

PROGRESS AND EXPANSION OF HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION DURING THE XI FIVE YEAR PLAN

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Higher education has a very important role in the development of the nation in the 21st century. Government has taken a number of initiatives during the Eleventh Five Year Plan period to increase access to higher education with equity and excellence, while these initiatives have focused on improvement of access along with equity and excellence, adoption of state specific strategies such as enhancing the relevance of higher education through curriculum reforms, vocationalisation, networking and information technology and distance education along with reforms in governance in higher education have also been initiated.

PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS DURING 2009-10/2010-11

Looking back, the year 2010-11 witnessed a phenomenal growth in higher education system. At present, there are 611 Universities/University level Institutions and 33,023 colleges including 3,982 colleges for women. The University level institutions include 289 State Universities, 94 State Private Universities, 43 Central universities, 130 Deemed universities, 50 Institutions of National Importance, 5 Institutions established under various state legislations. Enrolment in the academic year 2009-10 increased from 137.83 lakh to 146.25 lakh, which is an increase of 6.1 per cent Out of total 146.25 lakh

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students, 19.19 lakh (13%) were enrolled in university departments and remaining 127.06 lakh (87 %) in affiliated colleges. The number of women students enrolled was around 60.80 lakh (41.6%), out of which 18.45% were enrolled in professional courses. The total faculty strength in universities and colleges was 6.99 lakh, out of which 1.0 lakh (14%) were in universities and 5.99 lakhs (86%) in colleges. The number of research degrees, i.e., Ph.D. and M.Phil. awarded in 2008-09 were 10,781 and 8,525 respectively. During 2009-10, 66 Academic Staff Colleges engaged in faculty development programmes. There were 10,364 institutions providing technical education in 2010-11. The intake status in technical education was 15.54 lakh students at Degree and Diploma programmes (MHRD, Annual Report, 2010). The number of students enrolled in Open and Distance learning has also increased to 55.18 lakh. With respect to assessment of Universities and Colleges, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has assessed 1415 colleges and 159 universities as on 28th March, 2010.

Table 1
Progress Overview during 2009-10/2010-11(as on 31.12.2010)

Indicators	Higher and Professional Education Level Achievements
Enrolment in universities and colleges(Regular Streams) (2009-10)	146.25 lakh
Enrolment in Distance learning	55.18 lakh
Enrolment of women (RegularStreams) (2009-10)	60.80 lakh (41.6%)
Per centage of women in professional courses (2009-10)	18.45%
Intake in Technical Education	19.54 lakh
Institutions in Technical Education	10,364
Number of Universities	611 (as on Aug. 2011)
Number of Colleges	33,023 (as on Aug. 2011)
Faculty	6.99 lakh
Academic Staff Colleges	66
National Assessment and Accreditation Council	1,415 colleges and 159 universities as on 28th March, 2010.
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Source: UGC Annual Report (2009-10), UGC Approach paper to 12th FYP (2012-17) and MHRD Annual Report (2010-11).

STATUS OF CURRENT INITIATIVES OF REFORMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Government has initiated various reforms to bring both academic as also institutional reforms in higher education sector during the year 2009-10. This paradigm shift led to development and introduction of five Bills in the Parliament.

They are:

- Proposal to set up 'National Commission/ Council for Higher Education and Research' for prescribing standards of academic quality and defining policies for advancement of knowledge in higher education institutions based on the principle of enhancing autonomy of universities and institutions of higher learning and research.
- The National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for Higher Education Institutions Bill, 2010 recently introduced in the Parliament, proposes to make accreditation mandatory for all higher education institutes.
- Prohibition of unfair practices in Technical Education Institutions, Medical Education Institutions and University Bill 2010 recently introduced in the Parliament, aims to curb malpractices in higher education.
- The Educational Tribunals Bill, 2010 recently introduced in the Parliament, provides for a two tier system of tribunals to deal with disputes between students, teachers and institutions.
- The Foreign Education Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations) Bill, 2010 recently introduced in the Parliament, provides a time bound and transparent system for the approval process as also for regulation of Foreign Education Institutions. These Bills are presently under consideration at different stages.

EXPANSION OF CENTRAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The initiatives undertaken by Ministry of Human Resource Development have given fillip to the expansion of access through establishment of central higher education institutions. There is at least one Central University of national character in each State, except Goa, at the request of the concerned State Government. All the new 13 Central universities, except the Central University of Jammu, have started their academic activities from temporary premises by end of 2010-11. The three erstwhile State universities converted to Central Universities were provided substantial funds by University Grants Commission (UGC) to meet the requirements of expansion of infrastructure, programmes and filling up of faculty positions. In the field of technical and professional education expansion of the centrally funded institutions has increased to 79 institutions. The establishment of 374 new Model Degree colleges, one in each of the educationally backward districts of the country and

also 1,000 new Polytechnics with Central assistance are also under implementation.

