ABSTRACT

Education is the beacon that guides a society to a better future. Human Resources Development depends on the quality of Education provided. The aims of Higher Education i.e. equity, inclusiveness and quality can be achieved through Good Governance in Higher Educational Institutions. Good Governance features like Accountability, Transparency, Participation, Equity and Inclusiveness, Efficiency and Effectiveness, Responsiveness and Participation must be adopted by all the Higher Education Institutions.

Key words: Higher Education, Governance

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the beacon that guides a society to a better future. It is one sector to which the destiny of a nation is intrinsically linked. The better the quality of education at all its levels better educated are the people of a society and the more the level of education higher the quality of human resources of a country. India which is the second most populous country in the world as well as one with a young population is considered to be one with an enormous demographic advantage. But this demographic advantage will become a disadvantage if India’s vast young population is not given the quality of education that allows the country fulfil its immense human resource potential.

These aims can be achieved by bringing Governance reforms in Higher Education and through realising the Goals of Good Governance.

Governance in Higher Education is the means by which institution for higher education are formally organised and managed.

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE:

The following are the characteristics of Good Governance. Good Governance generally means looking after the welfare of all in all respects.
2.1. Participation
Participation of the people either direct or indirect in the developmental and decision-making process is one of the corner stone of good governance.

2.2. Accountability
Government is able and willing to show the extent to which its actions and decisions are consistent with clearly defined and agreed upon objectives.

2.3. Transparency
Government actions, decisions and decision-making process are open to an appropriate level of scrutiny by other parts of Government, civil society and in some instances, outside institutions and Governments.

2.4. Efficiency and Effectiveness
Government strives to produce quality public outputs, including services delivered to citizens, at the best cost, and ensures that outputs meet the original intentions of policy makers.

2.5. Responsiveness
Government has the capacity and flexibility to respond rapidly to societal changes, takes into account the expectations of civil society in identifying the general public interest.

2.6. Equity and Inclusiveness
A society’s well-being depends mostly on ensuring that all its members feel that they have a stake in it and do not feel excluded from the mainstream of society. This requires all groups, particularly the most vulnerable, have opportunities to improve or maintain their well-being.

2.7. Rule of Law
Another attribute, rule of law for good governance as pre-requisite for fair legal frameworks that are enforced impartially and particularly full protection of human rights especially of the weaker sections of the society. For enforcing the laws impartially, it requires an independent judiciary and an impartial and incorruptible law enforcing agencies.

2.8. Consensus Oriented
Another important attribute of good governance is consensus orientation. Good Governance requires mediation of the different interests to reach a broad consensus in society on what is the best interest of the whole community and how this can be achieved.

3. KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY
A Knowledge Economy is ability to create and disseminate knowledge and use it for economic growth and improved standard of living. In Knowledge Economy, therefore, human resource endowed with education and skill is considered important as knowledge can only be produced by human resources who can then transform knowledge into tangible products. A country, therefore, rich in educated and skilled workforce has great potentials to produce, disseminate adapt knowledge to enhance growth. It is for this reason that educated youth in the age group 18-24 years is an important index of knowledge economy for reaping the benefits of knowledge.

By 2030, India will have the largest population in the world India’s Economy is expected to grow at a fast pace, rapid industrialization would require a gross incremental workforce of 250 million by 2030, India could potentially emerge as a global supplier of skilled man power.

India has more than 50% of its population below the age of 25 and more than 65% below the age of 35. However, the gross enrolment ratio in Higher Education is 20.4%. The main objective of Higher Education is to meet the three objectives of equity, expansion and excellence.
4. GOVERNANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTES IN INDIA

To achieve these objectives the following reforms should be brought in higher education institutions:

4.1. Governance Reforms for Quality

Quality assurance in Higher Education is today the top priority of the policy agenda. Post-Secondary Education needs to prepare graduates with new skills, abroad knowledge base and a wide range of competencies to enter a more complex and interdependent world. Quality is a multi-dimensional concept and several mechanisms for quality assurance and management at individual and institutional level are needed. Systems of accountability and accreditation with a robust regulatory mechanism are essential to the process of sustaining and improving quality. The country has established external quality assurance agencies in the 1990’s and to assure external quality, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) was set up by the UGC in 1994 to accredit Universities and Institutions of general Higher Education and the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) was established by the All India Council of Technical Education in 1994 to accredit programmes and institutions NAAC accredits institutions and certifies for educational quality of the institution based on seven criteria. There is a dire need to undertake reforms in the entire higher education sector beginning with regulatory structures and going down to the institution level.

