

Governance in Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in the General Degree Colleges in the District of Howrah, West Bengal – A Study

Suresh Kumar Agarwal

Suresh Kumar Agarwal <skagarwal5599@gmail.com>

Abstract

Education in its general sense is a form of learning, in which the knowledge, skills, and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, training, or research. Higher education institutions are an important part of - and play an important role in – society. The institutions are societies unto themselves, but they are also part of the larger society. If they remained only societies unto themselves, higher education institutions would be locked up in the proverbial ivory tower and their future would most likely be considerably shorter than their past. On the other hand, higher education institutions without some distance from society at large would run a serious risk of losing their capacity to reason in terms of principle, to take a long term view somewhat detached from the immediate issues of the day and to identify sustainable solutions to the most serious and long term challenges facing our society. Student participation as defined by this conference is an aspect of the broader area of higher education governance, so it may be useful to recall that higher education governance is at the heart of the Bologna Process and will be a key feature of the European Higher Education Area to be set up by 2010. To an extent, this is taken for granted, and many institutional representatives and higher education policy makers refer to academic freedom and institutional autonomy – or sometimes a mixture of the two – as if these were obvious features of higher education in Europe, freedoms earned at the dawn of time and destined to be with us until some distant academic sunset. The present study investigates the issues of governance in Higher Education Institutions in India, with a specific and pin-pointed analysis on the degree colleges in the district of Howrah, West Bengal. The study is based on Primary Data Analysis

KEYWORDS : Governance, HEIs.

1.0. Introduction

India is next only to China and USA in student enrollment in the higher education sector. It is the largest as far as the number of higher education institutions is concerned. Universities like Visva Bharati University, Banaras Hindu University, University of Allahabad, Jamia Millia Islamia are a few reputed ones which were established during the pre-independence period. We know that the quality and quantity of the skilled manpower determine the competency of economic leadership of any world society in the global market. We also know that higher education is no longer a luxury. Higher education is essential for any nation for its social and economic development. As we know, India is a fast growing democracy with a robust GDP growth of 7.5% in the year 2008 and rising year by year. It is most satisfying to recognize that despite global economic recession, India has maintained its economic stability reasonably safe and sound. Higher education institutions in India are of varied growth levels and also have varying funding

mechanisms. We have higher education institutions under the category of Institutes of national importance like IITs, IIMs, AIIMS and the Central universities, all funded 100% by the Central Government. State Universities are funded mainly by the State Government, however, some marginal financial supports are provided by the Central Government as plan grants through various schemes of the UGC. Another category of institutions are designated as Deemed to be Universities. Broadly, the size of the State University sector is reported to be 57 % of the total, 8% is the Central University sector, 1% are the institutions other than universities established under the State Legislation and likewise, 7% are the institutions of national importance and almost 27% institutions are under the category of Deemed-to be-Universities. The number of the universities up to the year 2010 has been reported to be 518 by the UGC. The total student enrollment under all these institutions is over 12.3 million students (123 lakhs). There has been a rapid growth beyond the year 2000. The number of universities in year 2000 was 266 and there is almost 100%¹ growth in less than 8 years period. Also in 1947, the total number of universities were only 20, with student enrollment of about 0.2 million (2 lakhs). We thus have come a long way.

Education in its general sense is a form of learning, in which the knowledge, skills, and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, training, or research. Education frequently takes place under the guidance of others, but may also be autodidactic. Any experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels, or acts may be considered educational. The English word “Education” has been derived from two Latin words Educare (Educere) and Educatum. “Educare” means to train or mould. It also means to bring up or to lead out or to draw out propulsion from inward to outward. On the other hand the term “Educatum” denotes the act of teaching. It throws light on the principles and practice of teaching. The term Educare or Educere mainly indicates the development of the latent faculty of the child. But child does not know these possibilities. It is the educator or the teacher who knows these and takes appropriate methods to develop those powers.

In traditional sense, education means controlling or disciplining the behaviour of an individual. In Hindi, the term “Siksha” has come from the Sanskrit word “Shash”. “Shash” means to discipline, to control, to order, to direct, to rule etc. Education in the traditional sense means controlling or disciplining the behaviour of an individual. In Sanskrit “Shiksha” is a particular branch of the Sutra literature, which has six branches – Shiksh, Chhanda, Byakarana, Nirukta, Jyotisha and Kalpa. The Sutra literature was designed to learn the Vedas. Siksha denotes rules of pronunciation. There is another term in Sanskrit, which throws light on the nature of education. It is “Vidya” originating from “Bid” meaning knowledge.

Higher Education in India has seen massive growth in recent years. On one hand, this growth promises to produce more skilled individuals to fulfill needs of ever growing Indian economy and on the other hand it poses a huge challenge for the governing bodies like UGC, AICTE and others to maintain or improve the quality of education.

