

Indian Higher Education – Opportunities, Shortcomings – A Roadmap to Reach

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Abstract: Although there have been challenges to higher education in the past, these most recent calls for reform may provoke a fundamental change in higher education. This change may not occur as a direct response to calls for greater transparency and accountability, but rather because of the opportunity to reflect on the purpose of higher education, the role of colleges and universities in the new millennium, and emerging scientific research on how people learn. These disparate literatures have not been tied together in a way that would examine the impact of fundamental change from the policy level to the institutional level and to the everyday lives of college and university administrators, faculty and students. Now the time has come to create a second wave of institution building and of excellence in the fields of education, research and capability building. We need higher educated people who are skilled and who can drive our economy forward. When India can provide skilled people to the outside world then we can transfer our country from a developing nation to a developed nation very easily and quickly. The authors attempted to introduce the concepts of Higher Education in India. This paper contains the core of ideas towards reform initiatives in higher education.

Keywords: Transparency, accountability, Higher education.

Introduction: India's higher education system is the world's third largest in terms of students, next to China and the United States. Unlike China, however, India has the advantage of English being the primary language of higher education and research. India educates approximately 11 per cent of its youth in higher education as compared to 20 per cent in China. The main governing body at the tertiary level is the University Grants Commission (India), which enforces its standards, advises the government, and helps coordinate between the centre and the state. Universities and its constituent colleges are the main institutes of higher education in India. At present in 2011, there are 227 government-recognized Universities in India. Out of them 20 are central universities, 109 are deemed universities and 11 are Open Universities and rest are state universities. Most of these universities in India have affiliating colleges where undergraduate courses are being taught. However Jawaharlal University is a remarkable exception to this rule. According to the Department of higher Education government of India, 16,885 colleges, including 1800 exclusive women's colleges functioning under these universities and institutions and there are 4.57 lakh teachers' and 99.54 lakh students in various higher education institutes in India. Apart from these higher education institutes there are several private institutes in India that offer various professional courses in India. Distance learning is also a feature of the Indian higher education system. Some institutions of India, such as the Indian Institutes of technology (IITs), have been globally acclaimed for their standard of education. The IITs enroll about 8000 students annually and the alumni have contributed to both the growth of the private sector and the public sectors of India.

Objectives:

Developing good governance systems in higher educational institutions

- Role of the Governments as a facilitator rather than a regulator in developing higher education
- Leveraging technology in improving course delivery
- Addressing the paucity of good faculty resources
- Enhancing industry participation in academic institutions
- Deterioration in the 'employability' of graduates
- Creating awareness among HEIs the benefits of globalization of higher education and international accreditation for assurance of quality

The State of Higher Education in India:

Positive Trends: There is no doubt that considerable progress has been made in the provision of higher education in India since 1950-51 when it had only 27 universities or deemed universities. As things stand today this number has risen to 400, and vast improvements have also been made in generating gender equality in access to higher education. At the time of independence hardly 10 percent of the students enrolled in higher educational institutions were women. By the turn of the century, this figure had jumped to 40 percent.

Technology in improving course delivery: The design and delivery of a graduate-level course in management at two universities via advanced information technology, which was used to enable collaborative learning, teaching with transcontinental student teams and multiple instructors, and integration of external expertise. This partnership enriched student learning and expedited faculty and institutional development. We predict that such transformations will increase as schools of management and institutions of higher learning in general seek to add educational value at low cost.

Addressing the paucity of good faculty resources: Faculty orientation programs and to identify practice and research implications. Computerized searches in Medline, Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature, and Educational Resources Information Center, and references cited in articles, were the data sources reviewed. Keywords used in the search were *faculty orientation, faculty development, faculty development programs, faculty mentoring, new faculty needs, nursing, teaching, and mentoring*. All relevant articles published after 1980 were evaluated. Nineteen reports of research from indexed journals in English relevant to the keywords were reviewed: 14 were quantitative reports, and 5 were qualitative. Characteristics consistently present in the literature were that an orientation program takes place over a prolonged period of time, is incorporated into faculty development plans, creates or fosters an inviting environment, includes information about the tripartite role of the academician, and identifies a specific institutional resource person such as a mentor. Most research to date has been descriptive, consistent with the third level of quality of evidence. Faculty for whom orientation programs are offered might immerse themselves more effectively in their new environments. Mentoring relationships can ease faculty transitions.

Enhancing industry participation in academic institutions: Institutional academic-industry relationships have the potential of creating institutional conflicts of interest. To date there are no empirical data to support the establishment and evaluation of institutional policies and practices related to managing these relationships.

Deterioration in the 'employability' of Graduates: Investigation of universities' efforts to enhance graduate employability and the extent to which they are successful. Suggests more important to getting a job in short term than to longer-term employment success.

Creating awareness among HEIs the benefits of globalization of higher education and international accreditation for assurance of quality:

The main national external quality assurance frameworks for higher education. It has been suggested, from a European survey, that there are common features in national quality assurance. These comparisons show that a 'general model' of external quality assurance does not universally apply, but that most elements of it do apply in most countries. We conclude that the 'general model' provides a starting point from which to map deviations. In each country, there may be specific additions of elements or omissions from the model, but more usually there are modifications or extensions of elements. These variations are determined by practicalities, the size of the higher education sector, the rigidity/flexibility of the legal expression of quality assurance (or the absence of enshrinement in law), and the stage of development from state control of the sector. Some additions to the 'general model' are suggested.

Educational Innovation and Technology are an exciting opportunity to explore a promising mix the synergies that can result from combining innovation, the utilization of technology in education and the role of education entrepreneurs in creating new designs that can transform the ecosystem. It is in the interplay of these three factors that I see the greatest potential. Not all education entrepreneurs using technology generate innovation, and most of their designs have failed to transform the sector and not all innovators using technology have produced designs that can be scaled or with the ambition and potential to change the conversation or the sector. As a result, educational enterprise is a fragmented territory, of modest scale, yet to transform the education ecosystem.

In order for these three elements innovation, technology and entrepreneurship to produce the synergies necessary to substantially transform education, we will need to build a collaborative architecture that allows for the fruitful integration of careful study, design and invention, and action at scale. Such collaboration of industry, academy and the public schools is exceptional, not the conventional way of business for universities, governments or businesses.

The road to progress: In recent years, India has undertaken massive structural and systemic changes that have started to yield encouraging results. The country has been touted to have the best-in-class post-secondary education system at present. Some of the significant factors that have contributed to this growth and can help envision the 2030 dream includes:

- Expansion of a differentiated university system with a three-tiered formalized structure
- Transition to a learner-cantered paradigm of education
- Intensive use of technology
- Reforms in governance

Conclusion: There are several other challenges that we face in higher education in India today. As the world progresses, people face more complex social, cultural, economic problems and political crises which often affect their personal and social development. Education plays a vital role in solving these problems and resolving the imminent crises. With all its limitations, education remains to be the cardinal input in the process of human development. Higher education is the

driving force behind economic development and the focal point of learning in a society. It is both a repository and a generator of knowledge and is the chief agent of passing on the accumulated experience, both cultural and scientific to society. The emerging world view suggests that in the days to come, the role of knowledge capital in the process of development will predominate the physical capital and this clearly indicates that the importance and relevance of higher education are going to grow further. In order to materialize these visions, education in general and higher education in particular has to be more professional than it is now. This professionalism can be achieved by managing our educational institutions scientifically i.e., on the lines of Educational Management.

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