Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University
Centre for Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA)

Second Special Lecture on

Imparting Quality Skill Education through Open Universities
Issues and Challenges

By

Prof. Rajan M Welukar

About Dr. BRAOU

The University, initially known as Andhra Pradesh Open University, was set up on 26th August 1982 through an Act of the A.P.State Legislature (APOU Act 1982). Subsequently the University was renamed as Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Open University on 26th October,1991. The establishment of this University, the first of its kind in India, heralded and era of affirmative action on the part of the Government of Andhra Pradesh to provide opportunities of higher education to all sections of society to meet the changing individual and social needs. The University is providing services to the student community through a wide network of 179 study centres spread across both Telangana & Andhra Pradesh States, including 23 Regional Co-ordination centres and 11centres exclusively meant for women students. Prison inmates under life sentence also enrol themselves as students and pursue education through exclusive study centres at Central Prison - Cherlapally, Warangal, Rajahmundry, Visakhapatnam, Kadapa and Nellore and exclusive Study Centre for Army Personal and their family members, which was located at AOC, Secunderabad. The University offers Certificates, UG, PG Diploma and PG Degree and Research Programmes in including various Professional Programmes.

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A business model is research-driven. When they come out with a product they do research on its market and create a market. We need a paradigm shift towards new business strategies or models. For example, when the GST was imposed in the country, from the very next day you should have launched a 3 days' certificate programme in GST. However, you have to follow the government regulations for offering the programme. You know IIT Hyderabad offers a one credit programme for 15 hours. Out of the 15 hours, they are teaching 30%. That is $1/3^{rd}$ of the time allotted or almost 4 -5 hours and one professor from somewhere comes on Saturday and teaches for 3-4 hours face to face. The remaining teaching is through projects, and assignments, in that one credit programme. Can we not have a one-day programme, seven days' programme, one- month programme, three- months' programme? That's it. But look at the skills and competencies required by the people i.e. the second quadrant. These are the people whom we must tap.

Now, the third quadrant 'clientele' is the people who want to re-educate themselves. The fourth quadrant is the schools. Suppose you have a tie-up with the SSC Board and HSC Board and say, we will teach one course to your students on Artificial Intelligence. So, many students would want to learn that course and they will get a credit in the mark sheet saying that they are taking six subjects and they have the option of taking one additional course, as in Maharashtra. However, then, you need governmental intervention. That is what a partnership is. For instance, 14 laths students are appearing in the 10th standard SSC, out of which even if you can get 1% as your clientele, that is 14,000 in one go, and teach them skills for the future, such as, a course on website creation, for example, for which you may not need UGC recognition. I tell you it can generate huge revenue for the university. There is a way and this is what the future is.

My next point is – how do we become resilient? To be resilient you have to do research on what kind of skills and competencies the students are going to require. 10th standard students go to 12thstandard, and when they go for graduation, they will need some basic skills. It is those basic skills which you can teach them at this point of time and if you can convince the State Board, they will be happy. So, you tell the Board you will be getting these outcomes and your teacher who is going to do coordination work will get some incentive out of this. You get teacher support. You get the support of the Board. And you will be able to give the target to the government. So, they will get votes from it in the elections. It is a strategy, through which we can do business. Let us say, if you give a target to the Chief Minister that, "no child will remain uneducated in this aspect of the future tech skills" he will be happy, he will support it or get it promoted. Make everybody happy. If you make everybody happy, you also will be happy. Of course, there is no compromising with quality while looking for innovations and quantity.

I will show you some of the data to understand this. Whatever happens in developed countries, for example in the US, can also happen in our country. It may take 2-3 years or 4years. If we understand their scheme, we will understand what we need to do for our own young people.