The following reforms can be considered

- An Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) can be set up to ensure quality within the institutional framework and linking it with the standards set by the quality assurance agencies.
- A Governance structure wherein appointment of VC and Professors are through transparent and competitive process.
- Autonomy of the Institutions should be matched with accountability. The paradigm shift should be from regulation to facilitation. There should be single point clearances for grants and clearances. Autonomy of the institutions can be achieved by conferring degree granting powers to colleges and conferring autonomous status on colleges. In order to ensure horizontal and vertical mobility of students, we need to ensure that uniformity is achieved in terms of syllabi and curricula through a framework and Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) is adopted by all institutions.
- The Yashpal Committees’ (2009) recommendations that a National Testing Scheme for admissions to universities should be implemented. This national test should be open to all aspirants in India and it should be held more than once a year. This is an extremely good suggestion indeed as it seeks to do away with many banes in the Indian Higher Education scenario.
- Adapting a norm based funding approach could be considered for improving efficiency in grant disbursals.
- Prevention and Prohibition of unfair practices so as to ensure that only a merit plays a role in admission.
- Capitation fees and misleading advertisements to be punished severely.
- There should be changes in the composition of governing bodies such as having representation from industry, alumni and civil society, etc.

4.2. Ranking of Institutions and Accreditation

The global ranking of universities is based on an assessment of the institutional performance in the areas of research and teaching, reputation of faculty members, reputation among employers, resource availability share of international students and activities, etc. Most of the top ranking institutions are located in the USA and UK.

The Indian Universities do not find a place in the top 200 positions in global ranking of universities. Even the top ranking institutions of India appear low in the global rankings. As per the Times Higher Education Rankings 2012-13, the top ranked Indian Institutions are IIT Kharagpur (234), IIT Bombay (258) and IIT Roorkee (267).
The Institutions of higher education were supposed to approach the accreditation agencies to get their institution or programme accredited.

Accreditation was voluntary and as a result only few institutions have approached and accredited in India. Only 140 Universities (out of 164 recognised by UGC) have got themselves accredited by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and, among them, only 32 percent have rated as a grade or above.

Amongst 4,870 colleges, as many as 2,780 are accredited by the NAAC and, among them, barely 9 percent are rated as A or above.

The Indian Higher Education system has expanded and will further expand. This is in response to the increasing social demand for higher education. A major share of this expansion has taken place through the private institutions. An assessment and accreditation of institutions are important, especially in the context of mushrooming of private higher education institutions, to ensure quality in higher education.

Effective strategies must be devised to expedite the completion of assessment and accreditation by NAAC within a stipulated time frame. Even though accreditation is made mandatory for higher education institutions to received funding from UGC, the issue of accrediting large number of institutions within a short period of time poses challenges to the accreditation agencies. Some of the State Governments, notably the State Councils of Higher Education, have established their own accreditation units. This is an important development to decentralise the accreditation process.

4.3. Improving the quality of Regulation

One of the most important recommendations of Yashpal Committee is to establish a single regulatory body. It is felt that a single regulatory body would be more effective as it is often the implementation of the regulations rather than the regulations themselves which poses the problem. The role of the Government is being shifted from command and control to an evaluative and steering role. In this scenario the capacity of the higher education system must be increased to govern itself by coordinated regulatory reforms. However regulation is needed in some areas in the higher education sector. Granting permission to enter, permission to operate - decide on the intake of students and introduction of courses, monitoring its overall performance including issues related to governance and management and levels of student learning. Also more transparency is needed in both public and private institutions by requiring them to disclose important standardised information related to admissions, fees, faculty, programmes, placements, governance, finance business tie-ups and ownership.

The current regulatory framework needs to be reframed to

- Encourage serous private philanthropy and investment to innovate and provide high quality education,
- Promote better availability of information on private institutions to the public,
- Ensure that institutions that indulge in unfair practices are dealt with swiftly.

