

Private universities need to focus more on research: educationists

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New Delhi, December 27

Private universities need to focus more on research and offer niche courses to be a differentiator as well as to bring in quality, said experts.

"The focus area in the upcoming year should be to improve the quality of research. However, this comes with a challenge as these institutions cannot depend on fees for funding. The government always discriminates when it comes to providing grants to these academic institutions," said Mohandas Pai, Chairman, Manipal Global Education.

Furqan Qamar, Secretary General, Association of Indian Universities said that private universities have not been able to create much impact on the research front. These universities should mobilise resources and invest in research, he added.

He also said that there has been an increase in the number of private universities,

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which indicates potential for having more privately-run institutions of higher learning.

According to the All India Survey of Higher Education, the number of private universities in 2007-08 was 16, but the number has gone up to 262, a decade later.

With industry 4.0 ushering in new technologies, private universities are already focusing on these emerging technologies.

One of India's leading private universities, Amity University, said it will soon come up with an updated curriculum for every programme that it offers.

"The advantage that we have over government universities is that we can quickly update the curricula on offer as we do not have any bureaucratic structure to lord over us," said Sanjeev Bansal, Director, Amity Business School.

Road ahead

A section of educationists claim that the Ministry of Human Resource Development's decision to grant graded autonomy to higher educational institutes and to award best institutions with the Institute of Eminence tag are among some of the best decisions taken by the ministry.

"This will improve the way some of these institutions are run as they vie for such recognition", said Pai.

Private universities need to come up with a programme structure which is different from what other universities are offering, said Harivansh Chaturvedi, Director, Bimtech.