

HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA: QUALITY IS THE NEED OF THE HOUR

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ABSTRACT

Quality in higher education has become the prime agenda of countries worldwide. In the changing context marked by expansion of higher education and globalization of economic activities, education has become a national concern with an international dimension. To cope with this changing context, countries have been pressurized to ensure and assure quality of higher education at a nationally comparable and internationally acceptable standard. India has joined a worldwide trends in which nations are seeking to improve the quality of their higher education systems by giving greater autonomy and accountability to lower levels of government (e.g. states) and to the higher education institution themselves. India's 12th Five –year plan, released in December 2012, suggested a range of reforms to higher education to change the role of the national govt. from “Command and Control” to “steer and evaluate”. Information and communication Technology (ICT) is th need of the hour. ICT, if used creatively, can make a big difference in the way teachers teach and students learn and can help students acquire 21st century skills like digital literacy, innovative thinking, creativity, sound reasoning and effective communication in case of Open and Distance Education (ODE) system where “Anyone, Anywhere and Anytime i.e is 3 A's the main philosophy, ICT-enabled education can do wonders that no one can imagine and help pave way for the creation of virtual Universities in the long run .

Keywords: Quality Teaching, High Education and Teaching Methods.

INTRODUCTION:

Quality in Higher Education has become the prime agenda of countries worldwide. In the changing context marked by expansion of Higher Education and globalization of economic activities, education has become a national concern with an international dimension. To cope with this changing context, countries have been pressurized to ensure and assure quality of Higher education at a nationally comparable and internationally acceptable standard.

“Just as water needs the wind to create waves of change so does every individual need a helping hand to achieve the impossible” and education is that helping hand which can guide the individuals as well as the nations to the path of progress and success in the rapidly changing world. Primary education prepares a base for the whole education but higher education provides the cutting edge and the specialized skills required to move ahead. Higher education is the peak of the educational journey of any individual and it aims to contribute to the development and improvement of the society as a whole in a sustainable manner. Higher education should be able to meet the needs of all sectors of human activity. The World Bank and UNESCO report (2000) rightly presents a powerful message that “higher education is no longer a luxury. It is essential for survival. So we are interested in higher education because we are interested in our survival.”

Implementing Quality in Higher Education:

The following points provide a framework or guideline for improving the quality of higher education in India taking into account the various levels and key factors in education.

Both in academic (institutional goals and objectives, curriculum design and review, teaching learning and evaluation, research and publications) and in administration (organization and management, infrastructure facilities, support services, student feedback and counseling and management of financial resources) aspects should be assessed and to be improved to improve the quality of higher education as it will be the first step towards the most needed education.

Examination reforms like semester system, credit system are to be exercised to streamline them in a proper manner. As these are brought up from abroad, we should first of all check its feasibility for our organization climate.

Continuous and comprehensive Evaluation is to be encouraged, standardized assessment procedures to strengthen the evaluation system. Financial Accountability is more important which means that the fund is to be used for the enhancement of the laboratory and library facilities. Gaps of deficiencies in our educational system are to be bridged to suit our economic, social and cultural requirements.

Education is emerging as a service influenced by market operations and so it has to meet quality requirements and expectations of stakeholders for its survival.

Distance education has a great potential for high productivity and we must take advantage of it in a big way. Curriculum restructuring and innovations and evolvments, conducting training programmes, orientation programmes, refresher courses. Accessibility, accountability and affordability are the major requirements.

While the nation of quality was not fully developed, it was recognized that expanding access alone would be insufficient for education to contribute fully to the development of the individual and society.

Need to raise investment in education: education can be the next big area of economic growth in the country. Despite promises by the policy planners to raise investment in education to 6% of GDP, state and central governments together have spent less than 4% of GDP on education. Anything less now would mean further delays in providing quality higher education.

“What teachers need to do improve the quality of Higher Education?”

Teacher Education: The preparation of teachers for all levels of education is the responsibility of higher education. Therefore it is also necessary to enhance the quality of teacher education within the higher education by adopting new learner centered approaches like constructivism etc.

Accountability: The higher education system must provide for accountability vis-à-vis the outside world and create accountability within the system. We need to create systems that enable system, or their parents, to choose between and assess universities.

Information: Institutions imparting higher education should be required to place basic information relating to their financial situation, physical assets, accreditation ratings, faculty positions , academic curricula, and so on, in the public domain. This would empower students and parents and can be an important step for maintaining qualitative standards.

Thus these are only some of the setups which must be taken towards the qualitative higher education. But, implementing the above guidelines will require support from the management, government, teachers and students as well as the readiness to change as per required changing needs and then only these guidelines can take a practical form.

Information and Communication Technology:

ICT is the need of the hour .It has the potential to provide solution to many of the challenges higher education faces today .ICT, if used creatively, can make a big difference in the way teachers teach and students learn and can help acquire 21st century skills like digital literacy, innovative thinking, creativity, sound reasoning and effective communication in case of Open and Distance Education(ODE) system where “Anyone, Anywhere and Anytime that is 3 A’s the main philosophy, ICT- enabled education can do wonders that no one can imagine and help pave way for the creation of virtual Universities in the long run.

To promote computer literacy and build capacity in ICT skills, ICT courses should be integrated to curricula from the school level itself. Computer Literacy classes in public libraries can also be used as a means of promoting and propagating ICT awareness. Since most of the time our computing facilities remain underutilized, efforts should be encouraged to harness the full potential of our computing resources with the help of shared resources and innovative technologies. This could obviate the problem of physical access and connectivity.

Conclusion:

Thus, it can be concluded at the end that quality is a buzz word in today’s world of education. It has become an important ideology of education which helps make education more relevant to the needs of the individual and society. Every educational institution must strive to achieve excellence through adopting the highest measures of quality as ongoing basis as fostering quality in higher education is a continuous journey. We all know that education is the key to success as well as a very powerful tool for change. Higher education is the peak time of individuals which must be qualitatively strong so that it can guarantee to high employ ability of good and reputed

positions. We need a vision of quality that goes far beyond mere conformance to standard, we need a passion for quality and continuous improvement, a quest for improvement that is never ending so that our higher education will always be qualitative and as per the needs.

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