

Issues Of Access Of Excellence Of Knowledge In Higher Education

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Search for excellence in education has been the prime objective for those who are concerned with higher education. Many efforts have been made and constant review of higher education suggests still the process of excellence continued. Presently the context has been provided by process of globalization where higher education has also been affected by constant internationalization. The impact has been:

1. Higher education has been opened to various universities from Europe, U.S.A. and Australia. Most of these universities have no academic credentials and yet they have been able to attract Indian students. They have provided lot of funds to these foreign universities. According to one calculation U.S. has earned 3 billion dollars annually from education which they provide to other countries.
2. The outside intervention has also been responsible for our search for excellence to counter the outside challenges.
3. Many universities in India have also decided to move outside India. Our search for outside markets have been limited to the developing world where economic situations continued to be in trouble.
4. With the process of globalization the market force have started affecting the overall working of universities where constant evaluation and updating of various courses and modernization of universities started taking

place and the entire debate on issues and impact of globalization is visible on Indian University system.

In Indian case we have more serious problems, due to our 'size volume' of universities and colleges. The expansion of higher education in our case has created more problems of maintaining standards and excellence. We have some of the well developed universities which can match any outside university who are doing excellent academic work and their effort to maintain standards has been laudable. Most of the universities suffer from various kind of ills ranging from financial crunch, squeezing faculties, political interventions and ever growing students population leading to a situation where some of the students getting best of the education facilities and most of the students have been naturally not getting the best, which may further continue the social and economic divides.

We may take up the issue of markets in our Indian situations and its impact on education. Recently after 1990s market forces have started shaping the demands of higher education and we have number of courses on management, computer, information technology and science and technology. This has serious bearing on our traditional subjects in each stream, including science, commerce, humanities and social sciences. Their utility was questioned and there were enough pressures to modernise them without a realization that their modernisation has its own limitation, arise out of human behaviour and human limitations. In this process we have ignored the outside experience where both classical (traditional) subjects not continued to flourish along with new market based courses. With India's size and potentials we may argue that we need both well develop new market based courses and equally well evolved traditional courses to underline and understand the process of social, economic and cultural developments. However, understanding of new market needs have to be kept in mind.

We may underline the areas which need special attention for developing excellence in higher education. Following areas may be identified.

CORRICULAR ASPECTS : With the explosion of knowledge and exponential growth of modern disciplines have determined the academic and administrative structure of universities all over the world. But this trend has changed in the light of interdisciplinary approaches. Therefore, with a view to promote interdisciplinary approach it is desirable to introduce the school system, theme teaching, context oriented applied research and restructuring of curriculum at the cutting edge of innovations in higher education.

Updating and restructuring of courses in conformity with the emerging trends in higher education. The exercise has to be extensive and intensive in nature. The interdisciplinary approach for the pursuit of excellence through research is imperative. Universities may reorganise departments with view to increase the capabilities of various departments to become one effective centre of higher education. Humanities and social sciences need reformations with the objective to make them more useful and socially vibrant, knowledge and experience based.

Creating a mechanism for giving adequate thrust on image building and marketing of university programmes and thereby improving its visibility nationally and globally.

Teaching, Learning and Evaluation : Teaching, learning and evaluation constitute major part of higher education. Improvements in these areas will certainly have great impact.

Teaching in recent years has suffered on the count of lack of faculty in various departments. The appointments are essential. These should be on permanent basis. The high quality faculty at all levels is essential. The faculty should be so trained as to meet the needs of recent times constant learning among the faculty is required which can be done through refreshers and workshop.

Evaluation can be improved through innovative and transparent mechanisms, keeping the subjective elements to the minimum, grading system may be introduced with semester system at least a teacher in evaluation is must. Considering this as a relevant context, excellence in higher education becomes a very important area of concern. In this unit we will help you to understand the role of various factors which influence 'quality' and 'quality improvement' efforts in a developing country like ours with particular reference to higher education.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Indicate the meaning of the term fundamentally improving education.
2. Describe the current scenario of higher education in India.
3. List the various factors of enhancing access to knowledge and professional education.
4. Explain why there should be a needed concern for enhancing access to knowledge.

Meaning of Promoting Amplication of knowledge for sustained and indusive growth in Higher Education.

Before explaining what is meant by excellence let us first find out what does excellence mean?

According to Oxford English Dictionary (1970), Excellence has been defined as "the nature kind or character (of something); now restricted to cases in which there is comparison (expressed or implied) with other things of the same kind; hence the degree or grade of performance possessed by a thing." The British standard institution (1991) defines quality as the totality of feature and characteristics of a product or service that bear upon its ability to satisfy the stated or implied needs.

Thus it may be indicated that quality is a coveted goal of all some of the significant points in 'quality' are that –

1. It is a dynamic idea
2. It is a positive concept

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1. It is a dynamic idea
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3. It is not achieved superficially
4. It is not a destination, it is a continuous journey
5. It is characterized by a customer focused approach to continuous improvement of process, products and services through an interdependent system of planning, implementing evaluating and decision making.
6. It is a degree of fitness for purpose and function.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION :

It has been emphasized in this unit that factors of quality improvement are closely related to our concept of quality in terms of product, process and perceptions of the client. It is a continuous journey and has to be integrated into our system as a pivotal concern. The improvement of quality requires understanding our visions, mission and goals on the one hand and the various instrumentalities to attain them on the other.

The ultimate goal of any educational institution, specifically the higher and professional education institutions is to ensure results. It may however, be born in mind that there are several stages through which these goals are attained. The first stage is concerned with planning and deciding on policies and programs.

To begin with, a detailed analysis is carried out of the environment and of the philosophy of the institution, its main thrust, rationale on which certain policy-decisions are being taken. Based on such an analysis, planning for further is attempted. Thus a continuous assessment of the environment, thinking about the future, discussing the alternative ways of responding to the needs and making use of the opportunities available are essential and can be performed by the institution's top administrators. At the bottom level, it is the grass root level administrator who implements the decision taken at the top and medium level administration and also carries out the routine administrative work.

The concern for quality improvement arises also from the concept of an institution defined as an organization which embodies, fosters, and protects normative relationship and action patterns, and performs functions and services which are valued in the environment. The institutions of higher and professional education have to function within the framework of this definition.

1. For promoting PEG (**Pride, Enjoyment and Growth**) orientation into our system of higher education.
2. For 'ensuring' goal related results through adoption of TQM (Total Quality Management) approach through out institutions of higher education.
3. For optimizing the capacity of the institutions of higher education to promote its impact on the society.
4. For ensuring better results with the help of interventions in the form of cyclic action research programs.
5. For ensuring accountability to the stakeholder to students, parents community and government etc.

Consultancy may also be encouraged through regular contacts. The National Knowledge commission may design and other short term courses for the benefit of in service employees. It may also encourage effective relationship with industry which may divert its research and development funding to universities.

Higher Education has its social responsibilities and has to address the needs of society. Its responses to social needs will make them meaningful. Universities can provide these services through extension work. Our own efforts to critically examine the needs and provide training to social sectors on issues of Human Rights, Panchayati Raj, population issue and meaning, gave us new directions.

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