Quality Concerns & Assurance in Indian Higher Education

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Abstract

The standard of Higher Education indicates the amount of general and specific knowledge, achievement and learning level, power of oral and written expression and impact of acquired knowledge on the life of students. In order to meet the challenges of changing demands for advanced knowledge and technologies both quantity and quality of Higher Education should be enhanced. Quality of education is the need of the hour and every stakeholder need quality. This paper tries to answer the question "What are the key factors influencing quality in the higher education system?" How can academic excellence be achieved. To generate good quality Educational output our country should raise sufficient public and private resources and allocate them sufficient. Also to recruit and retain qualified professors and researchers, providing sufficient incentives is necessary and should be considered a priority.The purpose of this paper is to furnish local and global stakeholders with detailed information regarding the development and current status of quality assurance in the Indian higher education sector. This paper addresses the issues pertaining to quality and. It aims to suggest certain more steps for improving quality of higher education in our country.

KEYWORDS: Quality, Higher Education, issues, Assurance, NAAC, Institution, IQAC

Introduction

It is widely recognised that higher education promotes social and economic development by enhancing human and technical capabilities of society. Technical change and institutional change are key components of development. Higher education plays an important role in facilitating these changes by incorporating all of the various demographics of the population. India has the third largest higher education system in the world, next only to China and the United States. The higher education system in India grew rapidly after independence Quality assurance in higher education refers to ensuring the quality of academic degrees or professional qualifications. Vroeijenstijn (1995) explains quality assurance as „a systematic, structured and continuous attention to quality in terms of quality maintenance and improvement." Such a view of quality assurance is quite widely accepted. UNESCO (2004) describes quality assurance as a systematic review of educational programs to ensure that acceptable standards of education, scholarship and infrastructure are being maintained. Similarly, INQAAHE (2005) defines quality assurance as „all those attitudes, objects, actions and procedures, which through their existence and use, and together with the quality control activities, ensure that appropriate academic standards are being maintained and enhanced in and by each program". Bajaj (2006) argues that quality assurance is a by-product of ongoing efforts to define the objectives of the institution and have a work plan to achieve them and to specify the checks and balances and to evaluate the degree to which each of the tasks is

fulfilled. It has to be ensured that whatever is done is done efficiently and effectively for education with standards that enhance the image of the contribution of the institution. There should be no leadership deficit in executing Innovative interventions in teaching methods, support system, curricular enrichment and resource management. Sharma (2004) gives five essential aspects of quality education namely, quality syllabus, quality faculty, quality teaching and evaluation, quality research, and quality character. According to him, quality faculty includes their academic and research eminence, intellectual competence as measured by command over the subject, ability to build an argument in a cogent and coherent manner, communicative competence as reflected in clarity of thought and expression and above all, their creative competence as signified reflected character of teaching. All teachers may not be alike as far as above mentioned characteristics are concerned. But one thing is true that everybody should strive to improve quality

What is Quality?

"Quality is never an accident, it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skilful execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives "Quality in higher education means the educational process is such that it ensures students achieve their goals and thereby satisfies the needs of the society and help in national development Quality" is a much-debated term. With a variety of meanings and connotations, "quality" has been referred to as a "slippery concept"(Pfeiffer and Coot, 1991). To illustrate the elusive nature of quality and the confusion associated with it, many authors generally refer to the highly cited words of Pirsig (1974): The British Standard Institution (BSI) defines quality as "the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs" (BSI, 1991).

Green and Harvey (1993) identified five different approaches to defining quality:

- In terms of *exceptional* (exceeding high standards and passing a required standard);
- In terms of *consistency* (exhibited through "zero defects" and "getting right the first time", making quality a culture);
- As *fitness for purpose* (meaning the product or service meets the stated purpose, customer specifications and satisfaction);□
- As *value for money* (through efficiency and effectiveness); and
- As *transformative* (in term of qualitative change).

Quality Movement in Indian Higher Education

The University Grants Commission (UGC) with its statutory powers is expected to maintain quality in Indian higher education institutions. Section 12 of the UGC Act of 1956 requires UGC to be responsible for "the determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examinations and research in universities". To fulfil this mandate, the UGC has been continuously developing mechanisms to monitor quality in colleges and universities directly or indirectly. In order to improve quality, it has established national research facilities, and Academic Staff Colleges to re-orient teachers and provide

refresher courses in subject areas. The UGC also conducts the National Eligibility Test (NET) for setting high standards of teaching.

