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A Strategic Roadmap to Improve Quality of Higher Education in India

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Abstract:
In India, the present education system has emerged as a giant knowledge society where the more stress is put on quality education and knowledge creation. After independence, there has been a major transformation in higher education system. In fact, there have been considerably rising in number of higher education institutions, courses, degrees and students. But, the key objective of a nation cannot be achieved simply with increasing in number of higher education institutions. Due to mushrooming of colleges, education system has faced great challenges leading to the risk of quality education. This paper mainly covers major suggestions to the improvement in quality of higher education through strategic roadmap and benchmarking which will give new directions to bring higher education system of India on quality track.

Keywords: *Strategic Roadmap, Benchmarking, Quality Education*

1. Introduction

Quality adds beauty to education and excellence and sustainability of higher education have a great association with the quality. 'Quality' in higher education is widely and much more discussed topic in the field of education. Originally, the concept of quality derived from the production management. Quality is the performance of the product as per the commitment made by the producer to the customer (Chary, S. N., 2002). In relation to education, quality is the performance of all educative activities (teaching learning process and practices) as committed by educational institution and expected by the learner. Quality is everybody's job, associated with higher education. And therefore, each stakeholder is to play multifaceted roles. Through this paper the author has made attempted to suggest a strategic roadmap to bring quality factor in higher education across the India.
Following table gives an account of Higher Education Institutions in India.

Type of University	Number
Central Universities	45
State Universities	318
State Private Universities	185
Deemed to be Universities	129
Institutions of National Importance (for example IITs, NITs)	51
Total Number of Colleges	37,204
Source: Ministry of HRD website, data as on 31st March 2013	

2. Quality Management in Higher Education

To introduce innovative and best practices for quality in higher education, following strategic roadmap is required to be followed.

2.1 Quality Planning

It is a primary and the important step which culminates identifying the needs of the learners and society followed by setting up objectives and benchmarking. Looking at the present scenario, the quality of education in rural and semi urban areas is not impressive at all. Thus, quality planner is required to do an intensive homework on people's readiness for higher education and the level of literacy. He should take the stock of those who are aspiring of higher education and their expectation as well. Quality planning is the blend of planning for quality control, quality assessment, quality audit and quality assurance. This also plans for innovative and best practices in teaching learning process. Quality in education largely relies on experienced acute teaching faculties which should be taken into consideration while planning for the quality in higher education. Designing of quality standard is the job of quality planning

2.2 Quality Implementation

Quality implementation is the carried out by the following

- Adoption of best and innovative practices such as case study, project work, group discussion, role play, simulation, internship and student exchange programmes, in house workshops
- Availability of all facilities such as well equipped library (24 x 7 hours access), Wi Fi / internet connectivity, canteen, sufficient numbers of classes, languages lab, science lab, computer lab etc.
- Teaching staffs should be encouraged and sent for faculty development and refreshment programmes to update their knowledge. Similarly, students should be imparted training on major skills required to perform different tasks. Besides, they should be sent for education tour to get them acquainted with the application of learnt principles at the actual work place.
- Promotion of e-Learning and use of blogs & other social networking sites for e-resources and study materials
- Syllabus should be so designed that can offer thorough knowledge of all aspects including more of offering practical exposure. Possibly, it should be in congruence with reputed foreign universities. The curriculum should be revised and upgrade after regular interval says, 3 or 5 years.

2.3 Quality Assurance

In higher education institution, students should be well assured with the good learning environment. Actually, it is the process whereby a stakeholder is made confident that standards will be maintained by the way of either exhibiting successfully placement of students, sharing future course of actions and alumni meet.

2.4 Quality Monitoring and Control

It includes Benchmarking, Quality Audit, Quality Assessment and Quality Control

2.1.1 Benchmarking

Benchmarking is a self improvement tool for organization which allows them to compare themselves with others, to identify their comparative strength and weakness and learn how to improve Benchmarking is done in following ways (Agrawal, Raj 2012)

- **Internal Benchmarking:** Internal standard performance is compared with actual one indicating where does education institution stand? is lagging behind?
- **External Benchmarking:** Standard performance of educational institution is compared with that of competitors. In addition, actual performance is compared with that of other competitors. This also helps in setting benchmark.
- **External Collaborative Benchmarking:** Here, standard performance and actual performance are studied in collaborative way. In fact, institutions to which comparison is made are not competitors. This encourages more of learning than beating.

- **External Trans Industry Benchmarking:** This type of benchmarking involves the study of number of educational institutions with a view to searching of new and innovative practices for instance, ICT, Students Exchange Programme, Learning Across Curriculum etc.

2.1.2 Quality Control

Quality control is an operational process involving the evaluation of teaching activities.

2.1.3 Quality Assessment

This refers to assess the social relevance of an institution programme and the worth of the outcome in terms of societal growth

2.1.4 Quality Audit

This focuses on processes that are believed to produce quality and methods by which academicians assure themselves that quality has been attained (Dill et al 1996)

2.5 Quality Feedback and Remedial Measures

This is the crucial function of quality management covering sub functions namely remedial measures, result, precaution, re-establishment of quality plan and benchmark.

3. Suggestions to revamp and improve Higher Education System

- Accreditation and grading practices of Higher Education Institutions and their regularly renewal
- Availability of competent and experienced teaching staffs
- Promotion of research culture
- Preparation of modern course material and more emphasis on e-learning & development of e-course materials
- Design of syllabus covering more of practical industry exposures.
- Corporate governance is required to remove major hurdles that come in the way of achievement of quality education viz. corruption, nepotism etc.
- Fetching FDI to fund educational activities
- Offering and promotion of Research Consultancy
- There is a dire need of model curriculum applicable to all universities, institutions and colleges operating within the boundary of India
- Establishment of Knowledge Centres to redefine the knowledge
- Arrangement and sponsorship of state and national level seminars and workshops to train both teaching staffs and students.
- There should be an industrial collaboration to bridge the gap between practical and theoretical aspects of education
- Working towards directions and recommendations suggested by RUSA (Rashtriya Uchhatar Shiksha Abhiyan, National Higher Education Mission)
- Moreover, following regulatory and promotional bodies associated with higher education system are required to develop futuristic approach

  Department of Education, Ministry of HRD
  Department of School Education and Literacy
  Department of Higher education
  University Grants Commission (UGC)
  All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE)
  Medical Council of India (MCI)
  The Bar Council of India
  Universities

4. Conclusion

Quality education should be key priority of all stakeholders associated with higher education system. The multifaceted role of all regulatory and promotional authorities is the need of an hour to bring quality factor in education system resulting to the achievement of national objectives.

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