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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Indian Higher Education System and Quality Teaching

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Abstract

The Indian higher education system is very complex. The regulators associated with governance are overlapping and entangled cross different ministries and regulatory bodies. With a gross enrolment ratio. India is still below the world average the world average .With relatively stagnate growth of public sector ,private sector now accounts for 62 percent of the total higher education institutions and 52 percent of the total enrolments in Indian higher education. Despite various intervention measures to address equity objectives ,disparity still exists in terms of gender ,ethnic groups ,and economic criteria and by location. Quality and efficiency policy responses and their endeavors have been insufficient accompanied by poor regulations and its subsequent implementation .Multiple regulation and measures have been envisaged by different commissions and committees to enhance the access ,quality and equity to face the challenges of opening -up this sector globally.

The review of the literature is organized in three main parts as to address three major questions: A) "What is the meaning of Quality Teaching and why is it important at higher education level?" B) "How can we improved teaching concretely?" .C) "How can we the one make sure Quality Teaching initiatives are helpful?". Quality teaching has become an issue of importance as the landscape of higher education has been facing continuous changes: increased international competition, increasing social and geographical diversity of the student body, increasing demands of value for money, introduction of information technologies, etc. But quality teaching lacks a clear definition, because quality can be stakeholder relative. The impact of research, of the "scholarship of teaching" and of learning communities on teaching quality is discussed here. Quality teaching initiatives are very diverse both in nature and in function. The role of the professors, of the department, of the central university and of the state is analysed, as well as the goals and the scope of this initiatives. Choosing reliable and quantifiable indicators to assess the quality of one's teaching and the efficiency of teaching initiatives remains challenging. different methods and their effectiveness are discussed here. The factors that determine whether appropriate use is made of the feedback provided are also brought into conversation.

INTRODUCTION

Indian institutions are facing major changes as they navigate the 21scentury and make decisions that will not only impact higher education but will also contribute to our country's future competitiveness in the global marketplace. This article examines various influences on institutions of higher learning as they move toward a customer-oriented focus. It also stresses the importance of balancing the needs of various customer groups while continuing to serve as purveyors of educated human resources in a global economy. This article identifies and evaluates outcomes from efforts to modify quality standards in higher education. While change is unavoidable and higher learning faces difficult choices, we can choose to make proactive decisions and become agents of change. The financial obligations of running an institution today are a major concern. While not a new concept, there is a trend for public institutions to redefine their identity as service organizations and businesses.1 Due to increased financial demands, there has also been a dramatic rise in the cost of attending post-secondary schools.2 The Delta Project,3 which focuses on postsecondary costs, productivity, and accountability, points out that while students are paying more of the total costs associated with higher education, less of the tuition-generated revenue is actually going into the classroom. In the 1990s, student tuition paid for approximately 24% of the operating costs at public colleges and universities, in 1998 that percentage rose to 37%, and in 2005 it was nearly 50%.4 Today, institutions rely on increasingly large numbers of students to help balance expenditures. As institutions face growing financial constraints due to recent economic events, there is even greater concern that institutions will defer to the value of the monetary benefits of increased enrolments, especially in the face of fewer state resources. Given the importance of enrolment monies, it is not surprising that universities have become very savvy in marketing their institutions to the student customer.5,6,7 If the focus is directed at attracting larger numbers of potential students even when it is necessary to modify admission standards, there is an associated risk of also negotiating academic standards to create easier courses and modify academic requirements.1 The reputation of the institution becomes the most costly casualty of all when academic standards that underlie scholarly integrity are compromised. Higher education in India suffers from several systemic deficiencies. As a result, it continues to provide graduates that are unemployable despite emerging shortages of skilled manpower in an increasing number of sectors. The standards of academic research are low and declining. Some of the problems of the Indian higher education, such as – the unwieldy affiliating system, inflexible academic structure, uneven capacity across various subjects, eroding autonomy of academic institutions, and the low level of public funding are well known. Many other concerns relating to the dysfunctional regulatory environment, the accreditation system that has low coverage and no consequences, absence of incentives for performing well, and the unjust public funding policies are not well recognized. Driven by populism and in the absence of good data, there is little informed public debate on higher education in India. Higher education in India has expanded rapidly over the past two decades.

