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Education ministry, UGC have to streamline private univs

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THE note of caution that the University Grants Commission sounded for students against enrolment in private universities having illegal outer campuses and disputed ownership and running on court orders after being disapproved by the commission seems to be a welcome effort to save a large number of students the hassle and the money that could go waste. About a million students, after their higher secondary education, are preparing for admission and many could have attempt at admission to such private universities. Ninety-one private universities now in operation all have about 4,00,000 students and about fourth of them were enrolled in 2017. The commission notice says that the commission or the education ministry would not take the responsibility for any students enrolling in unapproved universities or illegal outer campuses of approved universities. But all this seems to be an effort of the commission and the ministry to wash their hands of the matter as they both are responsible for issuing licences to private universities. The commission earlier sounded warning against errant private universities and similar caution for students, yet nothing positive has taken place and the commission has to sound the same caution again.

The private universities that the commission sounded caution for students against fall in a few types: illegal outer campuses of approved universities, universities having disputed ownership, universities disapproved by the commission but running on court orders and universities running on court orders after being banned by the government. But why can the commission and the ministry not stop the running of outer campuses and why can the commission not resolve the ownership dispute in some private universities? Why can the government not stop private universities running illegally? The commission has largely failed to prove its worth in streamlining private university affairs, academic and administrative. It has only sounded warnings and caution all along without taking any action, which has emboldened private universities to flout rules and regulations. The continual leniency that the commission and the ministry have showed towards the adherence to law by private universities has led to the situation at hand. This calls out the commission and the education ministry on shoring up a few issues to streamline the private universities. But first of all, the ministry and the commission should move courts to settle the legal issues that remain without further delay. And then they both should attend to academic and administrative issues of private universities that have persisted for too long. It seems to be ridiculous that the errant private universities would continue with their functioning while the commission would ask students not to enrol on them. The education ministry, the government that is, must, under the circumstances, take expeditious steps to settle the prickly issues by moving courts, by being stringent and by making intervention. The government at the same time must arm up the University Grants Commission adequately so that it can make corrections in cases universities, private and public, go awry.



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