Table 2

Establishment of New Central Higher Education Institutions

S.No.	Type of Institution	Number Existing at the end of X Plan (31.03.2007)	Total during XI Plan (2007-2012)
1.	Central universities	19	42
2.	IITs	7	15
3.	NITs	20	30
4.	IIITs	4	20*
5.	IISERs	2	5
6.	IIMs	6	11
	SPAs	1	3

Source: Annual Report, MHRD, 2010-11.

North-Eastern Region of the country has received special emphasis for expansion of Central Higher Education Institutions. There are 9 Central Universities and several technical institutions like IIT, Guwahati (Assam), Rajiv Gandhi Indian Institute of Management, Shillong, NIT Silchar, NIT Agartala, North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology, Itanagar and Central Institute of Technology Kokrajhar (Assam). Establishment of new polytechnics in 27 new districts of North East is imminent.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Technical education in the country has expanded significantly. There are 79 Central Government funded institutions along with State government funded and Self-financing Institutions. These institutions, supported by the government, play an important role in the technical education system of the country. Two apex level Councils, namely All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and Council of Architecture, as statutory bodies, and four Boards of Apprenticeship Training (BOATs) are established for promotion and coordination of technical education. The Councils grant approvals for starting new technical institutions and for introducing new courses or programmes in approved institutions. Approvals are accorded in consultation with respective state Governments and affiliating universities. The National Board of Accreditation (NBA) was set up in 1994 to award accreditation status to programmes.

Table 3**Number of Centrally Funded Institutions of Technical and Science Education.**

Centrally Funded Institutions	Number of Institutions
Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs)	15
Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs)	11
Indian Institute of Science (IISc.)	1
Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISERs)	5
National Institutes of Technology (NITs)	30
Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIITs) National Institutes of Technical Teachers	20* (proposed)
Training and Research (NITTTRs) Other institutes of technology including Schools	4
of Planning & Architecture (SPAs -3).	9
Total	79

The Central Government is also implementing the following important schemes for the development of technical and vocational education.

(i) Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme (TEQIP) assisted by the World Bank: The TEQIP Phase II is being implemented as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with the assistance of World Bank from the year 2010-11. The Scheme includes two components—Improving Quality of Technical Education in selected Institutions; and Improving Systems Management. The project is for a period of 4 years and covers about 200 institutions based on competitive funding.

(ii) Indian National Digital Library for Science and Technology (INDEST): The INDEST-AICTE Consortium set up by MHRD for enabling access of electronic resources and databases to centrally funded institutions. The benefits of consortia based subscription to electronic resources is also extended to AICTE approved State govt./State govt. aided engineering colleges.

WEB PORTAL OF THE ALL-INDIA COUNCIL FOR TECHNICAL EDUCATION

A new Web portal has been hosted by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) which will act as a single window system for processing applications of institutions for approval. The AICTE will also issue an identification number (ID) to institutes and faculty members of AICTE approved institutions, a mechanism that will help check the trend of certain faculty members working in multiple institutions. It is expected that the portal will facilitate a citizen-friendly, interactive mode with a responsive public grievance redressal mechanism.

DISTANCE EDUCATION

Approximately 15.45 lakh fresh students were enrolled in the year 2010-11 with the Open Universities including IGNOU and Distance Education Institutions (DEIs) in dual mode Universities. In all 55.18 lakh students were enrolled in the open and distance learning system. The Open Universities offer all kinds of programmes ranging from vocational to general to professional and technical, barring those which are not allowed by the respective statutory councils.

IGNOU has been implementing the following programmes:

- Regular two-way Audio and one-way Video Teleconferencing
- Interactive Radio Counselling
- GyanDarshan
- GyanVani
- EDUSAT or Educational Satellite
- A Pan- African Satellite hub

During the current year, 92 new academic programmes have been launched and about 6,10,000 students have been admitted during the January and July 2010 sessions of the University. In order to strengthen the regional network services, the University has set up 210 new study centres, making it to a total of 3,107 Study Centres and 61 Regional Centres.

CONCLUSION

In spite of the ongoing strategies for reform, there is a need to address the existing and emerging challenges in the higher education sector. The Report to the People on Education (2010-11) delineates major challenges as teacher recruitment and faculty development, promotion of research and doctorate programmes, quality of undergraduate colleges, promotion of humanities, social sciences and basic sciences disciplines and internationalizing higher education.

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