

Good Governance: A Strategic Road Map for Indian Higher Education

Dr. Goutam G. Saha

Dean-Academics & Associate Professor

MGM's Institute of Management, Aurangabad-431005 (Maharashtra)

Email: dr.gg.saha@gmail.com

Abstract

India, today, is considered as a talent pool of the world, having qualified and educated human resources in abundance. This has been one of the primary reasons for transformation of India into one of the fastest growing economies in the world since liberalization in the 1990s. As the economist Clark Kerr observed, "On a global scale, wealth and prosperity have become more dependent on the access to knowledge than the access to natural resources."

India possesses a highly developed higher education system, which offers the facility of education and training in almost all aspects of human creativity and intellectual endeavors. Structure of higher education - Management of the Indian education faces challenges of over centralization, bureaucratic structures and lack of accountability, transparency, and professionalism. However, as noted by the Working Group for Higher Education in the 12th Five-Year Plan (2012-17), "while almost all major committees and policy documents have accepted the need for increased involvement of private sector in higher education, there is also lack of clarity on funding pattern, incentives, and regulatory oversight".

Governance is a word that appeals to an image of abstract political, administrative and management processes. It is easy to lose sight of the real impact that governance practices in education can have on the lives of ordinary people, the hopes and aspirations of parents and children, and the human development prospects of nations. Good governance implies not just transparency and accountability, but also a commitment to equal opportunity for all citizens. Unlike the wealthy, who can opt for private provision, poor households depend on governments to deliver education services.

The term "education governance" indicates the formal and informal arrangements that allow higher education institutions to make decisions and take action. Formal governance is official and explicit. Informal governance refers to the unwritten rules that govern how people relate to each other within higher education: the respect accorded professors and administrators, the freedom to pursue research, and the traditions of student behavior, to name a few.

The purpose of this paper is to review the current condition of Indian higher education & its governance. This paper is going to discover about how education governance can make a balance between needs of stakeholders, demands of the society, and autonomy.

Key words: Higher Education Institute, Governance, Societal Accountability, Inclusiveness, Expansion, Equity

1. Introduction

In today's knowledge economy, it is an indisputable fact that quality education is mandatory to fulfilling one's potential and is the key for vertical mobility and economic growth, and an educated population is the precondition for economic prosperity of any nation. The main function of a higher education system is to add real value to human resources, and produce wealth creators and leaders in all fields – business, professions, politics, administration, and creative pursuits.

India has significant advantages in building a large, high quality higher education system. It has a large higher education sector – the third largest in the world in student numbers after China and the United

States. It uses English as a primary language of higher education and research. It has a number of high quality institutions that can form the basis of a world-class higher education system.

The governance of the Indian Higher education sector is changing. Like the Indian economy underwent a liberalizing in the 1990s, the education system is gradually being opened up for change and decentralization. In particular, the federal and state governments are gradually giving higher education institutions more decision and spending power. This represents a move away from detailed government control over spending, teaching, and curriculum decisions, which required frequent approval from federal or state government officials. Besides the 11th Five Year Plan, several facts pay witness to this movement.

1.1 Institutional Growth in 11th Plan:

Increase in higher education capacity during the Eleventh Plan was largely achieved through the setting up of new institutions by Central and State Governments and the private sector. The number of institutions grew by 58 per cent from 29,384 to 46,430. By the end of the Plan, the country had 645 degree awarding institutions, 33,023 colleges affiliated to 174 universities and over 12,748 diploma granting institutions. Table 1 provides a snapshot of this growth.

