



## Road Map To Improve Quality of Higher Education in India

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### ABSTRACT

*This article traces the evolution of the quality regime to the present day, which appears to signify that the contemporary arrangements are inadequate for an emerging interest in moving beyond quality assurance to quality enhancement in sphere of Higher Education in India. The focus of the article is to provide some of the best practices which are needed to be implemented immediately to improve the quality of higher education. The article interprets the shifting quality agenda as a conflict of values about the relationship between Government, the wider society and higher education. As interest in creating quality regimes for teaching and learning spreads to other systems of higher education, the question arises as to what, if anything can be learnt from the experiences of other developed nations of the world?*

**Keywords : Higher Education, Quality Enhancement**

### Introduction

Higher education may mean different things to different people. It is certainly not higher level of education. In its simple connotation, it may be defined as process of imparting in depth knowledge to students which will make them contributing member of our society. It is about knowing more and more about less and less. It goes without saying higher education enables students to seek truth and makes him competent to critique on contemporary issues. Higher education is generally understood to cover teaching, research and extension. The paramount success of any economy is largely attributed to system of higher education as this system supplies intellectual human resource to meet the requirements of industries. Development of indigenous technology, advancement in agricultural activities and effectiveness of service sector is also dependent on higher education unquestionably. It goes without saying higher education moulds the youth who could foster overall growth of the economy.

### Conceptual Backdrop

Undoubtedly, Ancient records of the Indian tradition testify to the search of the Rishis and sages for higher knowledge (para vidya), and their discoveries have been continuously transmitted to posterity and kept alive through its long history, marked by periods of expansion, specialization, decline and renewal. This theme of higher knowledge informs and inspires even the latest developments in the Indian educational system. It has been a significant component of the country's struggle for freedom, attainment of independence and an awakening from the slumber in which people were cast during the British rule. The need of an hour is to make the system of higher education qualitative. The concept of higher education is based on four parameters.

1. Higher Education as the production of qualified human resource
2. Higher Education as a training for research career
3. Higher Education as the efficient management of teaching provision

4. Higher Education as a matter of extending life chances

It is worth noting over here that all these four parameters are not exclusive, though they are very much in synchronization and give a complete picture of higher education.

### Road Map to Improve Quality Of Higher Education

Here are some of the practices which will help to introduce and maintain quality in higher education.

1. Public Private Partnership

There is strong need to invite private players in the sphere of higher education. Central and state government alone cannot bring desired change due to bureaucracy and red tape. It is understood that the prime objective of private players is to mint money in form of profit. At the same time allowing private players to come forward in the field of higher education will bring healthy competition which in turn improves the overall quality of the education system. State can held major decisiveness with itself. Speaking in the context of Gujarat, we are fortunate to have initiations of such concepts/activities of late.

2. Promotion of Research

Another area which requires immediate attention is to boost research activities. It is evident that barring few organizations of repute, we have dismal portrait of research activities in our educational institutes. In the age of globalization, research is the only panacea which keeps our educational system afloat. Class room teaching is indeed of prime importance to improve conceptual knowledge of students; it should be backed by research based learning. Surprisingly Government is ready to spend lofty amount funds to foster research for the improving the quality of higher education, there are few takers let alone most the institutions are unaware of such assistance.

3. Periodic Training For Faculty Members

Faculty members are the real facilitators who share their knowledge with the students. They should be trained regularly to keep updated knowledge. Faculty members should be encouraged to attend seminars, conferences, workshops which will provide platform to them to interact with the other academic fraternity.

#### 4. Foreign Collaboration

In the era of globalization, domestic competition has been put on back burner. There is growing need to get various institutions to tied up with foreign universities. Students and faculty exchange programs have been successfully accepted by many institutions which will give them a way to be benchmarking institutions in the time to come. One of the benefits of inviting foreign universities is that it will save millions of dollars of Indian students, as they will be able to study in foreign universities while staying in India. More than 250,000 students from India are studying in various universities outside India. If foreign universities start operating in India, it will give students a choice and also expand their higher education offerings in India. There is a huge gap in the demand and supply in higher education sector and foreign universities will reduce some gap. It is expected that, some of the foreign universities will also improve the culture of research in India. Some of the best universities in the world are waiting to set up their base in India. Students in India will get a better choice and competitive pressures will also improve the quality of the present education providers in India.