Various committees and commissions on education over the years have emphasized directly or indirectly the need for improvement and recognition of quality in Indian higher education system. The concept of autonomous colleges as recommended by Kothari Commission (1964-66) has its roots in the concept of quality improvement. Since the adoption of the National Policy on Education (1968), there has been tremendous expansion of educational opportunities at all levels, particularly in higher education. With the expansion of educational institutions, came the concern for quality. The constitutional amendment in 1976 brought education to the concurrent list making the central government more responsible for quality improvement (Stella and Gnanam, 2003). The New Education Policy (1986) emphasized on the recognition and reward of excellence in performance of institutions and checking of sub-standard institutions. Consequently, the Programme of Action (PoA) in 1986 stated, "As a part of its responsibility for the maintenance and promotion of standards of education, the UGC will, to begin with, take the initiative to establish an Accreditation and Assessment Council as an autonomous body". After eight years of continuous and serious deliberations, the UGC established NAAC at Bangalore as a registered autonomous body on 16th September 1994 under the Societies Registration Act of 1860.

The milestones in the emergence of NAAC can be identified as follows (Stella, 2000):

1. 1986: UGC constituted a 15-member committee on Accreditation and Assessment Council under the chairmanship of Dr.Vasant Gowarikar.
2. 1987-1990: Nine regional seminars and a national seminar organized to debate Gowarikar Committee report.
3. 1990: Dr Sukumaran Nair's project report submitted to UGC that reflected a consensus to have an accreditation agency accountable to UGC.
4. 1992: The revised New Education Policy reiterated all round improvement of educational institutions.
5. 1994: Prof. G. Ram Reddy committee appointed to finalize the memorandum of association and rules and regulation of the accreditation board (July 1994).
6. 1994: National Assessment and Accreditation Council established at Bangalore

The main objectives of NAAC as envisaged in the Memorandum of Association (MoA) are to:
- Grade institutions of higher education and their programmes;
- Stimulate the academic environment and quality of teaching and research in these institutions;
- Help institutions realize their academic objectives;
- Promote necessary changes, innovations and reforms in all aspects of the institutions working for the above purpose; and
- Encourage innovations, self-evaluation and accountability in higher education.
  Like NAAC (which is responsible for colleges and universities), there are other statutory bodies in India to assure quality in professional education. Some of these are:
- All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)

- National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE)
- Medical Council of India (MCI)
- Indian Nursing Council (INC)
- Bar Council of India (BCI)
- Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI)
- Distance Education Council (DEC)
- Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR)

Why Worry about Quality?

Why worry about quality? It is not just because of the UGC directive that we should think of quality, rather quality should be a bottom-up approach and everyone should be conscious of why we should worry about quality of our teaching, programmes and institutions. Some of the reasons are:

- *Competition***:** We are entering a new regime, where competition among educational institutions for students and funds will be highly significant. With globalization and the GATS (Global Agreement on Trade in Services), the educational environment will be seized by increased competition. In order to survive in such a situation, educational institutions need to worry about their quality.
- *Customer satisfaction*: Students, parents or sponsoring agencies as customers of the educational institutions are now highly conscious of their rights or getting value for their money and time spent. They are now demanding good quality teaching and receiving employable skill sets, and thus we should constantly worry about the relevance of our courses and programmes to the needs of the labour market.
- *Maintaining standards*: As educational institutions, we are always concerned about setting our own standard and maintaining it continuously year after year. In order to maintain the standard, we should consciously make efforts to improve quality of the educational transactions as well as the educational provisions and facilities.
- *Accountability***:** Every institution is accountable to its stakeholders in terms of the funds(public or private) used on it. Concern for quality will ensure accountability of the funds utilised and inform the stakeholders about taking appropriate decisions. Thus, quality can be considered as monitoring mechanism.
- *Improve employee morale and motivation*: Your concern for quality as an institution will improve the morale and motivation of the staff in performing their duties and responsibilities. If a quality system is in place, the internal processes would be systematic making every department Complementing each other's service domain and helping in developing internal customer satisfaction leading to high morale and motivation.
- *Credibility, prestige and status*: If you are concerned about quality, continuously and not once in a while, it will bring in credibility to individuals and your institution because of consistency leading to prestige, status and brand value.

