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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

ENHANCEMENT OF QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract:

Since 1991 Indian economy started process of liberalization and is marching towards globalization. Today, private foreign players are knocking doors for entry in the Indian education field. This is a threat to Indian education system.
Surely there will be competition and the higher education system will survive if it assures quality education.
Even though we are making efforts to provide quality education through 2(f), 12(b), NAAC and AICTE measures, yet, Indian higher education system has problems and quality in most of the institutions has deteriorated.

KEYWORDS:

Economy, Higher Education, Education System, Quality Education.

INTRODUCTION :

Hence there is sever need to assure the quality. Along with 2(f), 12(b) NAAC and AICTE's measures, institutional efforts will definitely lead to ensuring quality in education. A well thought-out plan, participation of all those related persons or organizations, officials, and constant honest efforts to change the present situation will definitely give fruitful results in years to come to improve quality

The liberalization of Indian Economy, a process that began in 1991, is certainly a major factor behind the large and growing number of Indian students seeking education abroad.
The Indian student numbers in the U.S. for 2008/9 in detail are: 15,600 undergraduates, 71,019 graduates (including masters and PhD programs), 1,755 non-degree, and 14,886 internship participants. The number of students studying in USA has gone up 94,563 to 103,260 in year 2010-11.
The impact of British higher education is felt in the basic structure of Indian Higher Education – the system of examination, structure of post secondary education, scheme of universities and affiliating colleges. We got the affiliation system 150 years ago on the lines of the then London University Act. The reason at that time was to avoid the danger of 'Independent' thinking and hence introduced centralized controllable umbrella structure. However, even after independence we continued to adopt the affiliating system, as the nation was in a hurry to spread the net of higher education in big way so as to make education to even those who never had such an opportunity. Now attempts have been made by establishing residential type of central Universities and deemed Universities as well as automats colleges and private universities. Hence the system has become very complex.

The education has witnessed a quantum jump of unforeseen proportions..
Situations during 2010
Table 1

Sr. No.	Item	Number
1	Central Universities	42
2	State Universities	256
3	Private Universities	60
4	Deemed Universities	130
5	Institution of National Importance	44
6	Colleges	31324
7	Students	1300000
8	Faculty	600000

Source: University News Jan-2002-2008, 2012 Pg 11

The complexity and explosion of numbers created deterioration of quality all over. Mass based higher education has overwhelmed large parts of this system, resource constraints are severe and the quality of education available to most Indian students has deteriorated in recent years, The situation is further complicated by the rigidities of centralized higher education bureaucracy, the political pressures of higher education institutions from regional religious and caste-based groups and the growing problem of corruption in various aspects of University life. Now with entry of foreign Universities there will be competition and our system will find it difficult if quality assurance efforts have not been implemented. Hence the investigators have selected Quality Assurance in Higher Education as the topic for study.

The objectives of the study are:

1. To study the quality in higher education.
2. To identify where we stand now in respect of quality and study the problems in the present system.
3. To study what efforts have been taken to measure or control the quality.
4. To identify efforts necessary to ensure quality and
5. To make conclusions.

What is Quality?

UGC Chairman Mr. Sukhadev Thaort ,in one of his speech had said that there is limited literature on the estimate of quality of our university and college system – Though there is no internationally recognized definition of academic standards and quality in higher education but for its purpose various countries have their own quality assurance agencies.

Ensuring Quality

As far as the quality is concerned the UGC has laid down indicators under provision of 2 (f) and 12(b). These provisions assess the minimum quality requirement to provide the grants to colleges and universities. The college is recognized under 2 (f) if it is registered body with a temporary affiliation and carrying under graduate program. The recognition under 12 (b) is granted, provided the college has permanent affiliation with university, after satisfying the required minimum conditions.
Besides, the UGC has set up National Assessment and Accreditation Council to assess the quality of higher educational institutions.
But about 60% of colleges in the country are not assessed even with minimum criteria of 2 (f) and 12(b). And about 82% of colleges have not been accreditated by NAAC. According to UGC chairman Mr.Sukhdev Thorat even half of the universities are not assessed by NAAC.
So it seems that quality of higher education has substantially remained un assessed or unmeasured.
The poor quality education has created number of problems. According to Jerome S. Arcaro student problems are violence, drug and alcohol, abuses, racial, animosity and sexual harassment. Though his findings are with experience from America, yet most are applicable to India too. Even author Ghanchi says in his article in University News, January 2-8, 2012. "Naturally a graduate thus produced is a half baked product, not capable of functioning in the market place in a competitive society. An organization of

co-operate employers in India like the ASSOCHAM has frequently complained that almost 90% of the fresh graduate in Indian Universities are found to be inadequate in respect   of knowledge and skills required by modern employers in business, industries, government and even in social services. Even in respect of their attitude to life and its problems as to career and towards, they are found to be severely deficient and ill prepared."

 Above all the author says that they lack in basic values of characters like punctuality, time sense and tenacity of working in different situations, both manually and with sophisticated technologies, particularly of ICT. They are averse of risk taking and owning responsibility for their decisions.

Some of them are under depression and cases of suicide after results have experienced as they are unable to cope with the situations. The study also reveals that the students have less concern towards ethical values.

Of course, quality of education may not be wholly responsible but improvement in quality can resolve number of issues.

