

Indian Higher Education System & futuristic role of the Registrar

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Abstract:

Higher Education is one of the most powerful instruments for reducing poverty and inequality and can lay a foundation for sustained economic growth. In view of this it is imperative to ponder upon the futuristic role, the Registrar of a University can play in the Indian Higher Education System to contribute effectively to achieve the aims and objectives of with which an University is established.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is central to development and a key to attaining the development goals, with higher education playing a vital role. It is one of the most powerful instruments for reducing poverty and inequality and can lay a foundation for sustained economic growth. The higher education system has constantly and will keep changing with time. A survey by *The Economist* (2005) identified four reasons for fundamental changes being faced by the higher education¹:

- i) the democratization, or "massification," of higher education means that ever increasing numbers of people are gaining higher education qualifications;
- ii) the rise of the knowledge economy with universities being the vital driver;
- iii) the higher education sector being turned into an import-export industry in view of the globalization;
- iv) the competition being faced by the higher education institutions for students and funding.

These changes mean that higher education funding, recruitment, research, collaboration, and teaching must take place in an outward-looking, international setting (Lunn, 2008).

II. INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Education in India as per the constitution is a state subject. Even when education including university education was the responsibility of the states, the central government was assigned the key function of coordination and determination of standards. In 1976 education was transferred to the concurrent list making it a joint responsibility of the Central and State governments. The history of regulation of higher education in India started before independence. In 1921 the government established the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) to bring consensus among provincial

governments on policy matters pertaining to education. The recommendations of the Higher Education Commission (Radhakrishnan Commission 1948) and subsequent discussions led to the establishment of bodies such as AICTE and UGC and it helped shift the regulatory authority to the Central Government (Carnoy and Dossani, 2011).

The Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India is responsible for the overall development of the basic infrastructure of Higher Education sector, both in terms of policy and planning, in India. The Central Government provides grants to the UGC and establishes Central Universities/Institutions of National Importance in the country. The Central Government is also responsible for declaring an educational institution as "Deemed-to-be University" on the recommendations of the UGC².

Higher Education is defined as the education, which is obtained after completing 12 years of schooling or equivalent (dealt by the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India) and is of the duration of at least nine months (full time) or after completing 10 years of schooling and is of the duration of at least 3 years. The education may be of the nature of General, Vocational, Professional or Technical education³.

III. REGULATORY AND STATUTORY BODIES IN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

At present there is multiplicity of regulatory bodies in higher education in India (MHRD, 2005). Several Ministries are involved in providing higher education and each Ministry has its own body to regulate as can be seen in the below table:

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¹<http://www.economist.com/node/4339960>

²<http://mhrd.gov.in/university-and-higher-education>

³http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/ebook/ebook_files/annexures/Annexure-2.pdf

Name of the Bodies	Expected functions
University Grants Commission {www.ugc.ac.in}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Co-ordination, determination and maintenance of standards in higher education. ❖ Release of grants to individual institutions
All India Council for Technical Education {www.aicte-india.org}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Proper planning & coordinated development of technical education system throughout the country.
Distance Education Bureau {http://www.ugc.ac.in/deb/}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Promotion of Open University and Distance Education systems in the educational pattern of the country and for coordination and determination of standards of teaching, evaluation & research in such system. ❖ Now under the UGC and earlier was with IGNOU.
Indian Council of Agricultural Research {www.icar.org.in/}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Co-ordination of agricultural research and development programmes and develop linkages at national and international levels with related organizations to enhance the quality of life of the farming community
Bar Council of India {www.barcouncilofindia.org}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Co-ordination, determination and maintenance of standards in legal education and profession
National Council for Teacher Education {http://ncte-india.org/ncte_new/}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Achieving planned and coordinated development of the teacher education system throughout the country, the regulation and proper maintenance of norms and standards in teacher education and for matters connected therewith.
Rehabilitation Council of India {http://www.rehabcouncil.nic.in}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Standardization and regulation of training of personnel and professionals in the field of Rehabilitation and Special Education.
Medical Council of India {www.mciindia.org}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Establishment of standards in medical education and to define medical qualifications in India and abroad
Pharmacy Council of India {www.pci.nic.in}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Prescription, regulation and maintenance of minimum educational standards for the training of pharmacists uniformly in the country.
Indian Nursing Council {www.indiannursingcouncil.org}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Regulation and maintenance of uniform standards of training for Nurses, Midwives, Auxiliary Nurse-Midwives and Health Visitors
Dental Council of India {www.dciindia.org.in}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Regulation of the Dental Education, Dental Profession, Dental ethics in the country and recommend to the Government of India to accord permission to start a Dental College, start higher courses and increase of seats.
Central Council of Homeopathy {www.cchindia.com}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Maintenance of the Central Register of Homoeopathy.
Central Council of Indian Medicine {www.ccimindia.org}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Maintenance of the Central Register of Indian Medicine
Council Of Architecture {www.coa.gov.in}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Maintenance of Register of Architects ❖ Oversees the maintenance of standards by the architecture institutions, periodically of recognized qualifications under the Act by way of conducting inspection through Committees of Experts.

