting the quality standards and must create enabling

policy frameworks and environments for supporting DE. The Guidelines can support governments to take appropriate measures to make a transition to DE methods and practices in order to minimise the disruptions caused by the pandemic and build resilient systems for the future.

a) *Develop appropriate national policies/frameworks* to mainstream DE, without making a distinction between distance, online, and face-to-face provision in terms of the qualifications awarded. The policies must focus on standard learning outcomes or competencies irrespective of modes of learning.

b) *Develop policies which are inclusive and focus on PWD* to ensure that no one is left behind.

c) *Promote national ICT and connectivity strategy.* The biggest challenge impacting a transition to DE is the lack of ubiquitous access to computers and the Internet. It is necessary to boost investments in providing access to technology infrastructure at educational institutions, ensuring that appropriate and affordable technologies are deployed to reach the last mile.

d) *Promote national platforms* to support online learning. The platforms must be robust to cater to large numbers and support a range of technologies including radio and TV. The platforms must also make provision for assistive technologies to include PWD.

e) *Provide financial support schemes for students* (especially women/girls and low-income students) to access technologies for personal use. Negotiate with Internet and Mobile Service Providers to provide 'zero rating' access to educational platforms in line with the universal service obligations of the providers.

f) *Adopt an OER policy* that will promote the development and sharing of quality content.

g) *Encourage cooperation between institutions* to avoid duplication of efforts by for shared activities and offering incentives collaboration.

2.2. Guidelines for Educational Institutions

Educational institutions have typically followed a campus-based model, but the COVID-19 situation has forced many of them to adopt online earning. The *Guidelines* will be helpful for both campus and distance education institutions to continue the teaching and learning process for all.

a) *Develop and implement technology-enabled learning policies/strategies* that are accessible and appropriate for the needs of learners. This would involve making appropriate technology choices such as print, radio, television and the Internet to suit different contexts.

b) *Facilitate the design and development* of blended learning environments (Cleveland-Innes, & Wilton, 2018) using suitable online systems, including Learning Management Systems to support teaching and learning to achieve expected learning outcomes.

c) *Prioritise capacity building* of staff to adopt DE approaches, including blended and fully online models. Establish specialist units and identify champions to support wide capacity-building for a sustainable and resilient organisation.

d) *Provide incentives to teachers* to curate and develop OER specific to the curriculum.

e) *Share course content* developed or curated by faculty members through an institutional OER repository to facilitate access by anyone, anywhere, anytime.

f) *Use innovative approaches* to assessment in both offline and online environments.

Institutions may review the one-time exit examination system and follow a process of continuous formative assessment to enable student learning and success.

g) *Develop ethical guidelines for the appropriate use of learning analytics* to track student progress and provide support, especially for those at risk. Adequate attention must be paid to privacy issues so that student data is not compromised.

h) *Identify existing open online courses* relevant to approved programmes and create mechanisms to recognise and provide credits for such courses completed by students.

i) *Provide orientation to students* to effectively use online learning and to develop self-directed learning skills by creating an engaging learning enrolments.

j) *Develop robust student support services using a range of technologies.* Personal contact must be provided through a variety of means, including telephone, email, discussion boards, appropriate social media to reduce the feeling of isolation and loneliness. Provide call centre facilities for student support, where there are large enrolments. Offer targeted support to disadvantaged students and those in remote locations.

k) *Ensure the quality of all courses* offered to students by following an appropriate institutional quality assurance process.

l) *Strengthen Internet bandwidth* to provide access to institutional resources as well as digital resources on the web.

m) *Provide appropriate technology support.* Technology failures can interrupt learning, and institutions must establish multiple ways of providing remote support.