Table-1
Growth of Institution in 11th Plan

Category	2006-07	2011-12	Increase	Growth Rate (Per Cent)
Central Institutions				
Degree Awarding Institutions	87	152	65	11.8
Colleges	58	69	11	3.5
Sub total	145	221	76	8.8
State Institutions				
Degree Awarding Institutions	227	316	89	6.8
Colleges	9,000	13,024	4,024	7.7
Diploma Institutions	1,867	3,207	1,340	11.4
Sub total	11,094	16,547	5,453	8.3
Private Institutions				
Degree Awarding Institutions	73	191	118	21.2
Colleges	12,112	19,930	7,818	10.5
Diploma Institutions	5,960	9,541	3,581	9.9
Sub total	18,145	29,662	11,517	10.3
Total	29,384	46,430	17,046	9.6

Source: UGC, AICTE, NCTE

Growth in private institutions was significant during the Eleventh Plan period. Ninety-eight private State universities, 17 private deemed universities, 7,818 private colleges, and 3,581 private diploma institutions were set up during the Plan period. The expansion of Central institutions during the Eleventh Plan was historic. The Central Government established 65 new institutions during the Eleventh Plan period. The State Governments added 89 universities, 4,024 colleges and 1,340 diploma institutions during the same period.

Table-2 Growth of Central Institutions during 11th Plan

Type of Institution	2006-07	2011-12	Increase
Central Universities	19	40	21
Indian Institute of Technology	7	15	8
Indian Institute of Management	6	13	7
Indian Institute of Science Education and Research	2	5	3
School of Planning and Architecture	1	3	2
National Institute of Technology	20	30	10
Other Technical Institutions	15	15	0
Other Universities/Institutions	17	31	14
Total	87	152	65

Source: Ministry of HRD & Other ministry

1.2 Enrolment Growth in 11th Plan:

The Eleventh Plan recognised and responded to the rising demand for higher education. Enrolment increased in government as well as private institutions. Table 3 provides the enrolment numbers for the Tenth and the Eleventh Plan, the increase in enrolment and the compounded annual growth rate (CAGR).

Table No3

(Enrolment in lakh)

Category	2006-07		2011-12		Increase	Growth Rate (Per cent)
	Total	Per cent	Total	Per cent		
By type of institutions						
Government	63.38	45.8	89.63	41.1	26.25	7.2
Central	3.10	2.2	5.63	2.6	2.53	12.7
State	60.28	43.6	84.00	38.5	23.72	6.9
Private	75.12	54.2	128.23	58.9	53.11	11.3
By degree/diploma						
Degree	123.54	89.2	184.84	84.8	61.30	8.4
Diploma	14.96	10.8	33.02	15.2	18.06	10.8
Total	138.50	100.00	217.86	100.00	79.36	9.5

Source: UGC, AICTE, NCTE

Increased enrolments in the Eleventh Plan enabled Indian higher education to cross the threshold of 15 per cent GER, moving the country from an ‘elite’ to a ‘mass’ higher education system. GER is the total enrolment in higher education (both degree and diploma programmes) as a percentage of the population in the eligible age group of 18–23 years. Using this definition, GER for higher education was 12.3 per cent in 2006–07 and increased to 17.9 per cent in 2011–12. During the Eleventh Plan, enrolment in higher education (including enrolment in open and distance learning) grew by 9.3 million from 16.6 million (in 2006–07) to 25.9 million in 2011–12. Target for the Twelfth Plan is to increase enrolment capacity by another 10 million. Of this, 1 million will come from ODL, 3.3 million through large scale expansion of skill-granting diploma programmes and remaining 5.7 million will come from further expansion of degree programmes with accelerated expansion of postgraduate and doctoral programmes (Table 4).

