

## Top institutions in Kolkata, Hyderabad, Pune and Chandigarh come together to form Meta university

Manash Pratim Gohain, TNN | Sep 26, 2013, 09.19 PM IST

NEW DELHI: Tried and tested in Delhi — [Delhi University](#) and Jamia Millia Islamia, the concept of [Meta University](#) is all set for a pan India replication. Apart from Jawaharlal Nehru University and Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, some of the top institutions regarded for academics and research in Chandigarh, Pune, Kolkata and Hyderabad are coming together to form porous clusters where resources will be shared with students as well as staff enjoying free access to the best facilities available. Some of the big names to join the meta-club are Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh, IIT, Ropar and Hyderabad, IIM-Calcutta, English and Foreign Languages University and Indian School of Business, Hyderabad, among others.

According to sources from the ministry for human resource development, Chandigarh, Pune, Kolkata and Hyderabad have been identified for creating Meta Universities because they are acknowledged as education hubs of the country with a large number of academic and research institutes.

For instance at Chandigarh, 15 institutions have come together under a common arrangement called 'Chandigarh Region Innovation and Knowledge Cluster' or CRIKC in line with the Meta Universities concept. The blueprint was finalized after a series of meeting with the participating institutions in May this year. And through this alliance these institutions have, to start with, started extending support and specific expertise for research activities.

"The work for the projects started more than a year ago. Panjab University is anchoring it. And the participating institutions of higher learning includes IIT Ropar, PGIMER, PEC University of Technology, IISER Mohali and NIPER, among others," said Dr Vineet Punia, director, public relations, Panjab University. CRIKC has already pressed two buses into service for easy mobility of students and staff across the city.

In fact CRIKC is an improved version of the DU-Jamia model, which is offering a postgraduate programme - Masters in Mathematics Education. Under CRIKC institutions have come together to "identify and carry out joint and collaborative research projects, attempt to initiate joint teaching/training programmes including pre-PhD courses, encourage the pooling of research facilities of the participating institutions, promote the spirit and philosophy of 'Meta-University' concept and promote and sustain excellence in research in select areas."

According to a senior MHRD official, while Chandigarh has already rolled out the project, the other three cities have started their deliberations to identify areas of focus for collaboration under a Meta University. The official said: "The UGC has already issued specific guidelines for such tie-up. Meanwhile, the ministry has decided not to put a timeframe for the project to take off as the universities have to decide this among themselves."

The ministry however is of the view that no financial assistance for such initiatives is required as the concept is about optimal use of the existing resources and for mutual benefits. While the Centre is envisaging a plan to start such Meta Universities across the country, as per UGC guidelines, the participating universities will decide the programmes to be offered, duration, fee structure, number of seats as well as the infrastructure required. Like in DU and Jamia's Meta University, learners will get a joint degree or diploma.

### Factfile

Meta Universities: "Second generation universities, free from physical boundary conditions and able to operate in virtual space, taking advantage of the innovation and flexibility possible in such domain"

### Participating institutions

\* Chandigarh: Panjab University, IIT Ropar, Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), PEC University of Technology, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) - Mohali, National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER) - Mohali

\* Pune: Pune University, IISER - Pune

\* Kolkata: University of Calcutta, Jadavpur University, IIM Calcutta

\* Hyderabad: IIT Hyderabad, University of Hyderabad, English and Foreign Languages University, ISB -Hyderabad

### Delhi experiment

\* HRD minister [Kapil Sibal](#) announced the pilot-run of Meta University concept to start with partnership between Delhi University, Jamia Millia Islamia, Jawaharlal Nehru University and IIT, Delhi in 2012

\* DU & Jamia launched a postgraduate course in mathematics education from 2012-13 academic session

\* JNU & IIT-D decided to take more time for the collaboration