2.3. Guidelines for Academic and Support Staff

The greatest challenge to academic and support staff is the lack of capacity to effectively transition to DE, including blended and fully online models. Many staff are not trained to use DE methods and tools, and therefore, they will need additional support and mentoring to adjust to the new environment. The *Guidelines* are provided to help academic and support staff take appropriate actions for the effective implementation of DE considering a diversity of learning contexts and needs.

a) *Approach DE and the teaching process with empathy and care for students* (Veletsianos, 2020). The learner should be at the centre of every action and staff must ensure that student expectations are met.

b) *Take proactive steps to adapt to the new environment* by taking advantage of both offline and online learning opportunities.

c) *Integrate OER in teaching-learning.* Using existing OER reduces the time to develop a course and helps teachers focus on interaction and student support. Teachers can draw on quality OER from around the world in various formats and adapt these to local contexts.]

d) *Consider student workload while developing activities and graded assignments.*

It is important to ensure that the workload assigned is reasonable and realistic. Deadlines for assignments should be staggered so as not to inconvenience the learner.

e) *Make sure that staff are available* at designated times for students to reach them via telephone or social media. Ensure that all student queries are responded to within a specified timeframe. Provide a general space for frequently asked questions and information on the website and the course management system.

f) *Work in teams and develop communities of practices* to avoid duplication of effort, share best practice and leverage lessons learnt.

2.4. Guidelines for Learners and Student Bodies

These *Guidelines* are equally applicable to student bodies/associations and individual students. While accessing online learning on the Internet is an issue in developing countries, an increasing number of students

have access to mobile devices. Most students use these devices for communication and now need to develop the skills to use them as learning devices. Considering the importance of digital literacy in the 21st Century, students and student bodies must focus on the following:

a) *Develop skills to learn online* and become self-directed learners by accessing appropriate digital tools and short courses.
b) *Engage in group learning activities* to remain connected with peer groups. c) *Develop a study schedule* to manage time effectively.
d) *Stay connected with teachers and other students* regularly through the telephone, social media and a learning management system.
e) *Develop critical skills* to understand the consequences of plagiarism, privacy issues and the negative impact of misinformation in the digital space.
f) *Student bodies can play a central role in advocating for DE* and provide support to learners who are new to such forms of learning through mentorship and guidance.

2.5. Guidelines for Parents

During this crisis, the role of parents has become more important than ever before. They are required to become learning facilitators for their children while at the same time providing psychological support. No longer able to follow the routine of going to school and separated from their peers, children can suffer from loneliness and anxiety. This is exacerbated by the fact that some parents may also need to work from home while supporting their children's studies. This has contributed to stress, uncertainty and mental health issues. Within this context, the following *Guidelines* are offered.

a) *Appreciate that children do not study and learn all the time at school.* Do not expect them to study all the time.
b) *Establish a routine/timetable with the children.* Become a good listener and earmark the time to spend with them. Make provision for exercise and recreation.
c) *Regularly review activities and support adherence to deadlines.* Provide additional support to children who are not used to self-directed learning.
d) *Make sure that children are using secure devices* updated with virus protection while learning online. Set age-appropriate parental controls to supervise the use of websites and apps. It is important for parents to ensure that children are protected from online harassment and gender-based violence.
e) *Communicate with the teacher*, whenever necessary.
f) *Observe all safety and health practices* as recommended by national and international health authorities to serve as a role model for the children.
g) *Prioritise children's well-being* by reaching out to teachers, school counsellors, and outside resources such as help lines. Ensure that children are in a comfortable home environment where they can study in peace.

2.6. Guidelines for Quality Assurance/ Accreditation and Academic Recognition Bodies

Quality assurance (QA) and accreditation agencies play a critical role not only in setting standards, but also in ensuring that the standards are adhered to by educational institutions. While academic standards and norms cannot be diluted at any time, there can be more flexibility in emergency situations. Some of the *Guidelines* for QA agencies and accreditation bodies are:

a) *Update policies and norms to include DE* (blended/online) for teaching and learning. Teaching and learning credits may be based on learning outcomes and the competence achieved rather than the number of hours invested.
b) *Adopt a flexible approach to the accreditation and approval processes* of programmes and educational institutions by adopting online validation processes. Whenever peer team visits are not possible, alternative ways to validate self-study reports may be adopted as temporary measures.
c) *Use synchronous tools for meetings* and consider temporary approvals for specified periods.

d) *Identify and adopt existing guidelines* for blended/online/DE and provide orientation to educational administrators and teachers to ensure quality.

e) *Promote a learning-centred, outcome-focused teaching and learning system* by developing measurable graduate attributes at different levels.

f) *Support evidence-based authentic assessment practices* to measure learning outcomes and reduce the emphasis on face-to-face tests and exams.

g) *Support institutions to move towards self-assessment* based on a systematic process of self-reflection supported by evidence of institutional achievement using existing tools.

h) *Provide guidance to institutions for the development and deployment of systems* to store and transfer credentials in a secure manner using technologies such as blockchain.