- *Image and visibility*: Quality institutions have the capacity to attract better stakeholder support, like getting merited students from far and near, increased donations/ grants from philanthropists/funding agencies and higher employer interest for easy placement of graduates.

Privatised education

Few decades earlier imparting education was the noblest profession and teachers were very often respected more than the guardians. But, unfortunately the once holy profession of teaching has now become a money- spinning business. Over the period of time, particularly during the last three decades both government administered education system and the private run educational institutions have failed miserably in providing value based quality education. Government institutions with adequate infrastructure and well qualified teaching staff were unable to deliver and their results at the end of the academic sessions proved dismal both qualitatively and quantitatively. However, the private sector managed their performance of numbers but their quality of education cannot be termed satisfactory by any standards. Most of the times this knowledge paralysis can be observed only to the level of ten plus two and beyond that it is a level playing field where private sector is unable to compete with the state run education organizations

Much is being said and now being done actively and vigorously to revive the government education system. Let us wait for the day when, hopefully, this system will be back on rails and will offer quality education to every section of the society irrespective of class and status. As against the nominal teaching fee charged by government schools the private institutions charge hefty monthly sum to offer education. And if we compare the overall infrastructure and quality teaching staff of state and private sector educational institutions the private sector in most of the cases lags behind. Until seventies of last century only some missionary schools and few other private schools run by the religious organizations were part of the private education system. Most of these schools that time dominated the urban education landscape and in rural areas the state run schools not only ruled but provided wonderful results.

After seventies the fashion of sending wards to private schools picked up like an epidemic and major contributors to this ill- conceived education concept were the middle-class and the neo- riches. With substantial change in economic status and the living standard of people of Kashmir private run English medium schools became a status symbol. Thus the whole conception of education got linked with money and status and the hawkish exploiters watching this unprincipled development, without wasting any time jumped into this lucrative trade (otherwise holy profession) for a good margin without investing much. The period of unrest in the valley too played its catalytic role in changing the concept of education from noble service into murky trade. And that is how every businessman with or without any concept of education and knowledge shifted to greener pasture of education. Exceptions were there in the past and surely even now some players in private education sector do a great service and are able to maintain their standard of imparting knowledge oriented education. But most of the private players are out for a kill; to fleece the gullible parents suffering from complex and status symbol syndrome. A cursory look into the modus operandi of most of the private education players is not only

unethical but in broader sense can be termed as murkier. Development funds, hefty teaching charges and many other huge monthly payments end up in an education scenario that can be termed only as average by all means and standards. Lack of proper infrastructure and exploitation of work force are other aspects that bring most of these private schools under the shadow of answerability and invite action under rules. Interestingly, most of the private players have clandestinely joined hands to create a group with common interests and want to sway the opinion about private education sector in their favour. I have a word for this group—' be honest to the homeland and the future of this nation and leave rest to destiny'. During last two decades every Tom, Dick and Harry who had never been even remotely associated with education or knowledge has joined the bandwagon of private education sector. People who managed fortunes in pharmaceutical trade, hospitality and healthcare more aggressively joined the education industry along with real estate people. I don't challenge the credentials and credibility of any entrepreneur, but we should bear in mind that education sector is not a traditional business or trade where money should be the only criterion. In real sense education is dissemination of knowledge and shaping the future generation for a healthy nation building.

DOES INDIAN EDUCATION OFFER QUALITY?
The Knowledge Commission of India headed by Sam Pitroda has said that the country will need more than 1,500 universities by 2015 to provide opportunities of higher education to eligible Indian youths. Today the country has more than 700 universities and 33,000 colleges which offer a large number of programmes in Arts, Science, Commerce, Finance, Engineering, Technology, Law and Medicine. The country has grown in terms of number of colleges, universities and programmes, but it seems that there is a huge gap between the quantity and quality of higher education offered in this country.