¹ www.indiaeducationreview.com

The College sector which is primarily affiliated to the universities recorded its growth to reach a mark of 25951 in the year 2010. This number was 500 in the year 1947. Total percentage of enrollment for Undergraduate programmes is almost 90%, 10% is for Postgraduate Education & Research. Likewise, if we look at stream-wise enrollment in India, Humanities & Arts stream constitute the largest percentage among all i.e. 45%; Sciences constitute 20%; Commerce & Management constitute 18%; Engineering & Technology constitute 7% and remaining 10% for streams like Law, Agriculture, Medicine and all others ranging from 1% to 3% each. The Government of India has emphasized the need for further growth of higher education institutions incorporating the recommendations of the National Knowledge Commission and also similar recommendations by the Planning Commission of India from time to time. In the current plan period, the Govt. of India has already established 8 new IITs, 6 IIMs, 20 NITs, 3 IISERs, and 20 new NITs are proposed and 2 more SPAs. The spectacular growth in the number of higher education institutions at all levels including the affiliating college system, the universities including deemed-to-be universities etc has elevated India as a country leading globally in higher education sector along with USA and China. Governance and management of post-secondary institutions becomes even more diverse with the differences in defining the relationships between higher and tertiary education (university education), postsecondary education, technical and vocational education, and community college models of education. With the continuing liberalization of the Indian economy, manufacturing industries and service industries in India are facing major challenge. One of the main reasons for this is growth in national and international competition. Therefore Indian organizations have to strive forth in an environment that is highly competitive both within and outside the domestic arena. Thus development of higher education has been one of the most important agendas of the Indian Government. Implications are clearly proved through setting up of a number of higher education institutes within the country starting right from post independence. Not only in India, the last quarter of the 20th century has brought higher education into the priority list of many nations. This is because human resource development cannot really happen without development of intellectual capital.

As per the observations made by the World Bank, scientific and technological progress and enhanced productivity in any nation is closely linked with the investments made for improvement of human capital and quality of economic environment. India inherited an age old tradition of higher education system which had generated knowledge and learning right from the beginning of Indian civilization. To take into consideration the reign of the Guptas⁷ they encouraged higher learning by patronizing centers of higher education at Nalanda, Takshila, Ujjain, Vikramshila and Vallabhi. Each university as mentioned specialized in a particular field of study. Takshila was renowned in the study of medicine, while Ujjain was famous for astronomy. Nalanda, since it was the biggest centre and locational advantage, handled all branches of knowledge. As a matter of fact during the Gupta period, India became a renowned centre for higher studies by attracting scholars from all parts of India and from several foreign countries. These universities became even popular in the seventh and eighth centuries A.D. After the advent of Buddhism people flocked to the Sarnath university to study Buddhist religion and to Ajanta to specialize in art, architecture and painting. These educational institutions were mainly financed by grants of land and liberal donations. Such grants and donations came from kings as well

as from other affluent people existing in the-then society. In fact, historical data figures out a well-established system of higher education which functioned in India as early as 1000 B.C. "In that system, the construction of knowledge, the beliefs on which knowledge is based, basic concepts and the organization of learning were very different from the European tradition. The Indian system of education was validated by the fact that it sustained Indian Civilization for centuries.² This means that the Indian idea of education established a symbiotic link between the learner and his/her civilized view of the world. Learning during those days did not mean separating the learner from his own cultural identity but the learner affirmed it, as part of his learning process. Thus inculcation of social and cultural identity was one of most important elements of ancient learning. The components of this learning therefore included various skills for survival (for e.g handicrafts) and variety of knowledge systems which exposed the learner to the knowledge of his choice. The system manifested itself in a distinctly native institution of education called Gurukool.

Higher education institutions are an important part of - and play an important role in – society. The institutions are societies unto themselves, but they are also part of the larger society. If they remained only societies unto themselves, higher education institutions would be locked up in the proverbial ivory tower and their future would most likely be considerably shorter than their past. On the other hand, higher education institutions without some distance from society at large would run a serious risk of losing their capacity to reason in terms of principle, to take a long term view somewhat detached from the immediate issues of the day and to identify sustainable solutions to the most serious and long term challenges facing our society. The CD-ESR pilot project on the University as a Site of Citizenship identified four sets of issues in which higher education institutions have a role to play, as institution and/or through their individual members, i.e. the academic community of scholars and students: (i) institutional decision making; (ii) institutional life in a wider sense, including the study process; (iii) higher education institutions as multicultural societies; (iv) higher education institutions in their relationship and interaction with the wider society. While this conference focuses on higher education governance, I will to some extent also draw on the other dimensions identified by the project on the University as a Site of Citizenship where this seems relevant. India's higher education system is under pressure from the State and an increasingly educated youth population to achieve multiple objectives, such as growth, quality and equitable access. To reach these political targets, national and provincial policymakers take an activist approach, such as providing adequate resources, enabling private provision of higher education, and so forth. Issues concerning interaction with the Governments, statutory bodies etc. are issues of external governance of higher education system/institutions. Likewise, the issues of academic and administrative matters of the institution; and matters of its own vision and mission are considered as issues of internal governance within.