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Acknowledgements

UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS

Chennai - 600 005

SEARCH COMMITTEE NOTIFICATION

APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHANCELLOR

The Government of Tamil Nadu vide G.O. (D) No.48 Higher Education (H1) Department dated 04.03.2020 have constituted a Search Committee to recommend a panel of three names to the Hon'ble Governor-Chancellor for appointment of the Vice-Chancellor, University of Madras, Chennai.

The Search Committee invites applications for the post of Vice-Chancellor, University of Madras, from distinguished academicians with highest level of competence, integrity, moral and institutional commitment and possessing the educational qualifications and experience as notified in the Madras University Act, 1923 copy of which is available in the University of Madras Website **https://www.unom.ac.in**

Interested candidates possessing the qualifications and experience may download the prescribed application format from the website of University of Madras. The filled in application shall be sent (only in the prescribed format) by e-mail and one hard copy by post duly superscribing the Envelope **"Application for the post of the Vice-Chancellor, University of Madras, Chennai"** so as to reach the following address before **05.00 p.m. on 4th June 2020**.

Dr.G.Rathinasabapathy, Ph.D.
Nodal Officer
Search Committee for Selection of Vice-Chancellor
University of Madras
 # 577, Anna Salai, TNOU Administrative Building, III Floor
Tamil Nadu Open University Campus
Chennai - 600 015
e-mail: vcsearchcommittee.unom@gmail.com

Applications received after publication of the notification in the website of University of Madras / newspaper alone will be considered. Applications received after the closing date will not be considered on any account.

Dipr/ /Display/2020   **REGISTRAR**

CAMPUS NEWS

Webinar on Revising Management Education in India

A Webinar on 'Revising Management Education in India' was conducted by All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) recently. It was chaired by Rajive Kumar, AICTE Member Secretary. The participants included Prof. Kamlesh Misra, Vice Chancellor, Rishihood University, Prof Raj Aggarwal, Director, All India Management Association-Centre for Management Education, Prof B Bhattacharya, former Dean, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, Prof A N Bhattacharya, Program Chair, Marketing at School of Inspired Learning (SOIL) and Vinnie Jauhari, Education Director at Microsoft Corporation India.

The Webinar had deliberations on the impact of Cronavirus on higher education sector and how online learning is being increasingly used to reshape the application processes. The discussion centred around how COVID-19 has created a new normal for the higher education sector and revolutionized the online learning landscape. Dr. Rajive Kumar mentioned how AICTE has pursued the management institutes not to put any pressure on the students for fees especially, till the time banks are not able to give education loans. He also mentioned about the change in dates for B-school admissions. Earlier, the classes were supposed to be held in June but now they will begin from July 1, 2020 and 31st July, 2020 is the last date for admissions, he said, adding that students can withdraw their names till 25th July with a deduction of only Rs.1000/- from the entire fee. As far as new students are concerned, the admission will begin from August 1, 2020, he said. Dr. Kumar also mentioned that institutes can conduct classes online and also hold exams online keeping in mind the Guidelines issued by the University Grants Commission. The curriculum has also been revised for the management education, the number of credits in MBA and PGDBM has been reduced and there will be an emphasis on more Indian case studies. He also emphasised upon the guidelines to begin management education in online/distance learning mode for which the regulations will be framed by the management experts. All the approvals and accreditations by AICTE are being done online. Management students also have the option of registering on the AICTE portal for internships.