It seems there is lack of proper planning, appropriate guidelines, and corrective measures while sanctioning new institutions and disciplines. Thus a large number of institutions are being established taking only profit into consideration and with little emphasis on quality of education. Even many government institutions have become battlegrounds for political rivalry resulting in poor governance leading to poor quality of education. Most of the technical education institutions including the better known ones are understaffed and lack in qualified, competent and suitable faculty members. Not a single Indian university has featured in the Times Higher Education (THE)'s ranking of the top 100 universities in the world that are less than 50 years old. Close to 800 universities submitted their entries, including 20 from India. The rankings are specifically for young universities, where traditionally European and Asian universities have dominated the top slots. The 'top 100 under 50' rankings, which was first published in 2012, has only had one Indian university — IIT Guwahati — at number 87 in the 2013 list. The top five universities in the 2014 list include Ecole Polytechnique Federal de Lausanne, Switzerland; Pohang University of Science and Technology and The Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) from South Korea; Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and Singapore's Nanyang Technological University.

Why we lag behind?
According to experts, the poor quality of research publications and lack of good faculty are the main reasons for the bad performance by Indian universities. "The higher

education system in India has had to cope with huge increase in student numbers, which puts pressure on resources and quality. Also, a large number of Indian universities do not meet our criteria, including the minimum number of research papers to be published each year," said Phil Baty, rankings editor, The SS Mantha, former chairman of the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) said, "Be it established universities like IITs, Mumbai or Delhi universities, we rarely see academic or industrial collaboration in its true sense. "It is not the mere number of research papers that need to be a criteria but the kind of journals they are published in, the citations it has and its application in the industry. Interdisciplinary activities and collaborations are also crucial, "he said.

Education in India is 99% focused on theoretical aspects. That's why more and more people in India are unemployed and even if they get employed they are given former training to equip them with the latest industry trends. About 7% to 8% of the youth who finish the 10+2 stage (pre-university) enter the 17,963 colleges of India and claim to have achieved higher education. However, higher education does not mean simply obtaining a post graduate degree or so, it must result in some contribution to society. Everybody talks of scientific approach and recommends for science education however our contribution in the area is insignificant both in quality and quantity particularly when compared with other countries and particularly China whose achievements are notable during the same period. Recently it has been highlighted that only 5% of engineers are employable. Though Indian universities featured in another listing – the QS rankings - in April 2015, except for a few top IITs, others have performed dismally on other global parameters.IIT Bombay and Delhi University featured in the list of top 100 technical institutions of the QS rankings but failed to make a mark in other subjects like medicines or law. According to research paper on pitfalls of Indian university rankings, only 3% of the universities have any sort of industrial collaboration. In most of the institutions the course curriculum is, by and large, theoretical in nature and students are not made aware of the applications of the theories in industry. The programmes and their course content reflect lack of interaction among academic institutions and industries. In the process the curriculum quite often fails to meet the needs of the industries. Not many structural changes have taken place in the curriculum even though rapid developments have been taking place continuously in the fields of science and technology. New branches of subjects have been introduced with the structure remaining in the traditional mode.

Moreover, the institutions mostly follow the traditional method of teaching giving little thought to the fact that information nowadays is readily available on the net and thus students would not get interested unless they get something extra by attending classes. It is more of content delivery than knowledge delivery. The assignments given quite often are routine and do not involve any research or innovation. It is a great challenge to motivate and attract students to serious learning. Moreover, the evaluation system has not been made robust enough to find out the knowledge level of the students. The philosophy of the semester system and the continuous evaluation process are not being understood by the students and also by the faculty members. Thus they are applied in a routine manner and the students concentrate only on grades and not on learning. The emergence of the IT sector has also affected the quality of graduates in other traditional engineering disciplines. Knowing that it is easy to get a job with a high salary in the IT sector, students from other disciplines also take as many IT related courses as possible as electives and do not give much importance on their discipline subjects. Even during summer vacations

some of them take coaching in IT related courses. In the process we produce half-baked engineers, neither good in their own disciplines nor in IT. In addition, over-dependence on software packages in some of the core discipline courses rather than on concepts has led to poor understanding of the subjects. Moreover, the emphasis on soft skills during campus interviews has created a wrong notion among students. They give too much importance on the development of soft skills and ignore the subjects of their disciplines. It seems employers have also accepted the fact that students with soft skills can be trained in the industry and thus do not expect a high level of knowledge in discipline subjects.