1.1 HIGHER EDUCATION GOVERNANCE

² GOVERNANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA, Dr. Chandrakant N Koligudde, International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research, Vol. 2, Issue 3, pp: (245-250), Month: July 2014 - September 2014

Student participation as defined by this conference is an aspect of the broader area of higher education governance, so it may be useful to recall that higher education governance is at the heart of the Bologna Process and will be a key feature of the European Higher Education Area to be set up by 2010. To an extent, this is taken for granted, and many institutional representatives and higher education policy makers refer to academic freedom and institutional autonomy – or sometimes a mixture of the two – as if these were obvious features of higher education in Europe, freedoms earned at the dawn of time and destined to be with us until some distant academic sunset. Yet reality, as so often, is slightly more complicated, even if there is general agreement on the need for autonomous institutions. Once we start asking what this actually means, however, consensus breaks down as the level of precision increases. Autonomy is often referred to as “institutional”, sometimes as “university”, but the question of whether there are differences between the two or whether we need to develop a more nuanced view is rarely asked. Similarly, autonomy is often thought of in legal terms, but even where autonomy from Ministries is guaranteed by law and honoured by practice, no institution can be an island unto itself. Institutions are influenced by the expectations and financial contributions³ by other actors, whether these are Ministries and other public authorities, private companies or the somewhat imprecise animal normally referred to as public opinion. Institutions not only are influenced by their surroundings, but they should be, at least to an extent. The problem, then, is not one of principle, but of finding the right balance. Similarly, we tend to take it for granted that universities or higher education institutions – again, there tends to be lack of precision – are headed by an elected official who goes by many different names according to the context but who internationally tends to be referred to as the Rector and governed by a representative body elected by the academic community, typically by various combinations of the words University, Academic, Senate and Council. Recently, however, a good number of universities have welcomed representatives who are not members of the academic community on their governing bodies - or they have been forced to accept such representatives, as the case may be. These representatives underline that universities are a part of the larger society, that they have a duty to this society and that they both contribute to and are influenced by it. Nor is this really a new development.

1.2 Brief Review of the available Literatures

In the process of finding the proper research gap for the study I went through the following available literatures on the selected topic.

Pawan Agarwal, (2006), in his study “Higher Education in India: The Need for Change”⁴ has concluded that higher education in India suffers from several systemic

³ Agarwal, P (2006), Higher education in India: The need for change. New Delhi, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations.

⁴ Pawan Agarwal, 2006, “Higher Education in India: The Need for Change”, Indian Council For Research on International Economic Relations, Working Paper No. 180

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. Higher education in India has expanded rapidly over the past two decades. This growth has been mainly driven by private sector initiatives.

Alok Chakrabarti, (2007), in his paper “Higher Education and Research in India: An Overview”⁵ has attempted to provide a brief overview of the educational system in India. The intended audience is Finnish policy makers, universities and other agencies. Since India and Finland have few historical ties, it would need some concerted effort by both countries to develop productive collaboration. Although the modern education system in India is based on the Anglo- American tradition, there is a great variety of institutional systems in higher education. Government plays a dominant role not only in providing funds for education but also in the administration and control of these institutions. It is not uncommon that institutions may be facing dictums from various entities that are at times confusing and contradictory. Any foreign organization trying to build a relationship with these institutions must not be daunted by such ambiguities and must work with them patiently.

Fabrice Hénard, Alexander Mitterle, (2010), in their paper “GOVERNANCE AND QUALITY GUIDELINES IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A review on governance arrangements and quality assurance guidelines”⁶ concluded that governance arrangements concentrate on a specification and clarification of institutional roles and responsibilities (with a primary focus on the institution’s governing body) while quality guidelines concentrate on the improvement of processes and interaction within higher education. Yet, as quality guidelines become more detailed, institutional structure is addressed in a very similar way to governance arrangements.

Shyam Sunder, (2010), in his study “Higher Education Reforms in India”⁷ has concluded that the Indian economy and higher education must be viewed not merely in relation to its own past, but also relative to its neighborhood and the world. Comparison with universities in other parts of the world, including Asian universities, which were easily outranked by their Indian counterparts a few decades ago, is not favorable.