Table-4

(student numbers in lakh)

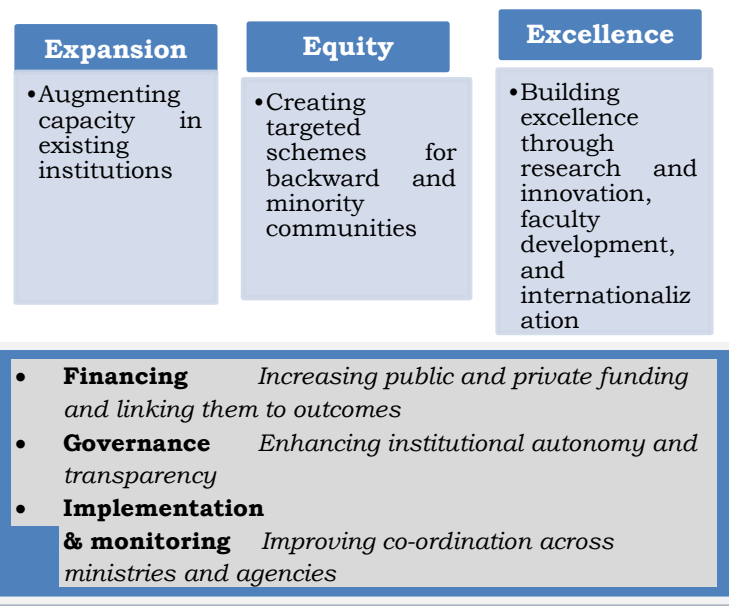
Level/Type	2011-12 (Estimates)	2016-17 (Targets)	Growth Rate (Per Cent)
PhD	1	3	24.6
PG General	17.3	33.2	13.9
PG Technical	5	12.2	19.5
UG General	116.6	128	1.9
UG Technical	45	66	8.0
Sub total	184.9	242.4	5.6
Diploma	33	65	14.5
Total	217.9	307.4	7.1
ODL	42	52	4.4
Grand Total	259.9	359.4	6.7
Population 18–23 years	1,451.2	1,427.4	-0.1
GER (%)	17.9	25.2	

Source: Planning Commission Estimates/Targets

2. Strategic Framework of 12th Plan

The key challenge is to find a path to achieve the divergent goals for the growth of higher education in India. Combining access with affordability and ensuring high-quality undergraduate and post-graduate education are vital for realising the potential of the country’s ‘demographic dividend’. The Twelfth Plan

recognizes these challenges and proposes several initiatives on the ‘Three Es’ (expansion, equity and excellence), Governance & Funding.



The strategic framework for the Twelfth Plan for higher education identifies such a classic shift in the following critical areas related to expansion, equity, excellence, governance and financing.

Expansion

- Expand access by scaling up capacity in existing institutions rather than increasing the number of institutions, with the exception of new institutions needed to address critical regional and social gaps.
- Create a system of institutional differentiation and distinctiveness to cater to a diverse body of students and the varied needs of employers.
- Use the transformative potential of new technologies to improve quality, reduce costs, improve processes and efficiency and reach a larger body of students, while promoting efficient and transparent governance and raising the quality of teaching and research.

Equity

- Provide significant increase in budgetary support for equity-related measures through targeted, integrated and effective equity-related schemes, which will replace the existing maze of multiple and diffused small outlay schemes.

Excellence

- Foster a shift from an input-centric and credential-based pedagogical approach to a learner-centric and learning-outcome based approach to improve the quality of teaching and research.

- Ensure availability, recruitment and retention of qualified people to meet the growing need for quality faculty; upgrade the skills of existing faculty; and, build synergies between teaching and research to promote excellence in both.
- Facilitate translation of academic research into innovations for practical use in society and economy and foster entrepreneurship that creates wealth and public goods.
- Promote internationalisation by encouraging and supporting institutions and their faculty to engage more deeply with institutions and faculty around the world in areas ranging from teaching–learning to research and outreach.
- Create and facilitate alliances, networks, clusters, and consortia of academic institutions amongst themselves and with research institutions and industry to accelerate the process of knowledge development by better resource utilisation and by complementing mutual expertise.

Governance

- Enable institutional autonomy by transforming the role of government from command and control to a steering and evaluative role.
- Enhance the capacity of the higher education system to govern itself by widespread and coordinated regulatory reform.
- Increase transparency in both public and private institutions by requiring them to disclose important standardised information related to admissions, fees, faculty, programs, placements, governance, finance, business tie-ups and ownership.