It's an Indian cliché that the best students end up becoming doctors. What the country really needs, it turns out, are doctorates. Almost 40% of teaching positions are vacant across the country's major central universities for want of quality PhD holders. As a result of these missing doctorates, India's grand plans of becoming a research juggernaut also face a huge obstacleThe problem was highlighted last by a parliamentary panel which wanted to know why it has been so hard to find suitable candidates for faculty positions in major universities. It even suggested that India might need a complete overhaul of the way it evaluates scholars

Prime Minister Narendra Modi pointed to the importance of research at the Indian Science Congress 2015 in January. "Our scientists should be able to explore the mysteries of science and not get stuck in government procedures," said Modi. "We have to place the university system at the cutting edge of the research and development activities in the country."

Another report by the British Council last year pointed out the same concern that India only produces a small fraction of PhDs as compared to countries like China and the US. "With a very low level of PhD enrolment, India does not have enough high quality researchers,"

SUGESSTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

By 2030, India will be amongst the youngest nations in the world. With nearly 140 million people in the college-going age group, one in every four graduates in the world will be a product of the Indian higher education system.There are some suggestions and Expectations from Government, Industry, Educational Institutions, Parents and Students for improving quality of higher education-

1. **Towards a Learning Society-** As we move towards a learning society, every human activity will require contributions from experts, and this will place the entire sector of higher education in sharp focus. Although the priorities, which are being assigned today to the task of Education for All, will continue to be preponderant, the country will have to prepare itself to invest more and more on higher education and, simultaneously, measures will have to be taken to refine, diversify and upgrade higher education and research programmes.
2. **Industry and Academia Connection-** Industry and Academia connect necessary to ensure curriculum and skills in line with requirements. Skill building is really very crucial to ensure employability of academia to understand and make sure good jobs (keeping in view knowledge + skills+ global professional skills = good jobs).

3. **Incentives to Teachers and Researchers**- Industry and students are expecting specialized courses to be offered so that they get the latest and best in education and they are also industry ready and employable. Vocational and Diploma courses need to be made more attractive to facilitate specialized programs being offered to students. Incentives should be provided to teachers and researchers to make these professions more attractive for the younger generation.

4. **Innovative Practices**- The new technologies offer vast opportunities for progress in all walks of life. It offers opportunities for economic growth, improved health, better service delivery, improved learning and socio-cultural advances. Though efforts are required to improve the country's innovative capacity, yet the efforts should be to build on the existing strengths in light of new understanding of the research innovation-growth linkage.

5. **To mobilize resources-** The decline in public funding in the last two plan periods has resulted in serious effects on standards due to increasing costs on non-salary items and emoluments of staff, on the one hand, and declining resources, on the other. Effective measures will have to be adopted to mobilize resources for higher education. There is also a need to relate the fee structure to the student's capacity to pay for the cost. So that, students at lower economic levels can be given highly subsidized and fully subsidized education.

6. **Coming of Information Age-** The world is entering into an Information Age and developments in communication, information and technology will open up new and cost-effective approaches for providing the reach of higher education to the youth as well as to those who need continuing education for meeting the demands of explosion of information, fast-changing nature of occupations, and lifelong education. Knowledge, which is at the heart of higher education, is a crucial resource in the development of political democracy, the struggle for social justice and progress towards individual enlightenment.

7. **Student-Centered Education and Dynamic Methods-** Methods of higher education also have to be appropriate to the needs of learning to learn, learning to do, learning to be and learning to become. Student-centered education and employment of dynamic methods of education will require from teachers new attitudes and new skills. Methods of teaching through lectures will have to subordinate to the methods that will lay stress on self-study, personal consultation between teachers and pupils, and dynamic sessions of seminars and workshops. Methods of distance education will have to be employed on a vast scale.

8. **Public Private Partnership**- PPP is most essential to bring in quality in the higher education system. Governments can ensure PPP through an appropriate policy. University Grants Commission and Ministry of HRD should play a major role in developing a purposeful interface between the Universities, Industries and National Research Laboratories (NRLs) as a step towards PPP. Funding to NRLs by the government should ensure the involvement of institutions of higher education engaged in research activities to facilitate availability of latest sophisticated

9. **Equipment :** There has been some effort both by the government and the private education institutions to develop the teaching staff at various levels. However, this needs to be intensified with appropriate attention to all the aspects related in

order to prepare quality and sufficient number of educational staff. Such efforts need a very serious structuring for the research base institutions. We have to be optimistic that private-public partnership and the Industry interface will take place in the field of education at all levels, and particularly in the backward regions, which is the needof the hour. To achieve excellence, we thus need to create a real partnership between government, educators and industry– Partnerships that can provide our high-tech industries with skilled workers who meet the standards of their industry.