⁵ Alok Chakrabarti, 2007, “Higher Education and Research in India: An Overview”, Sitra Reports 74

⁶ Fabrice Hénard, Alexander Mitterle, 2010, “GOVERNANCE AND QUALITY GUIDELINES IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A review on governance arrangements and quality assurance guidelines”, ssrn.com

⁷ Shyam Sunder, 2010, “Higher Education Reforms in India” , ssrn.com

P. Arunachalam, (2010), in his study “Higher Education Sector in India: Issues and Imperatives”⁸ has concluded that the Government should deregulate higher education in the country to prevent repatriating over Rs 50,000 crore per annum as nearly five lakh students still go abroad to acquire better skills, industry body Assocham said. The chamber said that higher education in India is so subsidized that on average, an IIT or an MBA student in reputed institutions shell out \$120 per month as fees, while people who go for studies abroad spend between \$1,500 and \$5,000 fee per month for getting engineering or management degrees in the U.S., Canada, Australia and the U.K.

Dr. J. D. Singh, (2011), in his study “Higher Education in India – Issues, Challenges and Suggestions”⁹ has opined that although there have been challenges to higher education in the past, these most recent calls for reform may provoke a fundamental change in higher education. This change may not occur as a direct response to calls for greater transparency and accountability, but rather because of the opportunity to reflect on the purpose of higher education, the role of colleges and universities in the new millennium, and emerging scientific research on how people learn. These disparate literatures have not been tied together in a way that would examine the impact of fundamental change from the policy level to the institutional level and to the everyday lives of college and university administrators, faculty and students. Now the time has come to create a second wave of institution building and of excellence in the fields of education, research and capability building. We need higher educated people who are skilled and who can drive our economy forward. When India can provide skilled people to the outside world then we can transfer our country from a developing nation to a developed nation very easily and quickly.

Martin Carnoy and Rafiq Dossani, (2011), in their study “THE CHANGING GOVERNANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA”¹⁰ have opined that India’s higher education system is under pressure from the State and an increasingly educated youth population to achieve multiple objectives, such as growth, quality and equitable access. To reach these political targets, national and provincial policymakers take an activist approach, such as providing adequate resources, enabling private provision of higher education, and so forth.

According to **Santosh Kumar Joshi, (2011)**, in his study “A New Direction of Governance and Regulation in Higher Education”¹¹ has concluded that The Governmental control in the Universities must be reduced, so that the University autonomy and accountability are strengthened and academic decisions are taken on merit. New methods and procedures of financial regulations should be devised and direct

⁸ P. Arunachalam, 2010, “Higher Education Sector in India: Issues and Imperatives”, Journal of Global Economy, Volume 6 No 4, JULY-AUGUST, 2010

⁹ Dr. J.D. Singh, 2011, “Higher Education in India – Issues, Challenges and Suggestions”, ssrn.com

¹⁰ Martin Carnoy and Rafiq Dossani, 2011, “THE CHANGING GOVERNANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA”, ssrn.com

¹¹ Ibid, p.3

interference of the finance department in the financial management of Universities, which is counter productive, should be stopped. As the Colleges are the feeding sources of the Universities, a better coordination in their working and activities is very much required. The participation of the teaching faculty in through a democratic process should be ensured. Complete transparency should be maintained in the working of Executive/Academic Bodies and other Governing Councils of the Universities. There is an urgency to review the University Acts in different States and revise the same in the light of the new requirements and the challenges being faced by the Universities.. New technologies of information and communication should be utilized for obtaining administrative efficiency. Higher Education should be developed as an infrastructure for social and economic growth of the Country. Students' involvement in the area of University/College governance should be encouraged. Political interference in the appointment of University teachers and administrators should be totally stopped.

Gujju Umamaheswara Rao, (2012) in his study “Governance: A Challenge to Higher Education in India”¹² has critically analyzed how the governance in higher education sector work and how is it working so far. The paper also discussed critically the targets of 12th five year plan and the possibilities of achieving them. In conclusion it can be said that one thing that the Accessibility and equity and quality are interrelated, if you neglect one out of three, the higher education system stick there where it was. The development in higher education must be viewed in the context of the changes in the Indian society and the Indian polity and their influences on the policy process.

Deepti Gupta, Navneet Gupta, (2012), in their study “Higher Education in India: Structure, Statistics and Challenges”¹³ concluded that India’s education system is often cited as one of the main contributors to the economic rise of India. The size of India’s higher education market is about \$40 billion per year. Presently about 12.4 percent of students go for higher education from the country. If India were to increase that figure of 12.4% to 30%, then it would need another 800 to one thousand universities and over 40,000 colleges in the next 10 years. This paper presents the development and present scenario of higher education in India by analyzing the various data and also identifies the key challenges that India’s higher education sector is facing.

