

# Towards an Educated India:

## Measurement of Excellence in Higher Education

**E**ducation is the key to social economic development of a country. In India the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) is quite low. Higher education is the driver of personal and professional lives of various individuals. The fact, nevertheless, remains that the higher education system in India has grown in a significant way to become one of the largest systems of its kind in the world. Also the rise of India as one of the economic superpowers has increased the demand for quality management education which will help to bring out managers who can effectively supervise, manage and increase the growing business of India.

There are several changing drivers that have a great influence on higher education system. Some of these changing drivers are:

- Changing student demographics
- New enrolment patterns
- Information
- Growth in the for profit higher education institutions
- Changing nature of work place (from job security to job insecurity)
- Formation of the global village concept, etc.

The issue is under these circumstances can institutes promote excellence? If so, how can institutes promote excellence so as to produce successful managers and leaders?

In order to excel, institutions need to benchmark themselves with the best in the industry. There is an urgent need to create a stimulating and challenging environment of the equivalents of the Harvards and the Stanfords in India.

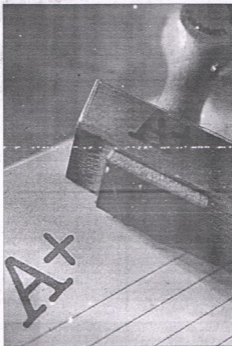
Any approach to measure excellence, must take into the following parameters:

- Vision, mission and goals of the institution
- Leadership aspects
- The impact on student and society
- The programs and courses offered
- The faculty, staff and the infrastructure
- The examination system and
- Outcomes and achievements measured in terms of placements, etc.

Each of these parameters throws itself open to several sub parameters.

### Vision, mission and goals

The vision, mission and goals of the



institution lay down the foundations or the directions in which the institutes wish to go. Many organizations today express the visions or missions or the goals only because the statutory bodies demand the same. The vision statement gives a direction to the governance aspects, leadership aspects etc.

The vision statement is the central purpose of the institution. It serves as the main directional key for success. It has to be carefully crafted and should be not only displayed but also seen to be followed in all aspects.

### Leadership aspects

Leadership is one of the most challenging aspects in higher education.

Individuals in leadership roles have to necessarily take into account the national challenges as laid down by the statutory roles (eg Right to Education Act), local and institutional challenges (eg role played by local political parties etc), irreconcilable array of stakeholders' expectations, the demands of the bright and independent colleagues (eg faculty) etc. Leadership aspects also imply organizational leadership, public and professional leadership as well as ethical and social responsibility. The head of the institution plays a very pivotal role in the smooth and effective working of these very important committees. In order to achieve excellence, it is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the leader.

### Programmes offered

Extremely dynamic business world and the rapidly developing knowledge based service economy have put in an increased demand for professionals to manage the business effectively. In many of the institutions, it has been found that there is a mismatch between the skills possessed by the student and the skills required by the corporate. In terms of hard skills like technical knowledge, any institution in order to excel should have a robust system of programmes and courses offered, which needs to be innovated on a regular basis and which needs to take into account the industry requirements.

### The faculty, staff infrastructure

The role of faculty needs not be emphasized as they are the source of all knowledge. They are the first point of contact for the students. The issues involved are availability of faculty, involvement of faculty in institution build up, quality of the faculty, pay scale for the faculty etc.

### Expected outcomes

Two very important issues relate to the expected outcomes – the pass rate of the students as well as the employability of the students. They represent the final outcome of any university or institution. They are the very means for which the institutions exist.

From the above, it is very clear that an institution in order to be rated as an excellent institution needs to constantly upgrade itself, be student and the society friendly and ensure that the students are employable. Accreditation is one of the methods of measuring excellence but such measures as to be open and transparent. Additionally all institutions must be subjected to accreditation and these must be published. Non compliance should result in the institution being closed down. Through accreditation and other similar measure the institutions can develop a partnership wherein one constantly challenges the current and thus reaches the higher levels.

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