10. **To Provide Need Based Job-Oriented Courses**- All round development of personality is the purpose of education. But the present day education is neither imparting true knowledge of life and nor improving the talent of a student by which one can achieve laurels in the field one is interested. So, combination of arts subjects and computer science and science and humanities or literature should be introduced so that such courses could be useful for the students to do jobs after recruitment in some companies which would reduce unnecessary rush to higher education. The programme must be focused on graduate studies and research and developing strategies and mechanisms for the rapid and efficient transfer of knowledge and for its application to specific national and local conditions and needs. Meritorious doctoral students should be recognized through teaching assistantships with stipends over and above the research fellowships. Finally, based on knowledge only vision of the future life and work can be had; based on this vision only a broad ambition can be fixed for oneself; and based on this ambition only one can lead interesting life doing satisfying job to do remarkable achievements in some field in the world.

11. **International Cooperation-** Universities in India have been a primary conduit for the advancement and transmission of knowledge through traditional functions such as research, innovation, teaching, human resource development, and continuing education. International cooperation is gaining importance as yet another function. With the increased development of transport and communication, the global village is witnessing a growing emphasis on international cooperation and action to find satisfactory solutions to problems that have global dimensions and higher educationist one of them.

12. **Towards a New vision-** India realizes, like other nations of the world, that humanity stands today at the head of a new age of a large synthesis of knowledge, and that the East and the West have to collaborate in bringing about concerted action for upliftment, and lasting peace and unity. In this new age, great cultural achievements of the past have to be recovered and enriched in the context of the contemporary advancement so that humanity can successfully meet the evolutionary and revolutionary challenges and bring about a new type of humanity and society marked by integrated powers of physical, emotional, dynamic, intellectual, ethical, aesthetic and spiritual potentialities.

13. **Cross Culture Programmes-** After education, tour to all the places in India and world as far as possible with the cooperation of government is necessary so that one can understand about people, culture, arts, literature, religions, technological developments and progress of human society in the world.

14. **Action Plan for Improving Quality**- Academic and administrative audit should be conducted once in three years in colleges by external experts for ensuring quality in all aspects of academic activities. The self-finance colleges should come forward for accreditation and fulfill the requirements of accreditation. Universities and colleges should realize the need for quality education and come forward with action plan for improving quality in higher educational institutions.

15. **Individuality-** The life of one will not be interesting but rather boring, monotonous and frustrating. This is mainly due to parental interference in the education of the children. Parental guidance is necessary but it should not interfere in the creativity or individuality of the students. Also, in spite of the obsolete type of education system, some are achieving wonderful things in Sports, Music, Dance, Painting, Science and Technology in the world. This is only due to the encouragement of the parents and some dedicated teachers in the educational institutions. Higher education is necessary for one to achieve excellence in the line one is best. But one should be

16. selected for higher education on the basis of merit only. Further, fees for education in general should not be high; especially, the fees for higher studies should be within the reach of every class of people in the nation.

17. **Privatization of Higher Education-** In any nation education is the basic necessity for the socio-economic development of the individuals and the society. In reality only 20% of the population is educated in India. So, improved standard of education as first priority should be offered to the majority by the govt. authorities with sincere political will. Also, privatization of higher education is absolutely necessary in a vast country like India as government alone is helpless to do so.

18. **Quality development-** Quality depends on its all functions and activities: teaching and academic programs, research and scholarship, staffing, students, building, facilities, equipments, services to the community and the acdemic environment. It also requires that higher education should be characterized by its international dimensions: exchange of knowledge, interactive networking, mobility of teachers and students and international research projects, while taking ino account the national cultural values and circumstances. The level of education and knowledge being imparted by many colleges is not up to the mark. Instead of concentrating on quantity, these institutions should concentrate on quality..

19. **World Class Education-** Indian government is not giving priority to the development of Standard in education. India should aspire for the international standard in education. Many national universities like in the USA, UK, Australia, etc. allow studies in higher education for foreign students in their countries and through correspondence courses as well. In the same way India Universities of world class education can also offer courses of studies to foreign students taking advantage of the globalization process. To achieve that goal it should adopt uniform international syllabus in its educational institutions.