B. Komow, Raghav Khanna, R.K. Sharma, (2012), in their study “JOURNEY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA: AN ANALYSIS OF POST INDEPENDENCE ERA”¹⁴ have opined that the journey of higher education in India along the Post-Independence era has witnessed some creditable achievements in the field of higher education resulting into overall growth in the status of higher education in India but at the

¹² Gujju Umamaheswara Rao, 2012, “Governance: A Challenge to Higher Education in India”, ssrn.com

¹³ Deepti Gupta, Navneet Gupta, 2012, “Higher Education in India: Structure, Statistics and Challenges”, *Journal of Education and Practice*, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 17-24

¹⁴ B. Komow, Raghav Khanna, R.K. Sharma, 2012, “JOURNEY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA: AN ANALYSIS OF POST INDEPENDENCE ERA”, *Asian Journal of Multidimensional Research* Vol.1 Issue 1, June 2012, p. 96-115

same time has resulted into bigger problems and issues in the field. Undoubtedly, manifold increase in the number of institutions of higher education both in the universities and colleges yet the accessibility to higher education in the country has not achieved the desired standards. The wide variations in urban and rural accessibility are attention catching suggesting that emphasis on rural expansion of these institutions be given to bridge the gap between the rural-urban accessibility disparities.

Dr. K. M. Joshi, Dr. Kinjal Vijay Ahir, (2013), in their study “INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION: SOME REFLECTIONS”¹⁵ have come to a conclusion that India is one of the largest, vibrant and oldest democracies being the second largest country by population. As the world looks east for global leadership in economic growth, India has to consistently pay attention to her higher education as a source of growth in current times of knowledge driven growth. Within these challenges, underlie the promising opportunities for India to outshine on the global map. Indian higher education has various complexities in context of regulations, access, financing, equity, efficiency, quality, internationalization, etc. Regulations remain entwined resulting in lack of clarity for the ones who are supposed to implement the same. As a result, regulations associated confusions cause apprehensions in terms perceiving the regulation to suit the individual requirements the best. Judicial interventions add fuel to the fire with at times judgments going against the very objectives set for higher education. While the aggressiveness to achieve higher rates of gross enrolment ratios still remains unfulfilled, it would be very challenging to create sufficient opportunities to assure access to every eligible candidate in the relevant age cohort. This might continue to smooth the process of increased role to be played by the private higher education sector vis-à-vis public sector struggling to meet ends on other prioritized avenues of public expenditure. Equitable access may still be a misnomer for policy framers as there are complex challenges in assuring the same.

Lindsay Daugherty, Trey Miller, Rafiq Dossani, Megan Clifford, (2013) in their study “BUILDING THE LINKS BETWEEN FUNDING AND QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION”¹⁶ expressed that Indian higher education is at a transitional stage: The size of the system is growing rapidly, particularly among private institutions; government funding has increased substantially; and there is a call for a shift toward a less centralized governance structure based on the “steer and evaluate” model. While the 12th FYP provides a range of possible reforms that are aligned with this objective, this report focuses on how the government will incentivize newly autonomous institutions to pursue outcomes aligned with national goals. Many countries with less centralized higher education governance structures have instituted policies linking funding to quality as a means to provide institutions and states with robust incentives to pursue national objectives.

¹⁵ Dr. K. M. Joshi, Dr. Kinjal Vijay Ahir, 2013, “INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION: SOME REFLECTIONS”, Intellectual Economics, 2013, Vol.7, No.1(15), p.42-53

¹⁶ Lindsay Daugherty, Trey Miller, Rafiq Dossani, Megan Clifford, 2013, “BUILDING THE LINKS BETWEEN FUNDING AND QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION” www.rand.org

Dr. Suhas Avhad, (2013) in his research paper “EMERGING ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION”¹⁷ has opined that the Higher Education system is witnessing significant transformations and reforms. The globalization of economic activities and development in science and technology accelerate the emergence of new types of higher education institutions. On several occasions, however, resources have been found to implement significant new initiatives in higher education. The establishment of the institutes of technology few decades ago is an example. The IIT have proved highly successful in terms of providing high quality higher education in specific fields. They have, when compared to the traditional colleges and universities, been quite expensive.