This growth has been mainly driven by private sector initiatives. There are genuine concerns about many of them being substandard and exploitative. Due to the government's ambivalence on the role of private sector in higher education, the growth has been chaotic and unplanned. The regulatory system has failed to maintain standards or check exploitation. Instead, it resulted in erecting formidable entry barriers that generate undesirable rents. Voluntary accreditation seems to have no takers from amongst private providers and apparently serves little purpose for any of its stakeholders.

Despite, its impressive growth, higher education in India could maintain only a very small base of quality institutions at the top. Standards of the majority of the institutions are poor and declining. There are a large number of small and non-viable institutions. Entry to the small number of quality institutions is very competitive giving rise to high stake entrance tests and a flourishing private tuition industry. The stakes are so high that quota-based reservation of seats in such institutions in the name of affirmative action has come to occupy centre stage in electoral politics. Despite some merit, it has resulted in fragmentation of merit space and further intensified competition for the limited capacity in quality institutions.

II. INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Education in ancient India was highly advanced as evident from the centers of learning that existed in the Buddhist monasteries of the 7th century BC up to the 3rd century AD Nalanda (Perkin, 2006). In these centers, gathering of scholars-- Gurukula-- used to be engaged in intellectual debates-- parish ads-- in residential campuses. A few of these centers were large and had several faculties. Historians speculate that these centers had a remarkable resemblance to the European medieval universities that came up much later. The ancient education system in India slowly got extinguished following invasions and disorder in the country. Till the eighteenth century, India had three

distinct traditions of advanced scholarship in the Hindu Gurukulas, the Buddhist Viharas, and the Quranic madaras as, before the British set up a network of schools to impart western education in English medium (Perkin, 2006) The first such college to impart western education was founded in1818 at Serampore near Calcutta. Over the next forty years, many such colleges were established in different parts of the country at Agra, Bombay, Madras, Nagpur, Patna, Calcutta, and Nagapattinam. In 1857, three federal examining universities on the pattern of London University were set up at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. The existing 27 colleges were affiliated to these three universities. Later, more universities were established. At the time of independence in 1947, there were 19 universities and several hundred affiliated colleges (CABE, 2005a). The higher education system in India grew rapidly after independence. By 1980, there were 132 universities and 4738 colleges in the country enrolling around five per cent of the eligible age group in higher education. Today, while in terms of enrolment, India is the third largest higher education system in the world (after China and the USA); with 17973 institutions (348 universities and 17625 colleges) is the largest higher education system in the world in terms of number of institutions. The number of institutions more than four times the number of institutions both in the United States and entire Europe. Higher education in China having the highest enrolment in the world (nearly 23 million) is organized in only about 2,500 institutions. Whereas, the average enrolment in a higher education institution in India is only about 500-600 students, a higher education institution in the United States and Europe would have 3000-4000m students and in China this would be about 8000-9000 students. This makes system of higher education in India as a highly fragmented system that is far more difficult to manage than any other system of higher education in world.

III. QUALITY TEACHING AT HIGHER LEVEL IN INDIA

Quality teaching has become an issue of importance as the landscape of higher education has been facing continuous changes. The student body has considerably expanded and diversified, both socially and geographically. New students call for new teaching methods. Modern technologies have entered the classroom, thus modifying the nature of the interactions between students and professors. The governments, the students and their families, the employers, the funds providers increasingly demand value for their money and desire more efficiency through teaching.

Quality Teaching lacks of clear definitions and to some extent can't be disconnected from debates on Quality or Quality culture in higher education that remain controversial terms. Some scholars regard quality primarily as an outcome, others as a property. Some consider teaching as the never ending process of reduction of defects and so Quality Teaching can never be totally grasped and appraised. In fact, conceptions of quality teaching happen to be stakeholder relative: students, teachers or evaluation agencies do not share the definition of what "good" teaching or "good" teachers is.