The Webinar was held in two sessions wherein the first session looked at addressing the challenges and the second session was about the solutions that can be offered to counter the challenges. The panelists touched upon various points such as the complete shattering of the whole learning environment and how everything has changed so drastically especially the relationship between the students and teachers, staff and teachers etc. Also, how because of the social distancing norms, the system of studying together and working together has been impacted. There is the need to have a blended model of education which includes online as well as face-to-face interaction, and also how technology can be a big enabler in this and will play a pivotal role in reshaping the management education. The right kind of content has to be developed and sustainability has to be built.

The discussion also highlighted the importance of having adequate infrastructure as some of the institutes especially the ones which are in remote areas might have issues when it comes to switching over to the digital mode. The faculty and the students also have to be trained so that they are digitally competent. As far as the solutions are concerned, the panelists discussed how it is going to take some time for the management institutes and universities to come up with a new model for imparting quality education. The curriculum will have to be restructured and the industry will also have to play an active role in helping the faculty shift towards the online mode and to achieve this, a strong partnership with the corporate sector is necessary. There was also a mention of having virtual universities in the future.

VISHWANKAN -2020

A two-day National Fine Arts Workshop 'Vishwankan-2020' was organized by Shri Vaishnav Institute of Fine Arts, recently. The Workshop was graced by many senior artists who gave the art scene of Indore a new destination. The Workshop had about 58 registered participants including artists,

art teachers, art graduates as well as art lovers from Bhopal, Ujjain, Dewas, Dhar and Indore.

Dr. Santosh Dhar, Dean, Faculty of Doctoral Studies & Research and Coordinator, Shri Vaishnav Institute of Fine Arts was the Convener of Vishwankan --- 2020. In her introductory address, Dr Dhar opined that art is an expression of one's thoughts, emotions and desires. She also stated, "words alone are not enough, art gives greater sensitivity to whole world by visual effects. Art can exist for its own purpose." The aim of Vishwankan is to inspire budding artists to create original work and teach them skills to analyze their creativity. Also, the participants will enhance their skills and will explore different painting styles, she said. In the welcome speech Dr. Upinder Dhar, Vice Chancellor, Shri Vaishnav Vidyapeeth Vishwavidyalaya said that a person should understand the dexterity, creativity of hands, in this virtual era. He emphasised that Vishwankan-2020 is an opportunity for budding artists to learn from those who have done great work using their potential. He also mentioned that any form of art has three distinct components--- aesthetics, creativity and theme, which synergize to give a good art form.

Mr. Bipin Patel, Special Guest shared his life experience with the students and said that dreams are meant for those who believe in themselves. He remarked that heart can fail but art cannot as even if the artist dies, art remains forever. Dr. R C Bhawsar, the Chief Guest on the occasion said that history of humans can be found out through arts. Giving reference of *Vishnu Dharmottar Purana*, he said that Fine Arts is paramount among all kind of arts. Today, through traces of art we can find out the advancements done in Mohenjodaro, Harrapa and other ancient civilizations. He also enlightened students about the six limbs of arts viz. Distinction of Forms, Proportion, Expression, Colour, Similitude, Aesthetic sense. Through a story, he explained that a person who makes sculpture should know about fine arts, art of dance, art of music and singing, and art of literature. He motivated students and said that learning arts is like a worship. It requires hard work and is a time consuming process. Art should communicate a specific message, he said. Dr. Anu Ukande, Coordinator, Vishwankan 2020 proposed words of thanks at the inaugural session of the event. On the first day of the event, live demonstrations of

oil painting landscape and watercolor landscape were displayed by the senior artists Dr R C Bhawsar from Ujjain and Shri Bipin Patel from Gujarat respectively. A live demonstration of Acrylic painting was given by Dr. Vimmi Manoj, followed by a motivational lecture in Fine Arts by Dr. Vikrant Shah.

Valedictory session marked the conclusion of the two-day Workshop. Dr. Vimmi Manoj was Chief Guest of the Valedictory Function. The report was presented by Ms Ritika Soni, Student, Shri Vaishnav Institute of Fine Arts. Ms. Alka Jha, Co-coordinator Vishwankan 2020 proposed a vote of thanks.