According to **Jesiah Selvam, (2013)**, in her study “DOES GLOBALIZATION AFFECT HIGHER EDUCATION?: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM INDIA”¹⁸ examined the impact of globalization on higher education in India and also discussed the major challenges that the globalization brought to higher education. The study used data over twenty five years, 1981/82-2011/12 and applied Ordinary Least Square (OLS) analysis with inclusion of various functional variables that may contribute to the higher education in the post reform period. A regression model is developed using the perspectives of the heterodox model which does not conclude that the non-significant variables necessarily imply that the hypothesized causal links are invalid. The study reveals that the relationship between globalization and higher education was fragile revealing a gap between what the country has achieved on globalization and what it has achieved on higher education. The study cautions the policy makers that if they let present condition continue, it will be imminent that the capacity of higher education to produce right people would get jeopardized. It is therefore suggested that the government should ensure right allocation and correct appropriateness of budget on higher education.

Dr. Chandrakant N Koligudde, (2014) in his study “GOVERNANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA”¹⁹ has concluded that India’s higher education system is under pressure from the State and an increasingly educated youth population to achieve multiple objectives, such as growth, quality and equitable access. To reach these political targets, national and provincial policymakers take an activist approach, such as providing adequate resources, enabling private provision of higher education, and so forth. Issues concerning interaction with the Governments, statutory bodies etc. are issues of external governance of higher education system/institutions. Likewise, the issues of academic and administrative matters of the institution; and matters of its own vision and mission are considered as issues of internal governance within.

¹⁷ Dr. Suhas Avhad, 2013, “EMERGING ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION”, International Monthly Refereed Journal of Research In Management & Technology, Volume II, January’13, p. 53-56

¹⁸ Jesiah Sevam, 2013, “DOES GLOBALIZATION AFFECT HIGHER EDUCATION?: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM INDIA”, ssrn.com

¹⁹ Dr. Chandrakant N Koligudde, 2014, “GOVERNANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA”, International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research, Vol. 2, Issue 3, pp: (245-250), Month: July 2014 - September 2014

Naushad Forbes, (2014), concluded in his study titled “Higher Education in India: Growth with Challenges”²⁰ that the relatively small reform of the early 1980s of allowing private colleges in some states triggered a massive expansion of professional education, almost all privately provided. We should not underestimate just how impressive this expansion has been, but the quality problem India now faces is a direct consequence of its emphasis on quantity over quality. The solution is not to limit expansion but rather to improve quality. In typical Indian style, the state manages to simultaneously overplay and underplay its role.

In their study “Role of e-Governance to strengthen higher education system in India”²¹, **Dr. R. K. Shrivastava, Dr. A.K. Raizada, Mrs. Neeta Saxena, (2014)**, have opined that the planning for efficient administration of higher educational institutions, increasing Global communication skill, to achieve the world class standard it is necessary to have a improved collaboration and access to information available in all the parts of the world are possible only by introducing IT in Educational Sector with e-governance as a security for maintaining standard. The e-governance needs security for smooth information flow, best practice database and enhanced capacity for information analysis etc. Government should support by enacting favorable legislations and updated amendments for maintaining standards in the educational process and improvements in the related field. It requires completely new infrastructure, procedures, policies and working skills for producing and collecting online information. With the advent of ICT, electronic governance is an emerging trend to re-invent the way the government works, becoming a new model of governance.

1.3 Identifying the Ultimate Research Gap

After going through the above mentioned literatures it has been found that although some research work has been done on the governance practices adopted by the HEIs, most of the relevant books and articles are basically conceptual. However, the effectiveness of the governance of the HEIs has not been dealt with in great details as of yet, so it leaves a scope of doing research in this area.

1.4 Proposed Research Methodology for the Present Study

1.4.1 Nature of Data

The study is essentially empirical in nature. It is mainly based on relevant primary data and information are collected from all the general degree colleges in the Howrah District affiliated to the University of Calcutta, based on *Complete Enumeration Method*, where the population are all the afore-mentioned colleges, of course, depending on the availability of data. **Finally, data were collected from 168 governing body members of 13 degree colleges in the district of Howrah.**

²⁰ Naushad Forbes, 2014, “Higher Education in India: Growth with Challenges”, ssrn.com

²¹ Dr. R. K. Shrivastava, Dr. A.K. Raizada, Mrs. Neeta Saxena, 2014, “Role of e-Governance to strengthen higher education system in India”, IOSR Journal of Method and Education, Volume 4, Issue 2, Ver. 1 (Mar-Apr. 2014), pp. 57-62

1.4.2 Method of Collection of Data

Necessary data required for the study were collected through a questionnaire supplemented by personal interviews and discussions with the Principals, /Teachers-in charge, coordinators of IQACs, selected members of Governing Bodies, and cross-sections of stakeholders connected with higher education, namely, students, parents, teachers, staff members of the said institutions. Information available in the Annual Quality Assurance Reports (AQARs) has also been used in case of the NAAC - accredited colleges. For the purpose of the study, secondary data and information has also been gathered from the existing literature, such as relevant research based books/articles and reports and some relevant websites has also been visited.

