

Reforms for Qualitative Improvement in Higher Education

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Indian Higher education is the second largest in the world. Indian educational system calls for an urgent reforms. All of us who have worried about the progress of higher education in India have received many comments and criticisms about things that went wrong. The report on university education set targets for the development of higher education in the country. While articulating these goals Ramakrishnan commission on University Education, 1948-49 put it in following words-

"The most important and urgent reform needed in education is to transform it, to endeavor to relate it to the life, needs and aspirations of the people and thereby make it the powerful instrument of social, economic and cultural transformation necessary for the realization of the national goals for this purpose, education should be developed so as to increase productivity, achieve social and national integration, accelerate the process of modernization and cultivate social, moral and spiritual values."

The national higher education policy of 1986 reflects this vision of Radhakrishnan and Kothari Commission. The commission has five main objectives for higher education are following- increased access, equal access (or equity), quality and excellence, relevance and promotion of social values. The policy, The policy directions and actions covered in the 1992 "Program of Action" have been developed in such a way as to translate these objectives into practice, giving importance to the first three objectives, namely the access, equal access and quality.

Meaning of quality-

The definition of quality education depends on the meaning of "quality, a complex and multi level word. Quality can be defined as a result, a property or a process. Therefore it is hardly surprising that the phrase "quality teaching" has been given several definitions because definitions of quality are "stakeholder relative" (Harvey et al., 1992) Tam (2001) also found that all stakeholders held their own view of what quality in education means to them.

The Indian education system recognise the role of education in inculcating the values of secularism, egalitarianism, respect for democratic traditions and civil liberties and pursuit of justice. Its goal is to create citizens with the knowledge, skills and values needed to build an inclusive fair and progressive wrong. The three pillars of education are expansion, inclusion and excellence.

In the present Indian context there is a great deal, of emphasis on these three aspects. These three issues are highly interconnected and encompass a variety of social, economic, political and political dimensions. India's higher education sector is faced with twin problems: First, reforms as initiated, are directionless. And second, future of researchers lies in limbo. Both of these create an adverse public perception of research and teaching.

Academic Reforms Transformation of higher education requires specific strategies for academic reforms at the institutional level. Quality improvement in higher education has been initiated through restructuring academic programmes to ensure their relevance to modern market demands. Complete revamping of teaching/ learning methods from instruction and rote learning to interactive process that encourages creativity and innovation and is based on compulsory seminar tutorials is being advocated in the universities and college. Some universities have begun to follow semester system, modification in assessment and examination methods, teachers. "assessment, acceptance of grade and credit system and other related reforms. The introduction of credit system in Indian universities will contribute to the development of quality in higher education through using a common and transparent system for the measurement and expression of academic work and learning outcomes of the students. This will also facilitate the mutual recognition of degree and qualification and will also ensure compatibility with the academic norms practiced in similar institutions in India and abroad. UGC has written to all universities about the need to adopt credit system with credit accumulation along with other academic reforms while some of the universities have introduced the system recently, many others are in the process of introducing the same. It is suggested to introduce the credit system in phase in the first phase the university may consider to adopt the credit system across all departments. In the second phase, universities may ask all the autonomous colleges to follow the credit system and as the process develops, the credit system may be introduced at the undergraduate level. The whole process may take a longer time period depending on the maturity of the academic system.

Quality has both absolute and relative meaning. The concept of absoluteness in quality props up the moral of the higher education system at the delivery end and at the receiving end i.e. Institutional and students respectively. In the meantime, those who are concerned about the future of higher education in India should seek to understand the basic rationale behind these measures and help to address them in their own domains of involvement in whatever way possible. Since the nation's economic future and global stature are intricately associated with the credibility of higher education system, one can only hope that there is sufficient wisdom in the society not to let the present state of entropy to persist.

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