Faculty Induction Programme

A One-month Faculty Induction Programme was organized by the Teaching Learning Centre, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha, New Delhi under the scheme of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya National Mission on Teachers and Teaching (MHRD), Government of India, recently. The objectives of the programme were to sensitize and motivate newly inducted higher education faculty for adopting learner centric approaches and to give exposure to new emerging pedagogic approaches in teaching, learning and assessment for ensuring delivery of quality orientations in these processes. The Chief Guest of the function was Prof. Rajnish Jain, Secretary and CVO, UGC, New Delhi. Vice Chancellor of the Vidyapeetha, Prof. Ramesh Kumar Pandey; Registrar, Dr. Alka Rai were present on the occasion. Welcome address was delivered by Prof. K Bharath Booshan, Head and Dean, Faculty of Education and Background Note of the programme was presented by Project Head, Prof. Amita Pandey Bhardwaj.

In his address, Prof. Rajnish Jain highlighted various schemes under quality mandate of UGC related to teachers and institutions specially, STRIDE (Scheme for Trans-disciplinary Research for India's Developing Economy) and *Gurudakshta*. He further described and dwelt upon some details about MHRD initiatives such as Annual Refresher Programme in Teaching (ARPIT) through National Resource Centres (NRCs) and Leadership for Academicians Programme (LEAP) under PMMMNMTT scheme for the professional development of Higher Education Faculty. The Vice Chancellor, in his Presidential

Address described about the characteristics and attributes of a good teacher as elaborated in our *shastras* and encouraged to imbibe them for becoming a competent and effective teachers. The course content of the programme embodied all six core modules and two elective modules as provided for Induction Training of Faculty by Department of Higher Education, MHRD. The themes for core modules were Roles and Responsibilities of Faculty/Academics in Higher Education, University Structure and Functioning, Pedagogic Techniques and Teaching and Learning Methods, Assessment and Evaluation, ICT: Effective Use of Technology for Teaching, Learning and Evaluation and Academic Leadership and that for Elective modules were Research in Higher Education and Constitutional Values and Environmental consciousness. In all, 31 Assistant Professors from 18 disciplines belonging to various states participated in the programme. The programme was conducted through 103 distinctly designed sessions encompassing inaugural, induction, technical, hands-on-practice, sharing of experiences, cultural programme, CIET (NCERT) visit, online assessment, feedback and valedictory sessions. The technical sessions were transacted on practice centric approach under the able guidance of highly experienced twenty nine Resource Persons drawn from various reputed universities/institutions of the country. In practice sessions, participants were assigned total of 35 tasks out of which 24 were individual and 11 were group based. An online assessment test having 50 MCQ type items were administered on the participants in which they scored above 60 per cent. The experiences of the participants about the programme were obtained with intent of getting feedback in one of the sessions and was followed by the cultural programme by the participants. A separate feedback about the quality of lectures delivered by the Resource Persons was taken in four categories viz. Outstanding, Very good, Good and Satisfactory and was found to be 60 per cent, 30 per cent, 08 per cent and 02 per cent in respective categories. In addition, online feedback about the programme was also taken on 20 points in five categories viz. Excellent, Very good, Good, Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory. The average percentage of all points in these categories was found to be 62 per cent in Excellent, 30 per cent in Very good, 07 per cent in Good and 1 per cent in Satisfactory.

In the Valedictory Session, the Chief Guest was Prof. Roop Kishore Shastri, Vice Chancellor, Gurukula Kangri Vishwavidyalaya, Haridwar, Uttarakhand. It was presided over by Prof. Nagendra Jha, Former Head and Dean, Faculty of Education. In the valedictory session, the Project Head Prof. Amita Pandey Bhardwaj welcomed the guests and presented the brief report including learning outcomes of the programme at awareness and application levels along with a short video on glimpses of the programme followed by sharing of experiences by the participants. In the valedictory address, Prof. Shastri appreciated the style of conduct of the programme and applauded the efforts of the entire team. After congratulating the participants for successfully completing the training, he further added that knowledge, skill and experience gained through the programme will facilitate the planning, designing, implementing and assessing procedures of teaching learning systems in a more meaningful and enjoyable way. Some of the participants were felicitated by presenting mementoes on the basis of their performances in presentations, participation, assigned tasks and assessment test followed by certificate distribution to all the participants. The programme concluded with Vote of Thanks.