1.4.3 Tools for Data Analysis

The data collected was analysed using appropriate statistical tools and techniques. Based on appreciation of the conceptual issues and analysis of data, an attempt has been made to draw meaningful conclusions.

2.0 Objectives of the Study

Based on the above literature review and more specifically, after pin-pointing the ultimate research vacuum, the major objective of the study has been found to be, to evaluate the governance of the general degree colleges affiliated to the University of Calcutta. With a view to making the study more meaningful, certain specific aspects have to be studied and these are as under:

1. **To assess whether and to what extent governance helps improve academic and administrative performance of the said institutions.**
2. **To measure the extent to which governance helps said institutions internalize and institutionalize quality culture.**

3.0 Tools for Data Analysis

The data collected has been analysed using appropriate statistical tools and techniques like frequency distribution, cross tabulations etc. Based on appreciation of the conceptual issues and analysis of data, an attempt has also been made to draw meaningful conclusions.

4.0 Detailed Analysis on the Governance of Higher Education Institutions based on the collected Data

From the above collected data, I got the following information about the governance of HEIs which are presented below :

4.1. Strategic Plan is framed by the Principal/TIC

Table 1 : Strategic plan is framed by the principal/TIC

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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Valid	strongly agree	86	51.2	51.2	51.2
	agree	82	48.8	48.8	100.0
	Total	168	100.0	100.0	

Source : compiled from primary data through SPSS 21.0

From the above table it is clear that 51.2 per cent, i.e., majority of the respondents agree on the point that Strategic plan is framed by the Principal/TIC of the institution, **which strongly depicts strategic governance of the Institutions.**

4.2. Principal/TIC Discharges duty for the development of the Institution

Table 2 : Principal/TIC discharges duty for the development of the institution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	54	32.1	32.1	32.1
	agree	57	33.9	33.9	66.1
	neutral	12	7.1	7.1	73.2
	disagree	25	14.9	14.9	88.1
	strongly disagree	20	11.9	11.9	100.0
	Total	168	100.0	100.0	

Source : compiled from primary data through SPSS 21.0

From the above table it is clear that 32.1 per cent strongly agree and 33.9 per cent agree on the point that Principal/TIC discharges duty for the development of the institution, **which strongly depicts the administrative governance of the institutions.**

4.3. Principal/TIC develops the financial strategies in consultation with the Finance Sub-Committee.

Table 3 : Principal/TIC develops the financial strategies in consultation with the Finance sub-Committee

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	95	56.5	56.5	56.5
	agree	45	26.8	26.8	83.3
	neutral	9	5.4	5.4	88.7
	disagree	8	4.8	4.8	93.5
	strongly disagree	11	6.5	6.5	100.0
	Total	168	100.0	100.0	

Source : compiled from primary data through SPSS 21.0

The above table depicts that 56.5 per cent of the respondents strongly agree on the point that the Principal/TIC develops the financial strategies in consultation with the Finance sub-committee, **which strongly depicts the financial governance in the aforesaid**

institutions.

4.4. Principal/TIC develops the staffing strategies necessary to achieve its goal

Table 4 : Principal/TIC develops the staffing strategies necessary to achieve its goal

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	115	68.5	68.5	68.5
	agree	45	26.8	26.8	95.2
	neutral	8	4.8	4.8	100.0
	Total	168	100.0	100.0	

Source : compiled from primary data through SPSS 21.0

The above table depicts that 68.5 per cent of the respondents strongly agree on the point that Principal/TIC develops the staffing strategies necessary to achieve its goal, which strongly depicts the governance regarding the management of human resource of the aforesaid institutions.

4.5. The opinion of the Teachers' Council regarding adoption of strategic plan is honoured by the Principal/TIC

Table 5 : The opinion of the Teachers' Council regarding adoption of strategic plan is honoured by the principal/TIC

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	90	53.6	53.6	53.6
	agree	65	38.7	38.7	92.3
	neutral	3	1.8	1.8	94.0
	disagree	2	1.2	1.2	95.2
	strongly disagree	8	4.8	4.8	100.0
	Total	168	100.0	100.0	

Source : compiled from primary data through SPSS 21.0

the above table depicts that 53.6 per cent of the respondents strongly agree on the point that strategic plan of Teachers' Council is honoured by the Principal/TIC, which depicts the situation of democracy in the aforesaid institutions.