The literature stresses that "good teachers" have empathy for students, they are generally experienced teachers and most of all they are organized and expressive. "Excellent teachers" are those who have passions: passions for learning, for their field, for teaching and for their students. But research also demonstrates that "good teaching" depends on what is being taught and on other situational factors.

Research points out that quality teaching is necessarily student-centered; its aim is most and for all student learning. Thus, attention should be given not simply to the teacher's pedagogical skills, but also to the learning environment that must address the students' personal needs: students should know why they are working, should be able to relate to other students and to receive help if needed. Adequate support to staff and students (financial support, social and academic support, support to minority students, counseling services, etc) also improves learning outcomes. Learning communities – groups of students and/or teachers who learn collaboratively and build knowledge through intellectual interaction – are judged to enhance student learning by increasing students' and teachers' satisfaction.

IV. GUARANTEE OF QUALITY TEACHING IN INDIA

There are in fact, no widely accepted methods for measuring teaching quality, and assuring the impact of higher education on students is so far an unexplored area as well" moreover argues that the culture of measurement that has trivialized teaching excellence in recent years and the language of business that has turned it into a product need to be replaced by appropriate forms of judgment and expression.

Evaluation system in the class :

A tool for change and identification of best practice ? One of the most used tools today to evaluate teaching quality and identify Quality Teaching is undoubtedly peer in-class evaluations. The literature on Quality Teaching recognizes several advantages to peer evaluations. Pagani (2002) describes peer review as a tool for change, allowing individuals to improve their performance, ensuring that standards are being met, and helping to identify best practices.

focus on the process and not simply the outcome: -

Erstad (1998) points out that student questionnaires measure the outcomes of teaching and not the process, whereas mystery customers and peer in-class evaluation measure the process rather than the outcome. The use of peer evaluation may be preferred to that of mystery students, because many professors view mystery students as threatening. A common conception is that their use is linked to disciplinary action (Telford & Masson, 2005). Peer in-class evaluation may promote conformity, hamper teaching innovation However, the use of peer in-class evaluation may also not be free of risks. Cox and Ingle by (1997) found that peer review through peer observation of teaching can produce conformity of teaching. Indeed the professor being evaluated may not dare to be innovative. Or the professor evaluating his colleague may be influenced by his or her conservative methods of teaching. Moreover, Bingham and Ottewill (2001) recognize that the assessment of peers might be too self-congratulatory. According to Green (1993) the "traditional peer review based assurance system" is currently breaking down, a breakdown which is "clearly" correlated with "the increasingly market orientated culture of higher education".

Evaluation of teachers' assortment

Another possible method to assess teaching quality and identify best practices is the use of teachers' assortment. The teacher's portfolio evaluation is a valuable technique because it is based on multiple sources of evidence and multiple levels of scrutiny (Webb stock, 1999). However, as it was noticed by Webb stock, who was working on the assessment of teaching quality at the University of Natal, the problem is that it is difficult to agree on which items should be included in the portfolio and on how much each of these items should be waited. The question remains whether quantitative weighs should be attributed to each item of the portfolio to increase the transparency of the process or whether this would transform the portfolio evaluation process into a mechanical task, thus hampering teaching creativity.

The Departmental Teaching and Learning Committee of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University used all three methods-student questionnaires, peer in-class evaluation and evaluation of teacher's portfolio)- to assess the quality of their teachers (Mac alpine, 2001). The department decided to design a Teaching Evaluation Index which comprised a weighted sum of the three indicators. This methodology's goal was to balance the defects of each of three methods of evaluation when they are used separately by creating a "three-legged stool". The Teaching Evaluation Index weighted student questionnaires for 50% of the total result, in-class peer evaluation for 30% and the teaching portfolios for 20%. Interestingly, Mac alpine notes that there was a reasonable degree of consistency between the three indices, particularly for extremes. As an outcome of the evaluation process, the weaker lecturers were linked with the higher scoring lecturers in a trial scheme.