Now this is the data from 1970 to 2009 and it has further enhanced. Just as there is a changing demand for skills in the United States, that is what is now happening in our country. There is an increase in non-routine interpersonal skills. We now need to teach non-routine analytical skills. For that you don't have to do a long-term diploma programme. You know FINTECH started it in six months. It is an example to emulate. Technology will not reduce jobs, in fact, it is going to increase them three-fold. Some jobs will be outdated but some new jobs will be created, which will be three-

fold, the data showed. Then there is the difficulty of filling vacancies in Asia and the Pacific because we have really not taken the decision fast enough and therefore our students are skilled in some fields but are not skilled in all the fields which are going to be created. The future is the idea of a hybrid work place, sitting at home or sitting in a restaurant and at the same time, as and when I upload the data and do something when I go to the office — that is hybridisation.

Now, there are 5 key skills that are required for post COVID employment. One is data literacy, the second is digital and coding skills, and the third is technology up- gradation; the fourth is digital distancing and the fifth is paradigm shift and adoption of the franchise model -cum-partnership approach. So your relationship is not only with your own college but your relationship is with the entire world. You must have seen the book "Corporate Chanakya". That is what we have seen. I did that in Surat, I launched an online course, of 3-months' duration on Finance and Social Intelligence. I offered it to the industry people, those who are looking after the finance in an industry and it was a hit. My fee was Rs.8, 000/- There were only 30 students, so, 30 multiplied by Rs.8, 000 was the amount generated. I spent 60% of the amount on those resource persons. So, we need to come out with some different ideas like these.

As I told you earlier, when GST came in, on the very second day you should have announced a short course for 15days, and you could have brought the Sales Tax commissioner or GST commissioner as resource persons for classes. You would have got no less than 10,000 admissions with Rs. 2,000/- as fees. If you calculate Rs.2000 into 10000, how much money could you have got? In the same way, if something new comes up, you should look at the numbers. When the government comes out with a scheme for many people, you just launch a programme on it. Even if the

government comes out with a farmers' scheme, you say "in one rupee we will teach you". With that one rupee the scheme will teach the farmers how to fill the form, how to do this, how to do that. That kind of course may not fetch your money but it may fetch you a brand, goodwill and also good grades in that, isn't it, because you are doing something social and of course the new paradigm which brings significant changes in talent management.

All the private universities and educational institutions want their teachers to be trained, but they are not ready to share the money with you, isn't it? You come out with a scheme, that you will give training to the entire new faculty who can be trained. If you come out with a Government regulation that any new teacher who is appointed in any college or a university shall do this particular course and only then they can pursue that career- that will fetch you money and it will help create quality teachers in the education system of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. So, if you create a plan, if you create a scheme, go to the government. Like in Maharashtra, the MKCL-Maharashtra Knowledge Corporation Limited, came up with a scheme. You know one government came out and said that anybody who wants to get a government job must do a compulsory computer literacy course of three months. We offered the course and you know, the enrolment went up to 2 million, 3 million. Similarly, in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh when the government appoints teachers, if you create a course on teaching- learning processes, and offer that course, it will be a grand success. Through it they will also learn meta skills, such as how to inspect their school management. So, you could create a business model. This should become the strategy for the entire university.

Of course, everybody knows about industry 4.0 but now we are moving towards industry 5.0. We are talking about Robots, Artificial Intelligence, IT, IIT and all those things, also digitization, automation and several other things.

Then this is what you should employ in a range of cases. If you establish linkages with organisations and can declare that job aspirants will be employed only if they know the latest technology-whatever the field, whether it is construction or anything you need to understand. Therefore, let us create a strategy for the university. Sit together for a while and think. But we have to be a bit fast. Some might independently invent, design and operate. But for the franchise model which I have talked about, and third, for the partnership you need to move towards-franchise model or partnership model. And it doesn't matter-you can have collaboration with anybody, as the government is doing, nobody stops you. You need to come out of that mind- set and we should have a tie-up.

