

Excellence and Quality Driven Expansion: XII Plan Perspective

Dr. Fr. Davis George

1. University: Doorway to Development

The Universities have to perform multiple roles, like creating new knowledge, acquiring new capabilities and producing an intelligent human resource pool, through challenging teaching, research and extension activities so as to balance both the need and the demand.

“A University stands for humanism, for tolerance, for reason, for the adventure of ideas and for the search of truth. It stands for the onward march of the human race towards ever higher objectives. If the universities discharge their duties adequately, then it is well with the Nation and the People.” ~ Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Higher education in India: Issues, Concerns and New Directions.

The University Grants commission (UGC) had initiated nationwide discussion on the said issues during its Golden Jubilee Year, 2003. The Seminar topics have been suitably categorized and presented in three Sections:

- 2.1 Management of Higher Education
- 2.2 Reorientation of Higher Education
- 2.3 Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

2.1 Management of Higher Education

2.1.1 Public/Private Partnership

Recommendations

1. Good quality higher education at reasonable cost.
2. Tackle the equity problems.
3. No talented person shall be denied access to higher education opportunities on the grounds of economic and social backwardness.
4. Industries may be encouraged to be partners with educational institutions directly for the development of human resources dedicated to their interests.
5. Total Quality Management
6. An accreditation system for individuals in various disciplines.
7. The idea of allowing students to do Diploma or Certificate courses side by side with their Degrees.
8. Good Faculty
9. Autonomous status to all performing institutions will facilitate rapid development of efficient and state of the art higher education institutions.

2.1.2 Governance

Recommendations

1. The Governmental control in the Universities must be reduced.
2. New methods and procedures of financial regulations should be devised.
3. As the Colleges are the feeding sources of the Universities, a better coordination in their working and activities is very much required.

4. Complete transparency should be maintained in the working of Executive/ Academic Bodies and other Governing Councils of the Universities.
5. Higher Education should be developed as an infrastructure for social and economic growth of the Country.
6. Students involvement in the area of University/College governance should be encouraged.
7. Political interference in the appointment of University teachers and administrators should be totally stopped.
8. 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.

2.1.3 Access and Equity

A paradigm shift has been noticed in higher education now a days, from 'national education' to 'global education', from 'one time education for a few' to 'life long education for all', from 'teacher- centric education' to 'learner centric education'. These changes make new demands and pose fresh challenges to the established education systems and practices in the country.

It is worth noting that while India has the second largest system of higher education, next only to USA, the total number of students hardly represent 6 percent of the relevant age group, i.e., 18 - 23, which is much below the average of developed countries, which is about 47%. Thus, access, equity, accountability and quality should form the four guiding principles, while planning for higher education development in India in the twenty-first century.

Rural, urban and gender disparities must be kept in mind by policy makers in planning and implementing the higher education system.

While quantity is important, say achieving, double digit percentage for higher education, quality is of paramount importance.

2.2 Reorientation of Higher Education

2.2.1 Health Consciousness and Physical Fitness

2.2.2 Professional Ethics and Value Education

2.2.3 Evaluation and Assessment Systems

2.3 Quality Assurance in Higher Education: IQAC

- ❖ Quality upgradation is not a onetime phenomenon. Quest for excellence is a continuous and perennial pursuit.
- ❖ IQAC Activities to internalize and institutionalize quality benchmarking.
- ❖ NAAC has been instilling a momentum of quality consciousness amongst Higher Educational Institutions, aiming for continuous improvement. NAAC is triggering a 'Quality Culture' among the various constituents of the HEI, as well as enhancing the awareness of Institutional Quality Assurance with all stakeholders.

3. Approach to Higher Education in the Twelfth Five Year Plan

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has recommended enhancement of **the triple objectives of access and expansion, equity and inclusion, and quality and excellence** in the higher education sector under the 12th Five Year Plan.

3.1 Access and Expansion

In relation to Access Expansion of higher education shall continue to remain an important objective during the 12th FYP.

- a. Innovative Approaches to Access: the GER in higher education, by the end of the 12th FYP, may be expected to be either 23.5% or 27%.
- b. Correcting Regional, Disciplinary and Gender Imbalances.
- c. Lessening the Burden of Affiliation
- d. Working New Models of PPP

3.2 Equity and Inclusion

The objective of the 12th FYP in the sphere of equity should be to eliminate gender disparities and to significantly reduce urban-rural, inter-regional and inter-social group disparities.

The major emphasis of the 12th FYP should be on promoting inclusiveness so as to accommodate more students from the marginalized sections into the ambit of higher education in respect of the goals:

- a. Elimination of Gender Inequalities Promotion of Inclusion
- b. Improving Access for Differently-abled Students
- c. Promoting Equity in all Disciplines of General and Technical/Professional Education
- d. Reducing Regional / Disciplinary Imbalances

3.3 Quality and Excellence

Concurrent with the national attention towards expansion in higher education and providing for equity, it is also necessary to ensure that quality and excellence are sustained and upgraded in all the institutions of higher education to match upto international levels.

