

## **COUNTRYWIDE CLASSROOM: ITS PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE**

**by**

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The present decade is witnessing chaotic and seemingly unplanned developments in the educational television scenario in India. Countrywide Classroom, that ran on the National Network of Doordarshan for almost 20 years, has been taken off the air. Instead, we have three channels dedicated to higher education – Gyan Darshan run by IGNOU, the technology channel Eklavya and Vyasa channel – the new avatar of Countrywide Classroom run by CEC. Programmes are being produced for these channels with public funds. Most of these programmes are presumably significant in terms of their content and production value. However, all the three channels have very poor visibility and so the programmes go, by and large, unwatched.

The entire exercise of production of educational television programmes seems to be a wasteful exercise. What is wrong? Why is there so low awareness and even less demand for these programmes? Is it because of their poor visibility? Or is poor visibility a result of poor quality of the programmes? Is educational television at all a worthwhile exercise to pursue or should the funds be diverted to more useful activities? Can a viable model be evolved to optimise the existing infrastructure of educational television?

The research charts the development of 'Countrywide Classroom' over the past twenty years and suggests viable models for some of its future activities.