

Quality Parameters In Strengthening Higher Education And NEP 2020

Chandrakant Kothe,

Assistant Professor

Kendriya Hindi Sansthan

(Ministry of Education, Govt. of India),

Hindi Sansthan Marg, Agra UP

Abstract:

The progress of any country in is more than ever dependent upon the quantity and quality of education received by people. Higher education institutions provide the necessary trained and educated manpower required for the development and implementation of various programs needed for the growth and development of a nation. No nation has a patent on excellence. All are striving to modernize their education systems to meet the demands of the global knowledge economy and produce a new global skill set. Strengthening to higher education is, thus, of utmost significance for the growth and development of a nation. Therefore, this paper provides a brief overview of the present scenario of higher education in India, factors causing quality of higher education and parameters like autonomy, skill oriented curriculum, research development programme, performance indicators, and benchmarks to strengthen higher education.

Key Words: Quality Parameter, NEP 2020

Status of Higher Education in India:

It is very frequently observed that students enrol for higher studies with less interest or take is casually. Moreover, there are very few institutions in India who are giving quality inputs so as to inculcate the values and learning skills amongst students. Higher Education process in India compare to developing or developed countries needs substantial improvement. We are not only beaten in by the developing and developed countries in terms of GDP, exchange of foreign currency but also in terms of number of students pursuing higher education. The Government of India in its budget for the year 2014-15 the allocation for school education is up by nearly 10 per cent from the interim 2014-15 budget, while that for higher education it has increased by 13 per cent which is not going to be adequate. In addition to this, the present curriculum also lacks advanced sports, hobby classes, vocational skills development program, employability enhancement and soft skills development programs.

Special emphasis are not given to communication and presentation skills, especially for students coming from rural background and that for students studies in vernacular languages, so that they are unable to perform well in the corporate world,

across the globe. Most of the institutions do not inculcate multitasking abilities amongst students, foreign languages, advanced information technology knowledge so that they are not competent to perform better in the chosen field. Government at times fails to provide sufficient funds, annual schemes for unaided institution for enhancing overall support.

Quality Education:

Quality in higher education is an indefinable notion. Its attributes are complex and intangible. It remains highly resistant to assessment by means other than judgements that represent personal values, as much as professional standards. To set into the frame work of well thought definition would be: Quality is the degree of excellence of the entire educational experience. (Doherty-Delmore: 2002).

National Knowledge Commission of India in its report on higher education stated that Universities must become the hub of research once again to capture synergies between teaching and research that enrich each other. This requires not only policy measures but also changes in resource allocation, reward systems and mind-set.

Factors Causing Quality of Higher Education:

Quality is an important issue in higher education. Despite a vast network, the Indian universities that are in focus on the world rankings are below 200. There is an apprehension that Indian

Universities cannot produce 'world class' institutions to compete in the present day context. There are many factors of quality; some are more similar to Indian universities. Rectification of the following factors will pay a way for quality strengthening of higher education in India:

- Lack of skill and job oriented curriculum.
- Mismatch between the curriculum designed and skills expected of the course.
- Forming a link between industry-university curriculums.
- Less importance to practicum and superfluous focus on theory.
- The shortage of qualified skill faculties.
- Deterioration in the standards of the research work in some universities.
- Lack of emphasis on research activity and excessive concentration on teaching.
- Inadequate infrastructure and support services.
- Thin focus on career guidance and placement services.
- Tiny focus on the use of ICT.
- Deficiency of autonomy to individual institutions.

Parameters to Strengthen Higher Education:

From the above factors causing quality of higher education in India, the top most parameters to strengthen higher education are: autonomy, skill oriented curriculum, research development programme, performance indicators and benchmarking.

1) **Autonomy:**

It is widely accepted that institutions of higher education can achieve the very purpose of their existence, their vision, mission, and goals related to creation, advancement of knowledge for holistic development, only when they are allowed to function with sufficient academic, administrative and finance autonomy.