Financing

- Implement a quantum leap in both public and private sector investment in higher education to achieve the various goals set out for the Twelfth Plan.
- Implement a significant increase in Central plan funds for higher education and strategically deploy these funds to improve the entire system of higher education, including State systems.
- Directly connect funding streams to specific outcomes and desired impacts related to the Plan objectives through reforms in governance arrangements at the national, State and institutional levels with suitable implementation and monitoring mechanisms.

3. The Good Education Governance

Good governance is increasingly viewed as an essential element of any well-functioning society. It ensures effective use of resources and deliverance of services to citizens and also provides social legitimacy to the system. Governance is a word that conjures up an image of abstract political, administrative and management processes. It is easy to lose sight of the real impact that governance practices in education can have on the lives of ordinary people, the hopes and aspirations of parents and children, and the human development prospects of nations.

Education governance is not simply the system of administration and management of education in a country. In its broadest sense, it is concerned with the formal and informal processes by which policies are formulated, priorities identified, resources allocated, and reforms implemented and monitored. Governance

is an issue not only for central government but also for every level of the system, from the education ministry down to the classroom and community. Some definitions are as follows:

“According to the underlying ideas and assumptions of reform thinking, universities and colleges should be externally controlled, their activities should be formally evaluated, they should be held accountable for their performance, they should be steered by market forces and not by governmental or state mechanisms, they should be run by professional leaders and managers instead of by academic *primus-inter-pares* (‘first among equals’), and they should be included as service industries in regional and global trade agreements”. (Peter Maassen)

“The governance of higher education in the 21st century needs to develop a fusion of academic mission and executive capacity, rather than substitute one for the other.” (OECD)

“Effective governance is a harmonious fusion of power and authority and equal balance between trust and control where democratic, autocratic and *laissez faire* management styles are addressed according to the needs of a society and within the boundaries of active legislation.” (Lela Maisuradze)

As with any service, education provision is affected by wider governance conditions. When democracy, transparency and respect for the rule of law is weak, accountability and participation suffer. Within the education sector, governance structures link many actors and define the terms of their interactions. The ability of parents to participate in institutes decisions, hold institutes and teachers to account, and secure access to information is conditioned by the allocation of rights and responsibilities under governance systems.

4. Indian Higher Education & Governance

The government needs to play a sensitive and less intrusive role in the governance and regulation of higher education than it does at present. In place of a uniform regulatory role in respect of all institutions, the government’s role could be calibrated according to the type of institution involved. While, the government could have a promotional and evaluative role for upper-tier institutions, it may play a steering role in mid-tier institutions, and should actively regulate the lower-tier institutions. The governance structure should also enable institutions to increasingly differentiate themselves through course diversity, multi-disciplinary programmes and other approaches. Enabling differentiation requires a new regulatory structure that encompasses all fields of education rather than the current structure that separates the regulation of technical fields from other fields. In this context, a paradigm shift in governance is needed.

Based on the recommendations of the National Knowledge Commission (2005) and the Committee on Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education (2009), steps were initiated during the Eleventh Plan to create a new legislative framework and provide a new governance structure for higher education in the country. For this purpose, several new laws are currently under consideration. Several bills were introduced during the Plan period to improve the quality and transparency in higher education :

4.1 Higher Education and Research Bill, 2011 The Bill aims to consolidate multiple regulations and improve transparency by the creation of a single super regulator, the National Commission for Higher Education and Research, in the place of existing regulators such as the UGC and AICTE.

4.2 The National Academic Depository Bill, 2011 The Bill seeks to establish a national database of academic awards in electronic format through an identified and registered depository.

4.3 The National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for Higher Educational Institutions Bill, 2010 The National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for Higher Educational Institutions Bill aims to make accreditation and rating of all higher education institutions mandatory in India.