4.4. Improving Public State Universities

There is a need to change, restructure and reform the State Universities. The issues range from the appointment of Vice Chancellors in the State Public Universities, to those of affiliating system and the Governance. There is no systemic thinking to improve the efficiency and working of the colleges. Reforms should be brought on the following issues.

- Appointment of Vice Chancellors in the Universities
- Number of colleges affiliate to some of the State Universities
- The financing of State Public Universities and Colleges
- Promoting the standard of teaching and research
- The process of recruitment of teachers.

4.5. Skill Development

Impact of Technology and Globalisation on labour market made the work environment more complex. It required new skills to be competitive. But the education system is not able to respond to the demands
of the labour market. A key issue is to improve the effectiveness of the system in order to enhance the employability skills of the workforce.

Several measures can be taken up in linking education and skill development

- Establishment of community colleges in general colleges and polytechnics
- The country may start vocational studies programmes at the under graduate level and introducing skill credit transfer to facilitate vertical/horizontal mobility
- We may introduce KAUSHAL-Bridging Diploma-Degree Divide and promoting region specific skills. The polytechnics education may focus on employable skills.

4.6. Addressing Regional Disparity

The variations in Gross Enrolment Ratio are a good indicator of existing disparities in higher education development among the states. The GER at national level increases from 8.97% in 2002-2003 to 20.4 % in 2011-12.

The inter-state disparities in enrolment (GER) increased over a period of time. In 2002-03 the GER varied between 5.0 percent in Jammu and Kashmir and 28.7 percent in Chandigarh. In 2011-12 the variation in GER is between 8.4 percent in Jharkhand and 53.0 percent in Chandigarh.

The increasing disparities in GER are due to varying rate of growth experienced by different states.

To address the regional backwardness in education, more colleges should be established and existing colleges must be strengthened. Some incentive systems will be successful to attract students from disadvantaged groups in deprived regions.

4.7. Bridging Gender and Social Gaps in Higher Education

There exists wide disparities among social groups in terms of their participation in higher education. The twelfth plan reports that the variation in GER is 44.9% among the Christians while GER is only 7.7 percent among the ST, 9.6 percent among the Muslims and 11.6 percent among the SC. In all these instances the GER among the females lag behind the males. The major emphasis of the policy should be on promoting inclusiveness so as to accommodate more students from the marginalised sections into the ambit of higher education.

The affirmative action interventions should be revitalised to make them efficient and effective. Women’s participation and performance in Higher Education be incentivised by providing safe and secure environment within and outside the institutional campus. Gender gap can also be bridged by providing scholarships, hostel facility and imparting skill training so that they can earn while learning.

4.8. Higher Education should be linked to the society

Higher Education Institutions must play an important role in societal development. In recent years, higher education has isolated itself from the society and there is a need to re-establish and strengthen higher education’s close linkages with society. The Universities need to foster social responsibility and engage in community outreach programmes.

4.9. Linkages with Industry to increase employability

The Universities and higher education institutions operate independently and do not have mutual interactions with industry. There is huge difference between the skills imparted and skills required in the labour market. As per a NASSCOM report only one fourth of India’s engineering graduates and only 10% of its other graduates are employable. Industry academia linkages are essential to improve the employability quotient. The Resources of a particular region, the skills needed to harness the resources in the region should be identified by the local industries and Higher Education Institutions.

4.10. Giving Importance to Research

The progress of any nation depends on its sustained growth of education and research in Science and technology. More qualitative research work should be promoted. More significance must be given to basic research and inter-disciplinary research.
Government should provide incentives for research and there should be collaborations between Higher Educational Institutions and Research Centres.

4.11. Information and Communication Technology and Higher Education
The impact of Information and Communication Technology is significant. E-learning is one of the most important modes of delivery of education services. It brought changes in the teaching learning methodology. Broadband connectivity should be provided at all levels of education and administration. Use of Technology will improve the quality of service and delivery of services.

5. CONCLUSION
Democracy thrives, survives and persists on efficacious functioning of its education. In the absence of proper curriculum and predominance of mechanical studies, the whole philosophy of life has been confused. Higher Education reforms should be brought in such a way that they make the following words of Mahatma Gandhi true: “Education is the development of Body, Mind and Spirit”.

REFERENCES