

Institutional Distinctiveness

Effective conduct of examinations is one of the most important and critical front end operations of any University as it deals with the students who are the most important stakeholder of the University. Convenience of stakeholders viz. students, teachers and University staff is one of the most important priority of RTMNU. The University has been facing many problems in conduct of examinations as the geographical area of University is widespread among four districts and a large number of examinations across disciplines are required to be conducted twice a year. The examination system has been facing many issues such as logistical concerns, security and confidentiality, environmental concerns, etc. As a one go solution to these problems, the R T M Nagpur University has introduced an 'Online Question Paper Delivery' which is henceforth referred as OQPD which is distinctive in nature with regard to the priorities or thrust areas of the University. The RTMNU is pioneer in starting this OQPD scheme in examination in the State of Maharashtra.

Online Question Paper Delivery

At RTMNU, in every semester around 6000 question papers are required to set, moderate, print & distribute over 170 examination centres by road transport. Out of these 170 exam centres, 32 centres are outside Nagpur, some of which are even at 170 km away from the distribution centre. Every semester, around 3.5 to 4.0 lakh students appear for 963 examinations. The management of this system requires work force of around 1200 personnel. Apart from this, following additional risk is involved in the manual delivery of Question Papers, namely: Transportation risk, mishandling of Question Paper bundles while opening them at centres, risk of Question Paper leakage, risk of malpractice, safety & security of Question Papers at examination centres, logistic cost for Question Paper printing to delivery, etc. In view of all these problems, at RTMNU, an Innovative and very distinctive step was very necessary. Therefore, the Online Question Paper Delivery (OQPD) system was introduced for the first time at RTMNU, among any other state University, in Maharashtra. The objective of the (OQPD) system is to take care of the all the problems stated above.

Implementation of OQPD system was although innovative but posed many challenges for its effective implementation. The major issue was to make available the reliable, safe and robust online delivery mechanism along with all the necessary IT facilities at respective exam centres. Initially, officers at examination centres were also reluctant due to lack of confidence in technological implementation of OQPD system. In spite of all challenges, RTMNU examination division was firm and confident enough to implement the same, because once the examination centres are well equipped with all the IT facilities including Internet, it was going to be one of the best & unique feature that could answer almost all the problems faced in manual Question Paper delivery.

Initially, in W-2015, a trial attempt has been made only for Engineering examinations. This was due to the fact that almost all Engineering colleges and concerned examination centres were having at least basic minimum IT facilities required for OQPD system. This attempt was a great success and moral boosting. Therefore, the University decided to implement the OQPD system for all examinations. Initially, for first two consecutive examinations, on precautionary grounds, printed question papers were also kept ready. However, after two successful cycles of OQPD, there was no need of printing the Question Papers at University level.

For the online distribution of Question Papers an examination centre requires the following infrastructure.

- i) Computer with a good web camera
- ii) Biometric system
- iii) High speed printing machine
- iv) Internet connectivity of minimum 1mbps connection

These provisions were mostly available with many of the examination centres and if not, the same were made available through university on urgent basis. The complete on spot and multiple training sessions were provided to all exam centres and personnel.

Now, for an examination from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon Question Papers are released online at 7:50 am. These Question Papers can be downloaded at respective exam centres by a secure biometric, face reading and a confidential unique password provided to specific responsible person of the exam centre. Once downloaded, the Question Papers are ready to print with the specific number with a water mark on each it so that the printed Question Paper can be identified, which centre has printed the same. In spite of all precautions, even if somebody tries to leak out the paper, the code number of exam centre is embedded in the background as watermark and hence it is always possible to locate the culprit and its accountability can be fixed.

After the successful implementation of OQPD system, the overall work force requirement has been reduced drastically from 1200 to 7 personnel. Apart from this, the following issues have been eliminated completely.

- i. Now there is no need of transportation of Question paper and hence complete cost and risk of transportation has been eliminated.
- ii. The risk of mishandling of Question Papers at examination centre has been eliminated completely since they are delivered on time.
- iii. There is almost no chance of leakage of Question Papers due to its on time release and specific coding.
- iv. The question of security and safety has also been resolved completely since there is no physical existence of Question Paper till the time of examination.
- v. All the logistic cost has been eliminated due to OQPD system.
- vi. In addition, the cost involved in the entire process of Question Paper delivery has been reduced to almost 40%.

Therefore, the OQPD system of RTM Nagpur University has thereby provided a safe, secure, cost effective, robust and unique mechanism of Online Question paper delivery. RTMNU is extending help to many other Universities and institutions for implementing this OQPD system, however, yet except RTMNU, nowhere, it is found successful.

In this manner, the OQPD has proven as a boon for the University through which it has established its institutional distinctiveness while safeguarding the interests and convenience of its top priority stakeholder i.e. students, teachers and university staff.