New indicators for better assessment of Quality Teaching in India

There are various Indicators of quality teaching collecting qualitative and decentralized feedback: Student awards, joint research, and workshop.

Teaching concretely can be enhanced

Quality teaching initiatives are very diverse both in nature and in function. Some of these initiatives are undertaken at teachers' level, others at departmental, institutional or country level. Some quality initiatives aim to improve pedagogical methods while others address the global environment of student learning. Some are top-down process, other induce grass-root changes. The most currently used quality initiatives seem to aim to enhance teamwork between teachers, goal-setting and course plans. However scholars have developed holistic theoretical models of how quality teaching initiatives should unfold. Gathering information and reading the literature – looking outside the classroom – are important tools to improve quality teaching, but they are still under-employed. Another important point to keep in mind is that in order for student learning to be enhanced, the focus of quality teaching

initiatives should not always be on the teacher. Rather it should encompass the whole institution and the learning environment. One of the major drivers for enhancement of quality teaching concerns teachers' leadership – most quality teaching initiatives are actually launched by teachers. However the role of the department, of the educational support divisions and that of the central university – which can make quality culture part of its mission statement – are central. Scholars proved that bottom-top 5

Make sure quality teaching is effective

It is essential to measure the impact of the quality teaching initiatives in order to be able to improve these initiatives. However assessing the quality of one's teaching remains challenging. This difficulty may in part explain why the two most famous international rankings rely heavily on research as a yardstick of the universities' value and leave aside the quality of teaching. This may however change in the future, as the concerns about quality teaching and student learning are increasing. The choice of indicators to measure quality teaching is crucial, because it has been shown that assessment drives learning: how the teacher is judged will undoubtedly impact his or her teaching methods. Indicators to assess the quality of teaching (the value of graduates, satisfaction of teachers, retention rates,etc.) of an institution proved of use but carry various meanings and can even lead to misunderstandings. Researchers agree that reliable indicators should be chosen, and not just the most practical ones. Moreover, room should always be left for discussion of the figures obtained. Other tools than indicators exist. Using student questionnaires can seem logical, because students are the individuals that are the most exposed to and the most affected by the teacher's teaching. However, many teachers give little credit to the answers of the students that they perceive as biased. The answering students tend to blame teachers for all problems, forgetting the role of the administration or the infrastructures. Measurement should clarify its own aims (improvement or punishment?) before implementation.

Quality Human Performance—the Requirements:

A key component of quality in teaching and learning involves quality human performance by the learner. Substantial financial outlays by companies and the government for training are made in attempts to address problems in the quality of human performance. These efforts have met with minimal success, and major gaps in the standards to which humans have been trained and their resulting performance remain.27,28 Swart and Duncan29 note that the expected performance in a work setting is generally dictated by a set of valid and appropriate expectations and is attained through proper education and training. When performance consistently adheres to the appropriate expectations, then quality human performance is achieved. If there is a discrepancy in performance and appropriate expectations, then it must be investigated, causes identified, and appropriate corrective action taken. To achieve quality human performance, we posit that three components must be present:

- A clearly defined set of tasks to perform.
- An individual that has the capacity/ability to perform the required task.
- A clear set of standards that define successful performance.

V. SUMMARY

If colleges and universities focus on satisfying students as their primary customers, they may negatively affect another customer group— employers—because the two customer groups have significantly different ways of defining and measuring expectations. There are no easy solutions to addressing the negotiation of standards that undermine quality human performance. All customers of higher education deserve the best we can offer, as higher education, business/industry, and the economic success of the United States are intricately connected and are dependent upon one another. As noted in the Delta Project,3 the United States is quickly losing ground in the global race for talent. Institutions of higher education, faculty, students, and businesses can serve as contributing architects in ensuring education establishes quality standards. They are all consumers, and they all have a vested interest in maintaining standards.

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