#### 5. Pooling Financial Resources From Industries

Industries and individuals may be encouraged to channel a percentage of their profits to the higher education sector, with no strings attached to such contributions. Viable incentives may be offered for attracting such investments from the private resources. This could be one of the quintessential examples of discharging their responsibility towards society.

#### 6. Mandatory Accreditation

Accreditation for maintenance of quality should be made compulsory to eradicate poor quality of higher education. Strong quality control measures to assure performance above an acceptable benchmark is essential for the institutions. We are at the moment weak in this regard. The various rating agencies shall evolve scientific, transparent and consistent benchmarking techniques for this purpose. A regulatory system to ensure compliance to the set benchmarking is needed with sufficient powers to close down non-complying institutions is a need of the hour. The Higher Education Policy needs to incorporate such features in it in the interest of the nation.

#### 7. Dual Specialization/Degree/Diploma

Twin Programs or Dual Specialization will provide the opportunity for the students to enhance knowledge on two areas simultaneously. The idea of allowing students to do Diploma or Certificate courses side by side with their Degrees and Choice Base Credit System recently put forward by the UGC is a welcome step towards empowering the students to take-up work soon after their Degree courses. This is an area where private initiatives can come up to augment the activities of the Colleges. The Colleges can develop in-house faculty and other facilities for this purpose and make these facilities available at a reasonable cost. Such a measure will turn around many Colleges from the non-performing class to the performing class.

#### 8. Promotion of Private Universities

Introduction of Private Universities will bring competitive spirit among the educational institutions. Private Universities are a reality now and, as such, strong regulatory mechanisms are to be put in place immediately to monitor and control their activities with the objective of ensuring quality and social accountability. Those who venture investment in this area shall be properly scrutinized. Those with commercial interests dominating over the interests and ethics of higher education shall be eliminated.

#### 9. Perfect Blend Of Professionalism And Technology

It is important to realize that we live in a fast changing world, dictated by the developments in technology. Quick access to information has made knowledge creation fast, and the multiplier effect has made it even explosive. It is increasingly difficult to anticipate changes and respond to them with creative purpose. Designing courses with relevance to the future and developing the necessary manpower to deliver them is a challenging task. All this calls for a team of professionals in different areas to come together to develop proactive strategies for higher education to meet the future demands. A Strategy Planning Body and an Institution to design and develop futuristic courses for transferring them to the Universities and Colleges may be created.

#### 10. Reforming Teaching Pedagogy

In its common parlance, teaching pedagogy may be termed as methods of teaching. There should be perfect blending of various methods to impart education to the students. This certainly has greater impact to learn, understand and absorb the fundamental concepts. Following are some of the model techniques which could be used to suit the requirements of different academic institutes of higher education.

- Integrating Online Multimedia
- Just-in-Time Teaching
- Engage Students through Assignments
- Engage Students in Abstract Concepts
- Think-Aloud to Teach Problem Solving
- Engage Students through Play
- Engage Students through Productions
- Engage Students with Simulation
- Sustained Peer Response for Active Engagement
- Multiple Delivery Methods of Course Content Pause and Respond, Small Group Activity

#### Conclusion

The overall scenario of higher education in India does not match with the global Quality standards. Hence, there is enough justification for an increased assessment of the Quality of the country's educational institutions. Traditionally, these institutions assumed that Quality could be determined by their internal resources, viz., faculty with an impressive set of degrees and experience detailed at the end of the institute's admission brochure, number of books and journals in the library, an ultra-modern campus, and size of the endowment, etc., or by its definable and assessable outputs, viz., efficient use of resources, producing uniquely educated, highly satisfied and employable graduates. This view of determining Quality in higher education, popularly termed as the "value-addition" approach, does not measure the competencies students develop through the courses offered. The competencies are recall, understanding, and problem solving. "Recall" amounts to a competency of gaining knowledge by way of reading, viewing, listening, assimilating, and demonstrating it when required. "Understanding" is comprehension, which requires explanations and vocabulary development, and demonstrating it by giving ideas, predict, and evaluate cause and effect. The competency of "problem solving" can be developed by solving text-book type of problems and the expertise so developed can be used in handling real-life situations. The students should understand and accept these concepts, and the level of competency they are expected to attain should also be defined in consultation with them.

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