

## Quality Deficits in Indian Higher Education



### Education

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**Dr. Saima Siddiqi**

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### ABSTRACT

*Higher education system is essential for national, social, and economic development of the country. Quality assurance is of great importance to the institution. Quality of institution depends on its faculty, pedagogy, curriculum design, strategic planning, examination system, resources and policies. In this era of extensive competition quality education is a major concern (Koslowski, 2006). In the wake of the transition from elitist to mass education universities worldwide are under pressure to enhance access and equity, on the one hand and to maintain high standards of quality and excellence on the other. This paper highlights the quality deficits and the need of quality improvement in Higher Education system in India*

### Introduction:

Education of society is the most effective tool in transforming a country's economy, improves quality of life, and sustainable for long time. India is today one of the fastest developing countries of the world, with the annual growth rate going above 9%. In order to attain that rate of growth there is need to increase the number of institutes and also the quality of higher education in India. The higher education system remains primarily the responsibility of the state governments, although the central government has taken the initiative in establishing and funding a few central universities and other institutions of national repute. There has been phenomenal growth of higher education in India since independence. There were only 20 universities and 500 colleges at the time of independence. There are currently 634 universities or university level institutions and about 35,539 affiliated colleges including around 2,565 Women colleges. The vast majority of colleges are privately run but affiliated to state universities.

### Distribution of Degree Awarding Universities/University Level Institutions (2011-12)

Type of Institution	Number of Institutions
State Universities	306
Deemed Universities	130
State Private Universities	145
Institutes of National Importance and other University Level Institutions	60
Central Universities	44
Institutions established under state legislative Acts	5
Total	690
Affiliated Colleges	35,539
Grand Total	36,229

**Source:** Economic Survey of India, Ministry of Finance, New Delhi.

The 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan says "there must be a strategic shift from mere expansion to improvements in quality higher education. For this the focus should not only be on larger enrolment, but also on the quality of the expansion.

### Concept of Quality

The word quality comes from the Latin word quails meaning 'what kind of'.

The British Standard Institute (BSI) defines quality as "the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy or implied needs" (BSI, 1991). Green and Harvey (1993) identified five different approaches to defining quality exceptional, perfection, fitness for purpose, value for money and transformative.

John Dewey in his article "Quality Issues in Higher Education" frames the quality concept in higher education in five different ways: Quality as endurance, Quality as luxury and prestige, Quality as conformance to requirements, Quality as continuous improvement, and Quality as value added (John Dewey, 2009).

Van Kemenade suggests "A new definition of quality is needed to explain recent quality issues in higher education" (Kemenade et al. 2008). He describes "a quality concept with four constituents: object, standard, subject and values." and tries to fit the quality in higher education into these four factors.

### Quality Deficits

The World Bank study has identified the following issues related to the higher education in India:

- Over-centralization and lack of autonomy and accountability
- Resource constraints and wastage
- Poor quality and relevance in many institutions
- Difficulties in retention of Science and Technology personnel in education
- Poor technology and infrastructure support
- Limited access and regional disparity.

It is fair to say that not a single Indian university is among the top 200 in the major rankings of the global universities of the world. There is a need for transformation of the regulatory environment for seeking fundamental reforms in the higher education sector. The following issues need to be carefully considered while examining the nature of regulatory reform that is needed in the higher education space.

**1. Demand-Supply Gap:** According to the recent report of HRD ministry presently about 12.4 percent of students go for higher education from the country. If India were to increase that figure of 12.4% to 30%, then it would need another 800 to one thousand universities and over 40,000 colleges in the next 10 years.

**2. Poor quality of graduates:** Students lack skills for employability 10% of graduates and 25% of engineering graduates are directly employable (Infosys, and IT giant, last year sorted through 1.3 million applicants only to find that around two percent were qualified for jobs.) It is also found that quality of education delivered in most institutions is very poor. While India has some institutions of global repute delivering quality education, such as (Indian Institute of Management) IIMs and (Indian Institute of Technology) IITs. It is also fact that Education is become a seller's market and everybody wants to get more profit rather than the quality education.

**3. The low quality of teaching and learning:** The system is beset by issues of quality in many of its institutions: a chronic shortage of faculty, poor quality teaching, outdated and rigid curricula and pedagogy, lack of accountability and separation of

research and teaching.

**4. Constraints on research capacity and innovation:** With a very low level of PhD enrolment, India does not have enough high quality researchers; there are few opportunities for interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary working, lack of early stage research experience; a weak ecosystem for innovation, and low levels of industry engagement.

5. Overall amount of money available for education is insufficient to provide universal quality education and many funds which are available are misallocated or siphoned off before they reach their intended purpose.