4.4 The Educational Tribunal Bill, 2010 The Educational Tribunal Bill aims to expedite and enable more effective litigation involving students, teachers, employees and the management of institutions.

4.5 Foreign Educational Institutions Bill, 2010 The Foreign Education Institutions Bill aims to regulate the entry and operation of foreign institutes in India. The Bill is a key legislation to encourage private sector participation in India, given the absence of any regulatory framework for FEIs.

5. Governance as key initiatives

5.1 Reforming affiliating college system - Large and reputed colleges will be converted into full-fledged universities. College-cluster universities will be created, with each college functioning as a university campus. Some large affiliating universities will be bifurcated into manageable units

5.2 State-level governance- It would be desirable for states to set up a State Council for Higher Education for planned and coordinated development of higher education in them. Their role would include fostering sharing of resources between universities, lead academic and governance reforms at the institution level, maintaining databanks on higher education and conducting research and evaluation studies

5.3 Institutional-level differentiation and autonomy- There is a need to move away from enforced standardisation of institutions to categorization of institutions (such as research-focused, teaching-focused and skill-based Institutions) with each category being treated differently in terms of regulations, governance and funding given their distinct characteristics

5.4 Promoting academic leadership development- An Institute for Academic Leadership in Higher Education would be set up to develop academic leadership in higher education,. This institute would function as a hub, with a university-based Academy for Leadership Development as a node. At least five such academies will be set up in the Plan period

5.5 Student services and admissions- Given the plethora of admission tests in the country, there is need to move towards fewer tests, which are conducted transparently and objectively. Moreover, it is recommended that universities are provided greater autonomy to align their admission processes to their institutional philosophies.

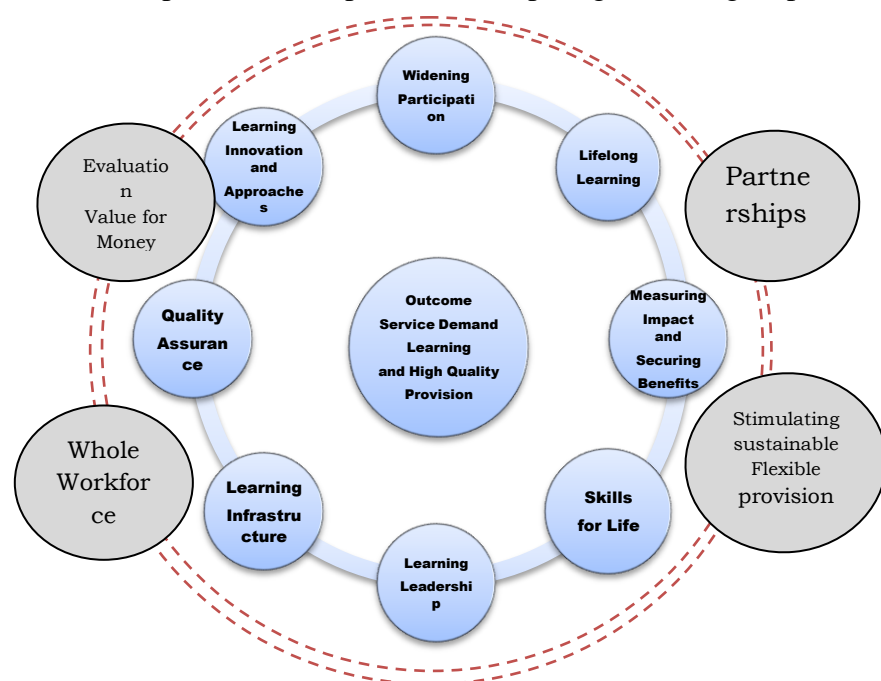
6. Road Map Strategy

Institutional growth and development does not happen by itself. It needs to be planned, resourced and its impact continually evaluated. This approach is the hallmark of an effective Learning institution – and the principle that underpins Education Governance. Education Governance must be more than a process. Its

focus, scope and structures must be aligned with the delivery and priorities of a comprehensive, organisation-wide education and learning strategy responsive to the training and development needs of all levels of staff.

