We Need Quality Assurance in Higher Education
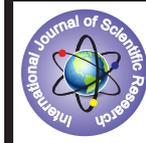
Education

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ABSTRACT

Indian higher education system has been undergone a rapid change both quantitatively and qualitatively during the last two decades because of Liberalization, Privatisation and Globalisation (LPG). Today, the role of higher education becomes most critical due to the media's emergence into the global knowledge economy. It is now considered as the most powerful weapon to build up knowledge based competitive society in correspondence with the changing global knowledge society. We have the main challenge of meeting the demand of expansion and at the same time improving quality. We shall have to look for improving quality from within the system. Against this background , a modest attempt has been made in this paper to outline the need of quality assurance in higher education.

Glorious Past

India is a country which has had great and rich traditions in the field of higher education. The great universities like Takshshila, Nalanda and Avantika established themselves in the world as great centers for learning, teaching and research. Experts and researchers of all fields imparted knowledge to thousands of students in these universities. It will not be an overstatement to declare that India gave to the world the concept of universities. From zero to infinity, India has contributed to the knowledge of the world innumerable discoveries. University refers to a hub of knowledge, which keeps track of all major research that is being done in the field of higher education at fundamental, practical and academic levels. It also disseminates this knowledge in society. In fact, the four kinds of expectations from the institutions of higher education are:

- The institutions of higher learning should act as a store-houses of knowledges.
- They should expand knowledge.
- They should disseminate knowledge.
- They should contribute in transforming society.

Today, Indian higher education is the World's third Largest System just after US and China. There has been an exponential increase in the system mainly in three dimensions, namely the number of

- Educational institutions,
- Teachers and
- Students.

From 30 at the time of independence the number of universities had increased to 635. Similarly, the number of colleges has increased from 700 to 33,000; that of teachers from 2410 to 817000 and of students from 34700 to about 170000 which evidently suggests that India has made efforts and progress in the field of education in a planned manner. However, there are four things that are important in this regard:

- Quality
- Resional Differences
- Uniformity of the syllabi
- Differences in the ratio of Admitted Candidates

These days every segment of society expresses its concern at the dismal standards of efficiency and quality at the level of higher education.

Lacuna in Indian Education System

India is the land of ideas; but ideas alone are of no use unless they are practiced in reality. The major lacuna found in our Indian education system and not in western countries is:

- Students learn for marks or degrees and not for shake of learning

- Non flexibility & curriculum
- Gender discrimination
- Less importance reading
- Lack of execution of innovative projects
- Poor rapport between teachers and learners
- Lack of everyday assignments and
- Absence of practical affiliation of curriculum.

Need to have Wider View

Whenever higher education is discussed, it is believed that it is independent of all other segments of education. However, this is not true, The quality of higher education is directly dependent on secondary education and that of secondary education on primary education. Hence, Primary Education is an important milestone in the incessantly flouring stream of education .It is important, therefore, to view this in totality.

Quality of Education-Need of the Hour

Having accepted that quality of education is the need of the hour and every stakeholder need quality. We need to answer the question "What are the key factors influencing quality in the education system?" How can academic excellence be achieved?

Quality of education depends an several factors. A few of them include

- Teachers – their background, qualification, motivation etc.
- Conductive environment of teaching.
- Conductive environment of learning
- Infrastructure
- Student-background, motivation etc.
- Academic structure and curriculum.
- Quality improvement programmes for teachers
- Effective feedback and monitoring system
- System, Policies and procedures related to academics
- Conduct of classes
- Conduct of Seminars at national and international level
- Method of evaluation

Conclusion

Quality of Indian higher education in a matter of concern in all the reports of Indian Education Commissions and policies. In this millennium, the world will witness a borderless   society. Global competition and cultural transformation will become the order of that day. Free flow of information will open up new vistas in the field of conventional and professional education .To maintain the competitive edge in the field of higher education, it will become necessary for India to ensure quality assurance, productivity improvement and technology development, aimed at improving the quality of life of the people.

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