6. Technical education also suffers from distortion of quality. Due to mushrooming numbers of technical education, there has been deterioration of quality and this has resulted into structural imbalance in skill requirement and deterioration of skill. For example, currently in engineering colleges Management courses (MBA) number of seats is more than the demand. As a result, students with low scores have easy entry to these courses. This has led to the growth of poor quality engineers and MBAs with poor employability skill.

7. There is lack of linkage between academic circles and industry and the educational institutes are not capable to develop the practical skill related to business and commerce and is the serious problems which hampering the performance of industry and business education in country our education has no direct connection to the practical life and the students face a lot of problem in the social life. The employers are not fully satisfied to the quality of university graduates in term of their professional, personal, social and intellectual skills because the population of the universities graduates increasing day by day and students perceive their degree as a source of employment this situation empowering the employer so his expectation and demand for quality of education increased.

8. The other destructive element for the quality of education is corruption. Hallak and Poisson (2012) argued that corruption occurs at all level and intake a number of stakeholders including faculty, students, examination body and other officials and employees. Corruption is the major contributing factor of educational failure this is due to the absence of accountability and the record under which an institute is operating may not actually exist they further disclose that due to the low pay employees get the support of certain unethical way of earning like bribery, illegal promotion, illegal foreign tours, heavy salaries, unnecessary utility bills and dictatorship. Corruption, scandal and seedy affairs are also taking place in this holy profession inside the faculty and administration.

9. There is no provision for appraising the quality of teaching or the performance of the teachers themselves, which means that there is no incentive for the teacher or faculty to perform well. Sometimes academic appointments are made on the basis of caste, political patronage or other corrupt considerations, without regard to either academic accomplishment or excellence.

10. Indian higher education is facing the problem of brain drain. There are quality education institutes such as IITs, IIMs, AIIMS, etc. in India. However, the number of pass-outs from these institutes is either too few in numbers, or decides to go abroad for higher studies, or even take up work there.

11. Government regulation in higher education hinders supply of quality education. It is all-pervading, whether in terms of determining fees to be charged, or foreign collaboration. When it requires around Rs. 6 lakh per year to produce an engineer, and anything between Rs. 10-12 lakh per year to produce a doctor,

asking a private institute to charge state-determined fees is unreasonable. In this fashion, the privately funded universities cannot survive, leaving aside, hiring quality teachers.

#### **Recommendations:**

The task of achieving excellence in higher education demands academic reforms to provide greater flexibility and choice of the students and strengthening of research activity in universities and by establishing mutually reinforcing linkages between teaching and research. Use of modern tools and technology to achieve higher standards and better quality.

Ensure appropriate curriculum and pedagogy, sufficient materials, quality formative assessment tools, sufficient quality teachers and sufficient time in class.

Quality assurance must be context sensitive and thus individualized. While developing quality assurance processes Higher Education Institutions and Quality Assurance agencies need to take into account disciplinary characteristics, various organizational cultures, the historical position of the institution as well as the national context.

The strategic planning as important in quality improvement" (Deming 1982). A review of the quality model or framework (Baldrige, 2006; EFQM, 2006) revealed that strategic planning is critical in quality management practices. In any implementation, the measurement of degree of success is absolute necessity to identify the area of improvements. Measurement and then evaluation are nearly impossible without clearly defining performance measures, even though it is difficult to identify the ones universally accepted for all HEIs (Bayraktar et.al. 2008).

Bilateral Exchange Programs in the field of Higher Education between India and various other foreign countries.

Sharing experiences in quality assurance for the future development of quality assurance, dialogues at various levels: within institution between departments, within a country between institutions should be encouraged.

The government will do better by putting a grievance redresser mechanism in place, where the universities can be tried, or their license cancelled in the event of false promises. In the event of healthy competition, bogus education institutes won't be able to survive. So, let the students decide. Hopefully, this will add to supply of quality education institutes, human capital, and help to sustain India's growth.

#### **Conclusion:**

Although the modern education system in India is based on the Anglo-American tradition, there is a great variety of institutional systems in higher education. Government plays a dominant role not only in providing funds for education but also in the administration and control of these institutions. It is not uncommon that institutions may be facing dictums from various entities that are at times confusing and contradictory. Any foreign organization trying to build a relationship with these institutions must not be daunted by such ambiguities and must work with them patiently.

It may be summed up that the quality of higher education is a function of infrastructure, availability and recruitment of good teachers, motivation of students, employability of the programme and freedom for innovations. The teachers should also undergo orientations as well as the content improvement through training from time to time. There is explosion of information in the modern times. It is, therefore, very important to convert this information into knowledge and here the teachers in the universities and colleges have to play a very crucial role.

## REFERENCE

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