Time and again the idea of having a single regulatory body for higher education or to create a coordination council of various existing regulatory bodies, which could harmonize varying views on policy matters, has been in discussion or being proposed like The National Policy of Education (1986), recommendation by National Knowledge Commission in 2006 for setting up of an Independent Regulatory Authority for Higher Education⁴ (IRAHE) or recommendation by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) appointed Committee headed by Prof. Yash Pal for having an apex body viz., National Council for Higher Education and Research⁵ (NCHER) in 2011. The matter is still under consideration of the Government.

IV. CATEGORIES OF UNIVERSITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM OF INDIA

Under the University Grants Commission (UGC) Act, 1956, “University” means a University established or incorporated by or under a Central Act, a Provincial Act or a State Act, and includes any such institution as may, in consultation with the University concerned, be recognized by the Commission in accordance with the regulations made in this behalf under this Act.

The universities imparting the higher education as defined above, can be classified into following categories⁶ :

- i) **Central University** - A university established or incorporated by a Central Act.
- ii) **State University** - A university established or incorporated by a Provincial Act or by a State Act.
- iii) **Private University** - A university established through a State/Central Act by a sponsoring body viz. a Society registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860, or any other corresponding law for the time being in force in a State or a Public Trust or a Company registered under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956.
- iv) **Deemed University** - An Institution Deemed to be University commonly known as Deemed University refers to a high-performing institution, which has been so declared by Central Government under Section 3 of the University Grants Commission (UGC) Act, 1956.
- v) **Institution of National Importance** - An Institution established by Act of Parliament and declared as Institution of National Importance such as all Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), National Institute of Technology (NIT).
- vi) **Institute Under State Legislature Act** - An institution established or incorporated by a State Legislature Act.

The understanding of higher education institutional setup or the regulatory bodies is not sufficient enough for an educational institution namely a University to contribute effectively in the education sector though it helps in planning out the requirements to be satisfied by an institution. It is very important for any individual at the helm of the affairs of an institution to plan out the mechanism by which best results can be achieved, the aim with which an institution has been set or the institutional goals can be achieved. Universities are generally headed by Vice-Chancellors and sometimes the nomenclature used for the post is Director. The Vice-Chancellor/Director being the principal executive and academic officer of the University exercises general supervision and control over the affairs of the University and give effect to the decisions of all the authorities of the University. The Registrar is the Chief Administrative Officer of any university and works directly under the supervision of the Vice-Chancellor/ Director. The selection of individuals at either of the posts play the most important role in the best

⁴http://pib.nic.in/archive/others/2008/apr/r2008042502.pdf

⁵http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/Higher%20education/high%20edu.pdf

⁶http://mhrd.gov.in/university-and-higher-education

interest of the University. Since this paper is focussing on the futuristic role to be played by the Registrar of a University, the discussion is being limited to the role that can be played by the holder of the post. Registrar can be a person from a Teaching or Non-Teaching background, and similarly in all criterions there can be more than one option. Apart from looking for the general traits like honesty, sincerity etc. efforts are being put to highlight the points that should be looked for, like the below mentioned ones, that can add to the best interest of the University in the selection of an individual for the post of the Registrar:

- i) **Educational Background:** The individual to be selected as Registrar should be having a minimum Ph.D. degree so that is well acquainted with the requirements of the institution that wants not only to impart higher education but also to have good research. This will make the individual contribute towards providing the required conducive environment instead of creating obstacles in the name of expenses incurred towards education or research, as it takes time for any research to yield the desired results.
- ii) **Teaching Professional:** It is always in the interest of the university to have an individual who continues teaching while being the Registrar. The reason for this is that it will help to be in touch with the students, understand their requirements and needs and plan out the policies accordingly. Moreover, it will help to understand the ground reality within which it is being aimed to provide the best higher education/research and realistically plan out the things instead of from the blues. An individual who leaves teaching assuming the charge of Registrar or the one who is not at all from the teaching background though may understand the requirements but will be a person away from the reality so may be able to yield the required results but with greater efforts.
- iii) **Clash of Interest:** Every individual thrives to achieve greater heights in career and its important too so that an individual keeps performing to the fullest. However, sometimes this can even act as one of the major roadblocks as it may happen that if both the Vice-chancellor/Director and Registrar are from the same educational background then there is more scope of competition amongst them in terms of efficiency or handling of things or there may be clash of interests. So the best option can be that the individuals in either of the post are from different educational background so that there is no common point to argue upon except for discussion related to administrative matters of the university and both can work together in the best interest of the university and do keep on moving ahead achieving their individual goals.
- iv) **Optimum utilization of resources:** If the above points are being considered while an individual is being considered for the post of Registrar then it should be taken care that person teaching such a subject should be considered for the post of Registrar which can let him devote the required time for handling the administrative tasks efficiently and effectively. It may happen the

number of minimum specified hours may not be devoted for teaching but obviously the knowledge and expertise can be used to the optimum extent in both teaching and administration, which can turn out to be an asset in itself.