The second most important point in my presentation which I would like to show to you is very important. I know, I tell you ISB, Hyderabad, says proudly that they are not affiliated to anybody, isn't it? And their fee goes to Rs.25 laths and it is difficult to get admission there. They do not have AICTE approval, but their programme is such that in one week someone comes from Harvard, in another week someone comes from Stanford, in the week after someone comes from Oxford; or someone comes for one week from Asoka. Like that, the teachers are from prestigious institutions and all the students get their jobs without a placement officer. No placement officers. People come to know that the curriculum delivery is happening here, no written examination, from 9' O'clock in the morning till 9'O clock in the night, all the 60 students are with a particular teacher, all of them are learning together. Only in the mark sheet it is written, that they have successfully completed the diploma. That is where education is moving. Can we move towards that? If we integrate skills and competency into each of our programmes then, we are going to achieve whatever I am saying.

Once a person from Mumbai met me. He had an 11 month-programme called digital marketing. What he did was, he trained the students in such a way that every student got a job, with a minimum package of Rs.6 laths per annum to a maximum of Rs.10 laths per annum. This has been happening for the last 6 years. He launched the 11 months' programme only because the Maharashtra Government doesn't allow anybody to launch a one- year programme, for one year or more, you should have permission or affiliation to university. so, he launched the 11- month programme. In this 11month- programme the fee is Rs.6 lakh and for 60 seats he received almost double or triple the number of applications. You can imagine, but the delivery system is very different. Because of the delivery, everything has changed today. Tomorrow, the students who complete the programme will bring in the kind of dynamic system which they have learnt and drafted. For that kind of dynamic system if you can bring in partnership there will be further innovation. We can't have a Board of Studies, Academic Council, and Management Council. Therefore, you need partnership and you need to move towards a very different model.

According to the new skills model, you must know that an Indian youth spends 6 hours on an average, browsing the Internet every day. But during the COVID, they started spending 12 hours on it. We need to understand that, all those age groups who are into technology are called the 'digital natives. In India, during the last six years, if one looks at the data price before 2016, it was 250 rupees per month for 1GB data. Today, we get 1GB per day. You need to capture this; you need to recognise the change, and you need to seek out the skills from this factor.

Then, if we compare the number of internet users, in 2016 it was 349 billion, and in 2022, it is 840 billion. India is the world's cheapest country in terms of internet data. So, understand this exciting fact and capture it. One can get a cheap Smartphone for

Rs.1250 today. And, all the technology can be incorporated into a smart phone. The COVID -19 situation had forced the transformation of business; similarly, we, who are in the education business should understand and adapt to the changed contexts.

Now India is Digital India. Most people including us can't sleep without reading on a Smartphone. This is what an opportunity is for a student irrespective of age and it is also the student potential and therefore the potential for the Open University. Now, you need to capture this. Our life goes on with these apps for food and beverages. When I was suffering from COVID, my mother-in-law, who is 96 was staying with me, and there was no third person in our house to do our household chores. The building doesn't allow servants to come in. How did we survive? We survived because of these apps! So this is the survival, with FinTech, Travel, Fashion, Entertainment, Banking, everything. I don't remember that I have gone to the bank in the last four years, I have not written a cheque for anybody but my entire banking is on my mobile. I didn't have a laptop during the entire two years of COVID. I was on my mobile and every day I was busy for almost six hours on my mobile, either addressing someone, conducting a meeting or attending some conference or something, all the time. This mobile device, we need to understand, has changed the whole world. Right or wrong, but this is what we have to help us survive. So business is digital in India. How do we move towards this reality? It is the skill we all need and all the programmes / courses which we need to offer should be through this. Our own teachers also need it. You can also give them training in the new technology use.

Like Amazon, which changed the entire world of business and earned well too, isn't it? Uber, and Ola, are all innovations. The same thing is going to happen here, in education and therefore, whether accounts or marketing, we need to learn a lesson from the market. Now, what are the digital skills? First, there is coding,

there are the coding languages, which people will have to learn. You can teach these coding languages online, those who are from Computer department can start them or you can hire a person from industry. And then there are career opportunities for developers, back- end developers, and front- end developers and there are courses in specialised languages. Then, the second is design, user-interface and user-experience in every course or a programme. You need to instruct learners in design and prepare them for related careers like designer, visual or product or creative designer. And then, the third is digital marketing. You must be teaching something similar in your MBA- website developer, social media marketing, and all those things. Virtual storytellers get a lot of money today. Data science specialists, business analysts and the like are other career opportunities.