National Knowledge Commission chaired by Sam Pitroda and the Commission on Renovation and Regeneration of Higher Education chaired by Dr. Yashpal examined the system and diagnosed the chief weakness in respect of quality of service. They challenged us to think afresh and out of the box and device policy initiatives that could restore the system and render the much needed service to the customer i.e. student.

Even then India has a large technologically skilled pull. Certain institutions are doing well but they are centered in big cities. However, substantial portion of townships has to strive for quality in higher education.

Quality Assurance In Higher Education –

 Who Will Do?
Assurance of quality may be achieved from

1)Government Regulation like – 2(f) and 12(b) provision of UGC
2)Accreditation Council.
3)AICTE
4)Institutional initiatives.

(1)The existing provisions of 2(f) and 12(b) for grant release and funding shall remove obstacles in the way of quality assessment and aimed to improve quality by redefining and assessing norms.
(2)Accreditation Council has to improve and enhance its own credibility as to make the accreditation process acceptable to the institutions and academy. The council needs to obtain feedback from the stakeholders to make it more effective under complex situations like geographical, demographical, social, political, economical and cultural factors and different disciplines like commerce, management; arts and sciences. Proper training and behavior of peer team will also motivate quality aspect. To overcome difficulties ,general interaction with council of accredited institutions must be once in every five years.
(3)AICTE is formed to conduct survey on the facilities on technology education and promote development in the country. The authority fixes norms and standard of quality assurance.
(4)The institutional or college level initiative will play an important role in shaping quality standards and consistently improving them.

The quality improvement in the institutions requires leadership from management, administrative staff, students, parents and the community. There is need of dedication from these groups.

What can be changed?

To suit the product (Student) as per needs of stake holders, need identification with active involvement of all the related groups is a must. To achieve this , role of the leader is very important and top priority must be given by them and take sincere efforts for quality improvement.

Research in this context has identified that Quality improvement is long term program and its results are sought within 5 years, and not immediately,. Each institution may have its own plan to enhance quality and to accomplish targets set.

However, the general critical factors to initiate change which may be identified with the involvement of related groups by the institution include-

1.Curriculum
2.Teaching Methods
3.Evaluation Practices
4.Teaching-learning Resources
5.Campus climate
6.Habits and Attitudes
7.Antisocial Behavior
8.In box thinking
9.Deficiencies in service
10.Misuse of students
11.Personality Traits
12.Recreational facilities
13.Cultural and Ethical norms
14.Encouraging creativity and innovations

Who will be the change agent?

The students, parents, alumni, college, management board, principal, staff of the college, personalities in the society along with industrial or businessman, university authorities and governmental officials will take part in the process of defining and ensuring quality at the institutions. Management institutions ensuring quality must be committed to focusing the quality and every one must be involved in the quality enhancement. Viewing education as a system, educational professionals can eliminate waste from education and improve quality. Quality is based on the concept that every process can be improved and that no process is perfect.

Educational professionals must learn to measure quality and added value of education. They will be able to do this by collecting and analyzing the data.

Education must be valued for the contribution it makes to developing students as valued citizens who are better prepared to meet future academic and business challenges.

Higher educational institutions should seek partnership to serve mutual and larger community interest. Quality is everyone's responsibility and it demands everyone's contribution. Building close relationships in between the persons involved is important.

The work of ensuring quality in higher education is hard and it is accomplished over a long period of time with constant efforts.

Identifying student's right problems and trying to solve the right problem is essential. Students centered approach must be adopted. There must be consideration to the needs of each student. Student can also be involved in evaluating their own work as well as that of others. All students must be involved in the process .Though there is diversity it becomes our strength.

The quality of teachers also enables to respond to new challenges and adapt to changing demands. Even though teachers have limited control over time, curriculum resources and learning styles, yet they can control the physical layout of classroom, attitudes, and they can also mould and encourage the students. The parent and the community involvement also form valuable resource.

According to Jerome S. Arcaro "There are probably as many different ideas about quality as there are schools. Quality is creating an environment where educator, parents, government official, community representatives and business leaders work together to provide students with the resources they need to meet current and future academic, business and social challenges".

How to ensure Quality

For insuring quality in higher education, the planning and accomplishment of the Quality Development Programme is very essential now. The program may consist of the following steps-

1.There must be commitment to change
2.Understanding where you are today.
3.Clear vision for future and
4.Planning for implementing quality.

CONCLUSIONS:

The education has witnessed a quantum jump so as to make it accessible to those who never had such an opportunity. The complexity and explosion of number has created deterioration of quality.

The quality of higher education is relative term and is purposive .Different countries may have their own quality norms & agencies to measure. Now a days along with UGC, AICTE and Accreditation Council are fixing norms for quality of the higher education. Even then institutional efforts are essential to develop and pursue quality in higher education in India.

Changes in outdated curriculum, traditional teaching methods and evaluation practices, additions of infrastructure facilities, climate change, changes in antisocial behavior, changes in conditioned thinking, improving the service, enhancing traits in personality and inputting cultural and ethical norms as well as encouraging innovations and creativity among the students are necessary for ensuring quality.

The participation of students, parents, staff, top management and social workers in society along with business leaders, university and Government officials efforts will play active role in shaping quality of education..

Formulation of well thought out development plan and compliance of it with constant efforts will definitely lead to ensuring quality in higher education in future years to come, so as to face local problems and global challenges.

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