International Webinar on Emerging Challenges in Teaching Literature and Language in the Virtual World

An 'International Webinar on Emerging Challenges in Teaching Literature and Language in the Virtual World' is being organised by the Department of English, Govt VYTPG Autonomous College, Durg, Chhattisgarh on 7 & 8 June, 2020. Teaching *per se,* is a challenging job. The compelled lockdown due to spread of COVID 19 has made it all the more challenging for the teachers as they have to experiment with new teaching methods with the classrooms becoming virtual spaces. With online teaching or video instruction etc as optional or alternative methods of teaching, the teachers are now facing the additional challenge of learning the technology. Teachers of Language and Literature are no exception. In view of this, the Webinar is being organised to get together and discuss the challenges and find possible solutions that will be best for the students.

Govt VYTPG Autonomous College, Durg, founded in 1958, is the largest and most renowned

college of Chhattisgarh. It is accredited with A+ by NAAC and has been recognized by UGC as the College with Potential for Excellence (CPE), receiving the grant under 3rd Phase of the Scheme. The College is a melting pot where diverse cultures of urban and rural India merge and it enjoy the unique status of catering to the needs of both the urban and the rural students. It also has the distinction of being one of the 20 prominent institutions across the country to have been selected for providing suggestions on National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF) of India.

Established in the year 1958, the Department of English of the college has been identified as 'Star Department' under UGC-CPE Scheme. The founder faculty including stalwarts and erudite scholars like Prof S B K Murthy, Prof M K Khan, Prof R S Chandani, Prof Suresh Chandra Sharma etc ensured a strong foundation and industrious culture in the Department. At present it has eight permanent professors and offers courses at UG, PG and Ph D levels. It is a recognized research centre of the University. In terms of infrastructure and resources the Department has a Language Lab setup under CPE scheme of UGC. It is well equipped with ICT facilities, high quality software and books, CDs and DVDs along with other basic amenities.

Dr. Aruna Palta, Vice Chancellor, Hemchand Yadav University, Durg and Dr. R N Singh, Principal, Govt VYTPG Autonomous College, Durg are invited to grace the inaugural function. Some of the invited speakers are Dr. Nadezda Stojkovic. Associate Professor in English for Specific Purposes, University of Nis, Serbia, Dr. Ashok Thorat, Director, Institute of Advanced Studies in English, Pune, Dr.Dhanashree Thorat, Asst. Professor of English Mississippi State University, US; Dr. Solzica Popovska, Faculty of Philology Blaze Koneski, Skopje; Ss Cyril and Methodius University, North Macedonia; Dr. Rooble Verma: Associate Professor, Head of the Department of Foreign Languages, Vikram University, Ujjain.

Fees for Registration to the Webinar is Rs 500 / - for Indian delegates and 20 $ for overseas delegates. Early Bird registration for Indian delegates is Rs 300/-. For further details, contact Dr Somali Gupta, Organising Secretary of the Webinar on Ph. no. 9893081194 or Email: somaligupta@gmail.com. ❑

AIU NEWS

Weekly E- Essay Series of Scholarly Articles on Reimagining Indian Universities

A 'Weekly E-Essay Series of Scholarly Articles on 'Reimagining Indian Universities' was launched on AIU Website on 15th May, 2020 as a part of the change which AIU seeks to bring about in the academics in this day and age of COVID-19. The essays scheduled for release in this series are in a broad range of fields covering a variety of topics pertinent to 'Reimagining Indian Universities' received from distinguished experts and authorities in the area of Indian higher education included in the Book 'Reimagining Indian Universities' edited by Dr. Ms.Pankaj Mittal and Dr Sistla Rama Devi Pani. In the series, every week one scholarly article written by an erudite scholar of Indian academia is being released on the AIU Website. The series was initiated with the essay of Prof Bhushan Patwardhan, Vice Chairman, University Grants Commission, India on 15th May, 2020.

The essays are unique, enlightening and inspirational. Those who are interested in reading these essays may browse AIU Website: www.aiu. ac.in. ❑