**A paradigm shift is in place. Are the Indian Universities ready for the challenges that a “Post Covid” world will plunge them into?**

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The year 2020 has come with a fresh set of challenges and opportunities with it. Over 11 lakh Indians were studying abroad in 2019. While the figures seemingly had a rise each year until 2020 happened, this has opened a domain of new opportunity at home. Let’s dive into some ground realities.

Why was studying abroad valued so much? The main benefits included a better educational content, more hands on experience, practical training benefits, cultural diversity and a wider space for job opportunities. All these credentials added to the CV, an individual felt confident and competent to level the base with his peers.

Now let’s focus on the present world. The Covid-19 pandemic has affected our lives on an unprecedented scale. The entire education system is undergoing a massive forcedly impacted change. This has given a chance to our policy makers to bring about an educational tech-revolution in our system. We need to focus on the facts of what we can offer to our talent at home.

To begin with, we need to start providing an educational experience that will focus on the delivery outcome. The students are more interested in getting a global experience and look forward to acquiring integrated skills of career prospects as well as personality development. The Covid-19 crisis has triggered the fundamental change in university business model, allowing them an opportunity to redefine their methods.

With the new travel restrictions that this year has brought upon us, it has offered a blessing in disguise to the universities at home. Innovation is the need of the hour. Indian universities could collaborate with international ones and develop integrated courses and modules which will help students gain the best of both worlds. An international panel of experts could be formed who commit themselves to help the students achieve the desired outcome. This is the time to explore the opportunities globally at hand. A win-win situation could be created out of these times. India doesn’t lack in technology nor in intelligent minds at work. Why can’t we offer our students value for money based outcome? Industry and academic partnerships could help secure job opportunity which is the primary outcome. Things could be redefined at a global level.

Post Covid world will also present a massive challenge to combat the psychological issues at hand. The anxiety of the unknown that lies ahead could destroy the morale of an intellectual. Also there will be many students who would have dreamed of studying abroad and would have a clear picture in their mind of an outcome, but would have to now compromise on their dreams. We need to be able to show them that they can still fulfill their dreams studying here at home. The Universities will need to incorporate a wellness program into their curriculum to help ease their minds into the transition. The mental well-being needs of every individual will have to be addressed to build a stronger society.

As the world adapts to a new normal, government involvement is also critical. The government has a huge role to play in redefining the status quo relating to education. Any joint degree programs will need to be recognized in both the countries. Developing bilateral agreements may be a solution to this. A sense of security has to be provided to any prospective candidate. The Universities will need to urgently rise to the challenges and introspect into their curriculum and business models to see what can be done to highlight the benefits and make use of the opportunity at hand.

A paradigm shift is definitely in place. What we make out of it, that is entirely for the time to tell.

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