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Shantanu Rooj, Co-Founder & CEO, Schoolguru.in

1,50,000
Number of students using the app

4

Putting Tech Thought into Correspondence

Schoolguru by Shantanu Rooj has been doing wonders in retaining students across distance learning courses, learns **Rajeshwari Swamianthan**

Giving a new dimension to the concept of distance learning, Schoolguru is partnering with several government-run universities across the country and is emerging as the indisputable service provider to run ICT (information and communications technology)-based services for their students ranging from the hosting platform, the underlying ERP, admission and fee management, the streaming services, student engagement and communication and student servicing to the expertise to manage the platform.

“Several Open Distance Learning Universities still follow the traditional distance education program which are run in the pen and paper mode. But, now with the government regulation mandating all the universities to go online in the next 12 months, they are finding it increasingly difficult to remodel their courses. This is where Schoolguru steps in and partners with leading Universities across the world to provide a holistic online learning experience for students. We offer end to end services that cover all touch points that a student has with the University. The University can choose to opt for 360 degree services or a bouquet of services that they require to attract, enrol, educate and support students,” said, Shantanu Rooj, Co-Founder & CEO of Schoolguru.in.

Spreading across several govern-

ment universities including Tamil Nadu Open University, Dr B R Ambedkar Open University and Uttarakhnad Open University, the organisation has established its presence in 13 state and central universities in India. The programs are being conducted in nine different languages not only in online but also in mobile mode, he adds.

Student retention rate is a huge factor in assessing the credibility of an ODL course. This has been abysmally low in the country, with a drop out rate of about 65% to 70% in the government universities. However, Schoolguru was quick to bridge this problem by coming up with an innovative solu-

tion. “We introduced the mobile app in 2013, and transformed the learning platform from a computer to a mobile phone. A large part of the content is available offline on the app, thus facilitating students who come from interior, rural areas.

This way, the programmes have improved in terms of engagement level and learning output,” said the co-founder. Close to 1,50,000 students have benefited from the mobile app, which ensures rural penetration and a large chunk of students, who are bereft of broadband connections, can stay updated through the offline facility, he added.

The online service providers have a network of 2,000 faculty members from all over the world, who lecture on the platform during their free time. Speaking about the plethora of courses being offered, he says, “They



far sight



GOING THE DISTANCE
SG is working on a highly successful PPP model with its mobile platform reaching to students in urban and rural areas. They work only with government universities Schoolguru offers its services to State and Central universities

can either choose to deliver lectures from their home or step into our studio. A lot of unconventional courses, like *Bharathnatyam*, *Kathak* and *Tabla* are being opted by students in the online mode.”

Admitting that most of the syllabi for ODL courses had now become obsolete, Rooj said they could not do much to change the syllabus, instead, they started to offer supplementary and complementary skilled-based courses. Several programmes like the industrial programme, insurance management programme, Tally and C Certification are being offered. “So, if a person has taken up a vanilla course of BCom with MCom, we also offer an optional Tally course and C Certification, so that by the time the

person graduates, he/she would be employable.”

In SchoolGuru's partnership model, the University is free to choose from among the bouquet of services offered. “Based on the University's requirement, we can offer an overarching 360 degree solution or provide tailored solutions for each service. At SchoolGuru, each University relationship is headed by one of the Managing Directors who has a dedicated team, which works as an extension of the University and plays an integral role in safeguarding our partners' interests. Our team ensures the university's team receives personal attention in every service offered,” he says.

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