Academic Autonomy: There is a need to grant autonomy to individual institutions in matters of design of curriculum. Universities may, however, provide a broad framework within which individual faculty members both within the university and in the colleges should be encouraged to innovate and

experiment to transform teaching and learning into a fascinating and rewarding experience for them as well as students. No faculty member should suffer in his / her research endeavours for want of funds. In order to facilitate this, certain funds should be made available to faculty members against duly worked out and approved research proposals. In return, the faculty member should be accountable to maintain progress of research of acceptable standards as should be evidenced by publications in reputed per reviewed journals.

Institutions of higher education should have the autonomy to adopt continuous and comprehensive system of students' evaluation with the sole objective of facilitating the acquisition of learning outcomes to the level of mastery, discouraging students getting into selective short cuts and optional readings. Though the universities' autonomy should aim at switching over to complete internal evaluation of students over a period of time, there could be a mix of internal and external evaluation during the transition period, depending on the circumstances prevailing in each university.

Administrative Autonomy: Institutions of higher education should prepare plans of futuristic development of each faculty discipline. This exercise should essentially be undertaken with a view to developing advanced teaching and research in frontier areas of knowledge and to strive towards national and international recognition. In implementing this idea, the present system of assigning fixed number of positions of Professors, Associated Professors and Assistant Professors to each teaching department should be replaced by a system wherein the head of the institution should have the autonomy to determine both the rank and the number of these positions in accordance with the tasks envisaged in the development plan of the institution.

Financial Autonomy: The higher education system as a whole is grossly under-funded. The level of funding for it has to be enhanced by degree of magnitude both through government funding and through higher level of fee contribution. One third of entire investment in education sector should be made on higher education. There is a case for bringing all government and government-aided universities and colleges within the purview of financial support of

UGC. The level of funding for colleges and for universities needs to be significantly increased from its present level. Even central universities which are already more generously funded require higher level of financial support.

2) Skill Oriented Curriculum:

Model curricula should be student-centered and students should be allowed to choose what they will learn in line with their aptitude. This has to be reflected in the student-friendly approach towards syllabus and curriculum. Skill oriented curriculum should always create a space for industry-institutions interactions where the youth identifies his/her studies and academics with skill oriented job opportunities. It's also the need of the hour that aligning the Indian curriculum to the level of universal standards, where the youth of India will face the global challenges and would emerge victorious.

Industry will have to be motivated towards planning a more active role in identifying the training needs for graduates. Academicians and the representatives from the industry should sit together to design practical and skill oriented curriculum for the benefit of young student community. It will also have to take more positive approach in providing the students practical experience for a reasonable period of time by being part of policy makers. Also, there is a need to motivate the faculties in curriculum restructuring through various departmental committees, Board of Studies, Faculty Boards, Post Graduate Council and Academic Council.

3) Research Development Programmes:

Research is exploring the knowledge. The progress of the nation depends upon the quality of research undertaken and its impact is sensed in the progress of science and technology in solving the problem of industries by way of consultancy, and interaction with both organized and unorganized sectors. In recent decades, the growth of scientific and technical knowledge has prompted scientists, engineers, social scientists, and humanists to join in addressing complex problems that must be attacked simultaneously with deep knowledge from different perspectives. Students show increasing enthusiasm about problems of global importance that have practical consequences, such as disease prevention, economic development, social inequality, and global climate change-all of which can best be addressed

through interdisciplinary research. Interdisciplinary research can be one of the most productive and inspiring of human pursuits-one that provides a format for conversations and connections that lead to new knowledge. Interdisciplinary research is a mode of research by teams or individuals that integrates information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts, and/or theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialized knowledge to advance fundamental understanding or to solve problems whose solutions are beyond the scope of a single discipline or area of research practice.

4) Performance Indicators:

Performance indicators are the criteria used for evaluating the work of an individual or an institution, or for judging the effectiveness of a program. It is related to the efficacy of a system or institution in terms of its productivity, i.e. the efficiency and returns. As Ramsden (1991) puts it, "The idea of performance indicators derives from economic models of the education system as a process within a wider economic system which converts inputs (such as academics' salaries) into outputs (such as research papers)." The indicators should be:

- be specific, quantified and standardized so as to enable comparisons within and between institutions.
- relate to the objectives of the universities, especially teaching and research.
- be simple, so as to aid understanding of activities.
- be acceptable, credible and free of bias.
- provide information about the activities and operations of the institution.
- be designed in such a way, so that its calculation will be simpler.