The development of such a strategy is crucial if institutions are to utilise investment to improve services in line with national priorities and adapt to the changing education and learning landscape.

The diagram below identifies the components that need to be included in this strategy if it is to be comprehensive, capable of anticipating and being responsive to change.



Institutions embarking on the Education Governance journey should consider the following four issues:

- a. **Education and learning strategy**
- b. **Self-evaluation**
- c. **Establishing an Education Governance Board**
- d. **Education and learning measures**

6.2 Benefits of EG strategy

- Improvement in the quality of higher education and learning.
- Development of a more effective and flexible workforce (faculty members & research team).
- Employers are able to match the education and learning they commission with the skills needed in the workforce.
- Retention of staff and improved staff morale.
- Improved recruitment as a preferred employer.
- Delivery of educational activities based upon best evidence and impact.
- Improved learner satisfaction and enhancement of learning infrastructure and resources.

- Reduction of inequalities in access to education and learning opportunities and resources.
- Transparency in the way education and learning priorities are supported and measured.
- Better understanding of the value and the contribution of education and learning in achieving institutional purpose and priorities.
- Innovation in education and learning activities.
- Improved efficiency through a single quality framework for education.
- Improved team working across all staff groups.

Conclusions

Good governance promotes educational quality. Traditions of governance vary from country to country and by type of institution, but a set of basic principles that promote good governance across a wide variety of situations. Unfortunately these principles are frequently not observed. It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of good governance for higher education, with a significant number of researches believing it to be the key issue. Good governance is not a sufficient condition for achieving high quality, but it is certainly a necessary one. Governance sets the parameters for management. A mismanaged enterprise cannot flourish, and institutions of higher education are no exception. In our country, significant work is still needed to develop academic systems of governance that meet the needs of faculty, students, and wider society.

References

- India, Education Commission, 1964-66. Report, Delhi Manager of Publication, 1966 (Chairman, D.S. Kothari).
- Improving Higher Education by Ronald Barnett, McGraw-Hill Education, 1992
- Gupta, M. and P. B. Singh (2010). "MARKETING & BRANDING HIGHER EDUCATION: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES." Review of Business Research 10(1): 46-53.
- Daniel, J., A. Kanwar, et al. (2009). "Breaking Higher Education's Iron Triangle: Access, Cost, and Quality." Change 41(2): 30-35.
- Mitra, C.R. Higher education in Changing Scenarios, New Delhi, Sanskriti, 2005.
- Jyothi, P. (2009). "Revisiting Linkages between Entrepreneurship and Higher Education." Advances in Management 2(10): 39-43.
- Umashankar, V. and K. Dutta (2007). "Balanced Scorecards in Managing Higher Education Institutions: An Indian Perspective." International Journal of Educational Management 21(1): 54-67.
- Association of Indian Universities, Handbook of Management Education, New Delhi. The Author, 2007.
- Agarwal, P. (2007). "Higher Education in India: Growth, Concerns and Change Agenda." Higher Education Quarterly 61(2): 197-207.
- Tilak, S. B. G. (2004). "Absence of Policy and Perspective in Higher Education." Economic and Political Weekly 39(21): 2159-2164.
- Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) (2005). Autonomy of Higher Education Institutions. Ministry of Human Resource Development. New Delhi;
- Dahlman, Carl and Anuja Utz (2006). India and the Knowledge Economy: Leveraging Strengths and Opportunities. World Bank. Washington DC
- World Bank (2002). Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Higher Education. Washington DC
- UGC Annual Report 2010-11
- UGC Annual Report 2011-12
- 12th Annual Plan (2012-2017) Planning Commission (Government of India) 2013
- 11th Annual Plan (2007-2012) Planning Commission (Government of India) 2007
- www.aicte-india.org