

# Government needs to keep a check on fake universities

## Before taking admission, students should check the authenticity of the university from the UGC website

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In an address to the Lok Sabha, Education Minister recently highlighted the 24 'self-styled' institutions that were declared fake by the University Grants Commission (UGC). Uttar Pradesh constituted the highest number of fake universities followed by Delhi. Around eight universities have been declared fake in Uttar Pradesh, seven in Delhi, four in West Bengal, two in Maharashtra and one in Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Puducherry.

Explaining what constitutes a fake university, Abhay Chebbi, pro-chancellor, Alliance University, Bengaluru, says, "Any entity that awards degrees without authorisation under the appropriate statutes is a fake university. In India, degrees can be awarded only by institutions authorised by the UGC. However, due to the difficulty in regulating higher education in a vast and diverse country, entities continue to award 'degrees' without the necessary authorisation. The degrees awarded by these universities are fake and not worth the paper on which they are printed."

The student who studies in the fake university, suffers gravely as the degree obtained by them is not acceptable for higher education in any other university or for job purposes, he adds.

Before taking admission in any university, students should check the authenticity of the university from the UGC website as well as from the website of the higher education department of the concerned state, says Rana Singh, vice chancellor, Sanskriti University. The students should only take admission in universities listed on the website of the UGC and should avoid enrolling in the fake universities which may spoil their future.

Questioning the recent list of fake universities, Chebbi, says, "The national regulator also needs to answer some questions. For example, the first name under the fake universities list from the largest state is an institution founded in 1791, with the largest number of affiliated colleges. Currently, it is a State University under a different name. The Governor is the chancellor."

Speaking on how so many fake universities were functioning in the country, RP Tiwari, vice-chancellor, Central University of Punjab, says, "The number of fake universities shows the increasing low morale and ethical values of people. This calls for an education system that inculcates values among the youth as proposed by the NEP. The government, media and UGC should proactively highlight such matters to put a curb on them. Such matters can be regulated only if they are highlighted and discussed extensively."

Highlighting on the measures that the government should take to keep a check on such universities, Chebbi says, "The national regulator needs to be more vigilant and must publish updated lists prominently every six months. To regulate such universities, the government should set up special courts to punish the promoters and key people. Detractors should be awarded severe punishment for setting up fake

universities. They must be imprisoned for life and the authorities should confiscate all properties of the promoters, key people, and their families.”