Performance indicators, if judiciously chosen provide useful and largely reliable information about the performance of an institution. Governments and funding agencies have supported the development of performance indicators, for evaluating the performance of educational institutions.

5) Benchmarking:

Benchmarking involves the making of comparisons. It is the open and collaborative evaluation of services and processes with the aim of emulating best available practice. While evaluating 'benchmarking' in terms of educational requirements,

Fielden (1997) described it as “a self-improvement tool for organizations, which allows them to compare themselves with others, to identify their comparative strengths and weaknesses, and learn how to improve.” Andersen and Pettersen (1994) proposed that benchmarking is based upon ‘what is being compared’, and ‘with whom it is to be compared’. On the other hand Alstete (1995) has acknowledged the following bench markings:

- *Internal Benchmarking* with external standards, principally to identify and emulate the best in which comparison is made between different units within the same university, without comparing practices.
- *External Collaborative Benchmarking* in which comparisons are made with larger groups of institutions that are not regarded as competitors, and using a methodology that is relatively open and collaborative.
- *External Competitive Benchmarking* where performance in key areas is decided made on the basis of information from other institutions.
- *External Trans-industry (best in class) Benchmarking* which involves looking across multiple institutions in search of new and innovative practices especially ICT.

Though various types of benchmarking are available as tools, yet as Stella (cited in Powar-2005) points out it will not be possible to apply benchmarking to all processes. Its use will have to be selective and restricted, at least in the initial stage. Before using them, it is necessary to contextualize, and sensitize the benchmarks. For this purpose, peer review is essential and vital.

Quality Education and NEP 2020:

The Indian higher education system is now being transformed by the National Education Policy 2020. NEP 2020 focuses more on practical rather than theoretical learning. The new education policy enables every student to get quality education irrespective of their socio-economic background, gender or disability. NEP 2020 enables teachers to use a variety of learning techniques and experiments. This policy places a strong emphasis on encouraging interdisciplinary study, offering novel subjects, and giving students access to new opportunities and flexible course options. It aspires to boost the higher education sector's gross enrolment ratio (GER), offer

a variety of entry and exit points, and let students select the classes that best suit their interests and abilities. Now apart from having various advantages, the NEP 2020 also has various hurdles to cross before it gets implemented. The policy aims to bring a considerate transformation by the year 2040. Whereas some proposals of this policy will have an immediate implementation, while others will take longer.

Conclusion: Thus the above mentioned parameters like autonomy, skill oriented curriculum, research development programme, performance indicators and benchmarking are crucial to strengthen higher education. This will promote the quality of education, especially at the level of higher education leading to better life style. At this bottom line higher educational institutions are challenged and bestowed with the responsibility of quality as a tool to achieve the necessary knowledge and skills.

References:

1. Alstete, J.W., (1995), *Benchmarking in Higher Education: Adapting Best Practices to Improve Quality*, ASHE-ERIC-HE Report No.5, Washington: the George Washington University,.
2. Green D, and Harvey,L., (1993), *Quality Assurance in Western Europe: Trends, Practices and Issues in Santa*, Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis.
3. Harmann, G., and Meek V., (2000), *Repositioning Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Australian Higher Education*, EIP, Department of Education Training and Youth Affairs, Canberra.
4. Powar K.B., (2005), *Quality in Higher Education*, New Delhi: Edupro Publishers.
5. Ramsden P., ((1991), A performance indicator of teaching quality in higher education, *studies in Higher Education* 16(2): 129-150
6. Rona-Tas, A., (1992), *A new approach to Quality Assurance in Higher Education*, Bangalore: INQAAHE,.
7. Shale D., and Gomes, J., (1998), *Performance Indicators and University Distance Education Providers*, *Journal of Distance Education*, 13(1): 1-20.
8. www.universitiesuk/parliament/showEvidence
9. www.beckmanmacular.org
10. [www.karen.macgregor@uw-news.com](mailto:karen.macgregor@uw-news.com)