According to Martin Trow's classification of stages of development of higher education (Trow, 2006), a country is at an elite stage of higher education when the gross enrolment ratio (GER) is less than 15 percent; at a stage of massification when the GER is between 15 and 50 percent and at a stage of universalization when the GER reaches 50 percent mark. As per this definition, the higher education sector in India with a GER of 21.1 percent in 2012-13 is in its initial stages of massification⁷.

If we look from the conservative mindset then the role of the Registrar is to just take care that the day to day administrative works of the university is going on smoothly, but if we see holistically then the role cannot be limited to just this. Instead the Registrar shall act as a salient player in achieving the universalization of the programmes being offered by the university and to achieve the same shall play active role in the following way:

- i) **Recruitment of qualified and experienced Teachers:** Any educational institution will be able to deliver only if well qualified and experienced Teachers are serving. So in the initial scrutiny of the received applications against a particular post shall make sure that only the ones meeting the set criterions are being considered for further recruitment process. Any educational institution will be known by its Teachers and hence appropriate selections through appropriate methodology shall be made.
- ii) **Structure of the University:** Each university has its own structure suiting to its requirement. Efforts can be made by the Registrar while contributing to the planning of the structure that maximum utilization of human resources is being made with no extravagant expense on the university.
- iii) **Curriculum:** The development of curriculum or the changes being made in it, may appear not directly coming under him but can give opinion on this aspect as ultimately it is the Registrar who has to make sure in the limited capacity that the universalization is being achieved. Adequate academic flexibility shall be provided so that courses can be pursued to ones interest and calibre.
- iv) **Affordable Education:** The fees being charged from the students for getting the education shall be such that irrespective of the financial background of the individual, one is able to afford/pursue in the area of one's own interest.
- v) **Representation from all sections of society:** India being a diverse country it becomes more important that students from various sections of the society are being admitted which will help in providing the students an opportunity to understand and respect the culture and tradition of each other, which will in turn help in creating an overall harmonious culture in the country.

⁷http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/statistics/EAG2014.pdf

- vi) Research:** Taking care of administration and teaching (if the points mentioned above are to be considered) then it will be difficult to expect major contribution from the Registrar in performing the research. But Registrar can be one of the individuals looking into that research is being carried out in the right direction and the funds received are used appropriately in the appropriate manner as the research activities undertaken can act as one of the best means to generate revenue for the activities of the university.
- vii) Extension and Training activities:** The University shall continuously keep on organizing seminars/conferences in the emerging areas so that intellectuals working in the field can come together and discuss on the varied aspects as this can give a new dimension of thought, which can turn out to be in the larger interest of mankind. Moreover, short-term courses shall be offered in the upcoming areas either in regular/distance mode so that ample opportunity is there with one to update self with the latest developments in any area. It is understood that any extra activities conducted will also contribute in generation of revenue for the University.
- viii) Infrastructural facility:** On behalf of the University, shall try to provide the best infrastructural facility to all. Anyone accessing the campus be it teacher, researcher or student shall be able to have all the required things to pursue the activities with a focussed mind. Efforts shall be made that the infrastructure provided keeps pace with the academic growth of the institution and apart from creating the infrastructure, effective mechanisms for maintenance and optimal use of the same shall also be made, which can again act as the source of revenue generation.
- ix) Evaluation mechanism:** The evaluation mechanism of the university shall be framed in such a way that there is well-conceived monitoring of the student progress. The evaluation shall act as the booster for one to do better than to demotivate the individual.
- x) Placement Scenario:** There is a well-established correlation between the education and the job. Any individual pursues a course looking into the prospects of the course in providing one with better job, so efforts shall be made to bring maximum number of recruiters on campus so that each student can have ample option to select the best according to the needs and requirements.
- xi) Sustainable and fair funding:** The University will be in a position to take care of all the requirements not limited to the ones mentioned above if has sufficient funds with it. Having huge fund is not sufficient, there should be continuous flow of fair funding and management of the same also, so continuous measures should be taken as per the requirements of the University.
- xii) Collaboration with Institutions:** Institutional collaborations is a measure by which the expertise of one institution can be used up by another institution like human or infrastructural resources. Joint activities can also be undertaken by which benefit of expertise of either of the institutions can be provided to the society.
- xiii) Internationalization:** In today's globalized world

keeping in view the business, economy etc. there is no region on earth which is being/can be kept secluded from the reach of a person of different nationality especially when one can help a particular country grow. Hence in order to make acquaint people of different nationality know and respect the culture and also learn from the expertise of the good educational institutions it is more important to open its doors for students from other nationality. It will make any institution a versatile institution and to achieve the same concerted efforts needs to be made in this direction.

V. CONCLUSION

In the globalized world with increased competitiveness an effort has been made to highlight the futuristic role that a Registrar shall play to effectively contribute towards achieving the universalization of the Indian higher education. If the Registrar is made to stuck to the traditional role mere taking care of day to day routine work then it may happen that the goal may be achieved but the duration with in which its going to be achieved will be long. Time plays an important role in this competitive world and things shall be planned accordingly.

VI. REFERENCES

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