5.0. Issues of Autonomy and Accountability

Time and again in academic debates, matters concerning autonomy are discussed. Mostly, such discussion panels include issues namely, financial autonomy with provision of block grants, appointment of members on the respective Boards, hiring of faculty with pay beyond minimum prescribed by the Governments, mechanisms of revenue generation and retaining revenue in the Institution over and above usual block grant from the

Government. Of late, some of these issues are being raised in the meetings of IIT and IIM Boards/ Councils chaired by the Union Minister and we know through media reports that there is a great deal of mutual understanding on some of the issues listed above and one can believe that these changes would happen. However, issues regarding accountability remain partially answered. There is unfulfilled accountability both to internal and external agenda. Issue concerning horizontal mobility of students for a semester or partial tenure from one Institution/university to another across the States with full transfer of credits is being talked about. Provision of flexible Academic Calendar and joining of the programmes to encourage in-service population for improving the education content and skill as and when individually possible, similar to “drop-out “and “drop- in”.

Academic community in closed circuit has been heard saying that there is much less delivered by the academic community with respect to:

- I. Innovation in teaching- learning process ;
- II. Pursuit of research and its applications ;
- III. Bringing laurels to Indian higher education sector; and
- IV. Enhancing list with greater number of Indian Institutions/ universities in the honour of ranking list globally etc.

6.0. Some Recommendations on Governance of HEIs in India

Based on the above analysis and discussions, the following recommendations are made on the Governance of HEIs in India :

1. Strategies for higher education should be set within an educational chain extending from early childhood to post- graduate education to career advancement. Improving the interrelationship of all stages and levels of education should be a long - term policy goal.
2. Rural, urban and gender disparities must be kept in mind by policy makers in planning and implementing the higher education system.
3. While quantity is important, say achieving, double digit percentage for higher education, quality is paramount. Higher education should continue to be subsidized by the Government in an adequate manner. For improving the quality in education the role of public sector should be enhanced.
4. While the Western models of higher education should be suitably adopted, the education planners/implementers and the institutions should devise and develop indigenous ones.
5. A liberal milieu in the Indian Universities must be reconstructed. Diversity of opinion and critique of society and its processes need to be encouraged.
6. The appointment of bureaucrats, police officers/generals as Vice Chancellors and Registrars must be avoided as far as possible
7. Policies of higher education should be designed to strengthen indigenous research agenda.
8. One reform that is urgently needed is the right to information in the institutions of higher learning. Transparency in the functioning at all levels is required so that those

- committing wrong are deterred.
9. It is recommended that the method of selection of Vice Chancellors must be changed urgently, to make them accountable to the academic community and not to the political or bureaucratic bosses.
 10. Policies of our country based on simplicity and sharing of facilities within and across institutions must be established and encouraged.
 11. The WTO pushing the trade in services will have far reaching consequences in India, particularly for the remote areas and poorer sections of the Society. Therefore, the World Bank, WTO and GATT policies on higher education need serious consideration, National interests must be safe guarded. And, the opportunities for the deprived and under privileged people and regions must be ensured
 12. There have been significant changes recently in the policies on financing of Universities in India affecting the pattern of financing and expenditure in the Universities. Given the increasing importance of higher education, it is important that the State continues to take major responsibility of financing the Universities. All other sources of income, including fees should be viewed only as peripheral. It is to be noted that reliance on students' fees has its own limitation.
 13. Increasing reliance on the generation of internal revenues through consultancy and interaction with industry may produce imbalances in the Universities across various disciplines of study. So, efforts for the mobilization of resources have to be made extremely cautiously. Keeping in view our concerns of equity, efficiency and excellence in University education. Hence, the best method of financing of the Universities may still be by the State.
 14. Universities have to attempt seriously to improve the pattern of allocation of resources between various activities and items of expenditure. Core academic activities should obviously receive top priority.
 15. At the Universities, students' welfare, particularly scholarships, stipends etc., should be given due importance. Expenditure on administration and other miscellaneous activities needs to be rationalized.
 16. New models for higher education including the following aspects need to be created and adopted in the country: (a) extended traditional Universities (b) technology based Universities, and (c) corporate Universities.. The Governmental control in the Universities must be reduced, so that the University autonomy and accountability are strengthened and academic decisions are taken on merit.
 17. New methods and procedures of financial regulations should be devised and direct interference of the finance department in the financial management of Universities, which is counter productive, should be stopped.
 18. As the Colleges are the feeding sources of the Universities, a better coordination in their working and activities is very much required. The participation of the teaching faculty in through a democratic process should be ensured.
 19. Complete transparency should be maintained in the working of Executive/Academic Bodies and other Governing Councils of the Universities.

There is an urgency to review the University Acts in different States and revise the same in the light of the new requirements and the challenges being faced by the Universities. New technologies of information and communication should be utilized for obtaining

administrative efficiency.

1. Higher Education should be developed as an infrastructure for social and economic growth of the Country.
2. Students involvement in the area of University/College governance should be encouraged.
3. Political interference in the appointment of University teachers and administrators should be totally stopped.

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