

22 April 2019: UPSC Exam PIB Summary & Analysis

India needs a world class higher education system: Vice President

Context

- The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has said that a world-class higher education system was the need of the hour, addressing students and faculty members of REVA University
- Reminding the gathering about India's illustrious heritage, Shri Naidu said that India must resurrect the glory of the bygone era and take up the production and dissemination of knowledge.
- This can be done on a wide scale through initiatives such as the digitization of higher education through expansion of online courses, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) courses and distance education.

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC)

- A MOOC is an online course aimed at large-scale interactive participation and open access via the web, or simply, e-learning.
- In MOOC courses, students can engage in online learning from top international faculty at home in order to learn the basics of a topic, and then interact with an on-campus professor to problem-solve and reinforce understanding.

Why MOOCs are required

- **Poor teaching standards in India:** an online talent assessment company asserts that only 10 per cent of MBA graduated and 17 per cent of engineering graduates in India are employable.
- **Poor accessibility:** There is lack of quality education at basic levels and accessibility at later levels. The challenge for India lies in providing access to secondary and higher education to make the youth employable.
- The demand among Indian students for instruction from globally-recognised faculty is a strong driver for these partnerships.
- There is substantial interest among several top universities and business schools to offer such integrated MOOC courses.

Significance of MOOCs

- MOOCs are primarily developed to enhance the skills of youth.
- Those who could not get a chance to receive traditional college degrees from top institutions can now earn them through MOOCs
- MOOCs are more affordable than the traditional classes.
- It has the potential to train and educate billion more people by making education more accessible for everyone.
- Learners can learn from anywhere irrespective of their situation as long as they have internet access.

Drawbacks of MOOCs

- Digital literacy is important to make use of such facilities and in India it is very low.
- Relying on user-generated content can create a chaotic learning environment.
- Time and effort to that has to be put in by the students of MOOCs is comparatively more than the regular classroom students.

- Students have to regulate and set their own goals.
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MOU signed between Ministry of AYUSH and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research

Context

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the Ministry of AYUSH and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR),
- Previously, CSIR jointly with Department of AYUSH (now Ministry) developed the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL), a globally recognized proprietary database on Indian systems of medicine for preventing bio-piracy and misappropriation of our traditional knowledge.

Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL)

- TKDL is an initiative to provide information on traditional knowledge existing in the country, so the patent examiners at International Patent Offices (IPOs) can examine and this can prevent the grant of wrong patents.
- This is a collaborative project of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the Department of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy, is situated in Ghaziabad, U.P.
- This bridges the gap between the traditional knowledge information existing in local languages in India, and the patent examiners at IPOs.

Why TKDL is important?

- This initiative dates back to the Indian effort on revocation of patent on wound healing properties of turmeric at the USPTO.
- Besides, in 2005, the TKDL expert group estimated that about 2000 wrong patents concerning Indian systems of medicine were being granted every year at international level.
- This is mainly due to the fact that India's traditional medicinal knowledge which exists in local languages such as Sanskrit, Hindi, Arabic, Urdu, Tamil etc. is neither accessible nor comprehensible for patent examiners at the international patent offices.

How TKDL will work

- The knowledge obtained from ancient Indian texts are stored in a number of A4 size pages and translated into five foreign languages – in Japanese, English, Spanish, German and French.
- It is a knowledge-based conversion, where data abstracted from the ancient scripts are converted into several languages by using Unicode, Metadata methodology.
- TKDL has signed access and non-disclosure agreements with patent office of India and seven other global offices.
- TKDL ensures near fool-proof security for our invaluable bio-resources and protects against piracy. All of this required not just high-end technology but also skills of a high technical order.