20. **Personality Development-** Finally, education should be for the flowering of personality but not for the suppression of creativity or natural skill. In the globalized world opportunities for the educated people are naturally ample in scope. As a result business process outsourcing (BPO) activities have increased

competition in the world trade leading towards the production of quality goods and their easy availability everywhere in the world market. That is the way the world can be developed for peace, prosperity and progress by able and skilful men.

21. **Status of Academic Research Studies-** If we see the number of researchers engaged in Research and Development activities as compared to other countries we find that we have merely 119 researchers, whereas Japan has 5287 and US has 4484 researchers per million of population. Even in absolute terms, number of researchers in India is much smaller compared to US, China,

22. **Fair Quality Assurance System**- Colleges and Private institutes should set up Internal Quality Assurance Cell and must follow a minimum standard to give degrees. The quality assurance system must be independent of political and institutional interaction and it must have a basis in the legislation. There should be operational, financial and academic autonomy coupled with accountability. There is a need of an independent accreditation agency with a conglomerate of government, industry, academia; society etc. means all stakeholders of the education to ensure that the stakeholders particularly the students are not taken for a ride. They should be able to know whether a particular institution delivers value or not, then things can be under control to some extent. It is also important that all institutes of higher learning must make public the acceptability of their courses and degrees. (i.e. the status, recognition and acceptability of their courses by other institutions).

23. **Examination Reforms**- Examination reforms, gradually shifting from the terminal, annual and semester examinations to regular and continuous assessment of student's performance in learning should be implemented

24. **High-tech Libraries-** Our university libraries have a very good collection of books, but they are all in mess. A library must be online and conducive for serious study. Indian universities should concentrate more on providing quality education which is comparable to that of international standards.

25. **Make the curriculum Dynamic not Dogmatic-**The curriculum or the syllabus for students in our country in higher education is outdated in most cases. It is stale, dogmatic and teaches things that the world has moved on with. To infuse dynamism, you need the curriculum to be progressive in nature.

26. **Make the Teachers feel worthy, pay them more-** The academic curriculum board, in most cases is filled with people above their 60's and 70's. With all due respect to them, I strongly feel that you need a bunch of younger professors in there to have that mix of experience and youth in the system.

The younger ones would be more in sync, more in line with the technological changes and the new age needs of the students in their years to come. Very few among the young are actually in teaching for the sake of teaching. The point is very simple; they are paid pittens in comparison with the rest. A graduating student earns more in an IT company than what a Lecturer or even a Assistant Professor earns in some colleges (despite the 6th Pay commission increase which covers only on the Government colleges). Once you start paying more, you get quality faculty in, you get people who actually want to teach and people who are worth the caliber of teaching. After this, you will have a scenario where you have quality young people who can actually give the 60's and 70's in the

curriculum boards a run for their money and there wouldn't be any excuses. So where would the money come in from?

All of the above are just mere suggestions to tackle system that has numerous issues. These suggestions might not break the deadlock or create a revolution by any means but it can be something that can be incorporated. These suggestions might not be relevant to some. These suggestions might also sound farfetched but if it at least one of them adds value somewhere to the education system, then it's worth it

CONCLUSION:

In this paper I have presented the present status of quality of higher education in India I have tried to focus on the issues related to student and issues related to largest academic system in the third world. After independence, there has been tremendous increase in institutions of higher learning in all disciplines. But with the quantitative growth has it been able to attend to the core issue of quality. India is today one of the fastest developing countries of the world with the annual growth rate going above 9%. In order to sustain that rate of growth, there is need to increase the number of institutes and also the quality of higher education in India. To reach and achieve the future requirements there is an urgent need to relook at the Financial Resources, Access and Equity, Quality Standards, Relevance and at the end the Responsiveness. To attain and sustain national, regional or international quality, certain components are particularly relevant, notably careful selection of staff and continuous staff development, in particular through the promotion of appropriate programs for academic development, including teaching/learning methodology and mobility between countries, between higher education institutions and the world of work, as well as student mobility within and between countries. Internal self-evaluation and external review must be conducted openly by independent specialists, if possible with international experts. Quality of education is the need of the hour and every stakeholder need quality. The author tried to answer the question "What are the key factors influencing quality in the Indian education system. The author also suggested certain more steps for improving quality of higher education in our country.

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