Quality enhancing measures and support along with accreditation need to be intensified during the 12th FYP, as indicated below:

- a. Reform Agenda
- b. Structural and Systemic Reforms
- c. Academic Reforms
- d. Generating a Knowledge Society
- e. Preserving the Character of a University
- f. Centres for Advanced Studies
- g. Internal Quality Assurance Cells
- h. Challenge of Expansion Beyond Brick and Mortar

4. Strategies for Enhancing Quality and Excellence in Higher Education

The innovative new initiatives to enhance quality and excellence across the country are to be facilitated in the 12th FYP.

1. Making Institutional and Programme Accreditation Mandatory
2. Attracting Quality Faculty, Promoting Faculty Mobility and Continuous Faculty Development Programmes.
3. Reforming the Academic Staff College (ASC) System as Faculty Talent Promotion system by rejuvenating ASCs as Faculty Development Centres.

4. Establishing New Faculty Development Centres.
5. Increasing the Faculty Development Centres (currently ASCs) from the present 66 to 100.
6. Faculty Mobility.
7. Student Mobility.
8. Evaluation of Teachers by Students & Peer Assessment.
9. Leveraging Technology for Curriculum Models, Course-ware Development and Participatory Teaching-Learning.
10. A Structural Orientation to Establish Schools in Specific Knowledge Domains to Facilitate Holistic Academic Reforms in all universities.
11. Networking of Universities and Colleges through Setting up a National Educational Resource Portal.
12. Strengthening the E-Initiatives.
13. Expand E-Resource Availability.
14. Priority initiative to implement automation of administration and examination to achieve e-governance.
15. Structural and Systemic Reforms for Good Governance.
16. Promotion of Autonomous Colleges.
17. Reforming the Self-financed Teaching Programmes.
18. Infusing Culture of Collaboration and Co-operation.
19. Research Facilities for Science Teachers in State Universities and Colleges.
20. Improved Funding Pattern for UGC-SAP.
21. Research Fellowships.
22. Curbing Plagiarism.
23. Maximising the Utilization of Research Facilities of National Institutes/Laboratories.
24. Establishment of NAVRATNA Universities.

5. Conclusion: Paradigm Shift

“Rashtriya Uchch Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), similar to the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), may be launched during the 12th Five Year Plan in order to attract a large number of youth coming out of expanded secondary education. Autonomous colleges which are identified as Colleges with Potential for Excellence (CPE) by the UGC and having a student strength of more than 3,000 can be converted into universities/PPP [public-private partnership] mode deemed to be universities,” says the document compiled by a team led by UGC Chairman Prof. Ved Prakash.

The document suggests that colleges which have received ‘A’ grade accreditation by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council and which have proved their sustainability for two consecutive periods of accreditation may be upgraded into unitary universities. This may be done for all eligible Central and State government-funded institutions.

The top priority and thrust in the 12th Five Year Plan may be on capacity building and optimum utilization of land, space, and faculty by fixing the minimum student strength and land area ratio for colleges and universities. This may also help the universities and colleges attain this critical mass and decrease the unit cost of education in areas of shared use.

To utilize optimally the enormous infrastructure and facilities which remain unused for an average 16-18 hours a day, a proposal has been made to introduce the shift system in colleges.

A major amendment to the UGC Act may be needed to bring the targeted 20,000 government and government-aided colleges as against the present 6,811 colleges under Section 12(B) and make them eligible for funding by the UGC.

The 12 Plan document has recommended stepping up capacity and improvement of infrastructure which can attract and facilitate the retention of students from rural and backward areas as well as differently-abled and marginalised social groups to enhance equity and inclusion in higher education.

To attract more girl students from the States where the rural or urban GER for girls in higher education is lower than 5 per cent of the male GER, a new scheme of women's higher education stipend (Mahila Uchha Shiksha Britti) may be introduced.

Develop a quality system for conscious, consistent and catalytic programmed action to improve the academic and administrative performance of the HEIs.

“You Must Be the Change, You Wish To See In the World.” ~ Mahatma Gandhi

Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached. ~ Swami Vivekananda

Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas. ~ Swami Vivekananda

All power is within you, you can do anything and everything. Believe in that, do not believe that you are weak... You can do anything and everything, without even the guidance of any one. All power is there. Stand up and express the divinity with you... Arise, awake, sleep no more. With each of you there is the power to remove all wants and all miseries. Believe in this, that power will be manifested. ~ Swami Vivekananda