To summarise, these four are the most important pillars of digital businesses. You are aware of Block chain Technology, Full-Stack development, Artificial Intelligence, Business Analysis, Digital Marketing, Sales, Scientific Computing and Video Production. These are the top skills needed. So, these are the digital skill competencies needed in 2022.

We need to change our approach to education. This is just one part which I have shown you. Similarly, in other fields also you will have to it. "It is not the big that ate the small". It is in the past- history. You know even not having these many employees, small businesses are earning more money by having only 10 people in their office, but their business is about Rs.100 core. We have so many people in all the universities and in spite of having so many people we are unable to make that big business. If your product is not good, consumers will move away from you. I am telling you we have so much opportunity, because we have a brand. I will be happy if Dr. B R Ambedkar Open University Hyderabad converts them into an education brand, like **Marriott** -that is a brand and

together, you too, can. I am sure you can do it, you are a pioneer, and I can help you. Of course, on the phone, I am doing it. I have done this in all the universities, I did in YCMOU. I called it a parallel system. I brought in people from outside and now there are so many innovative people there. So, with this, I must thank you for listening to me patiently and hearing me out. Thank you very much.

(Transcript of the Lecture delivered Dr.BRAOU, Hyderabad 4th July 2022)
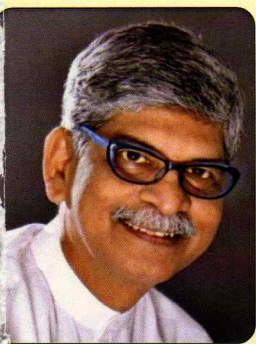
Professor Rajan M. Welukar
Brief Profile

Professor Rajan M. Welukar, is an eminent academician, former vice-chancellor of the University of Mumbai, Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University and G H Raisoni University.

Prof. Welukar has more than 36 years of experience in the Indian Higher Education System as a teacher, development leader, quality innovator, technology adopter, administrator and policy advisor.

Dr. Rajan Welukar has more than 35 years' experience with the Indian Higher Education System as a teacher, development leader, quality innovator, Technology adopter, administrator and policy advisor.

Institutions Prof. Welukar worked with include: Vice Chancellor, G H Raisoni University, Chindwara (1st Oct 2017 to 16th March 2019), Provost, Somaiya Group of Institutions, Mumbai (July 2015 to sept 2017), Vice-chancellor, University of Mumbai(July 2010 to July 2015), Vice-Chancellor, Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University(Sept 2004 to Sept 2009), I/C Vice-chancellor, SNDT Women's University (Feb 2011 to May 2011), Senior Programme Officer, Commonwealth Secretariat's CYP Asia Region(Oct 2003 to Aug 2004), Deputy Secretary to the Governor of Maharashtra(Mar 2002 to Oct 2003), Officer on special duty, Higher & Technical Education department, Government of Maharashtra (June 1996 to Feb 2001), i/c Director, Sydenham Institute of Management Studies, Research and Entrepreneurship Education(Sept 2009 to July 2010) and taught statistics to Undergraduate and Postgraduate classes in Institute of Science, Nagpur and Sydenham College of Commerce & Economics, Mumbai prior to 1996 from 1983). Vice Chancellor AURO University, Surat, Gujarat from 2nd March 2020 onwards.

Prof. Welukar worked on various important committees of National Knowledge Commission, University Grants Commission, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), Film and Television Institute of India, Central Govt., State Govt., Future Generation University, USA and various important educational institutions.

He Compiled and edited a book, *Gandhi@150* which explores the relevance of Mahatma Gandhi's ideas in today's world and the impact of his philosophy across a wide spectrum of areas such as religion, economics, science, education, the arts and health and development.

Dr. B.R. AMBEDKAR OPEN UNIVERSITY

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