

includes debate by practitioners and academicians on a contemporary topic

Building World Class Educational Institutions in India: Challenges and Prospects

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INTRODUCTION

N Ravichandran

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The Production and Quantitative Methods Area of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad organized a one-day seminar on April 3, 2006 in honour of Professor Jahar Saha, Director (1997-2002), Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad on the occasion of his superannuation from the services of the Institute.* Professor Saha contributed significantly towards strengthening the institution processes of IIM, Ahmedabad during his tenure as Director and as a faculty at IIMA. Accordingly, the conference theme was chosen to deliberate on the managerial issues and the complexities associated with creating world class educational institutions in India.

The purpose of this seminar was to initiate a national level debate on the following issues related to creating and sustaining World Class Educational Institutions (WCEI), in India:

- What makes an educational institution world class?
- How does one assess the impact of an educational institution?
- Who are the stakeholders of educational institutions and what role they are expected to play in governing and developing an institution?
- How should institutions in India attract critical resources (quality faculty) and retain them?

*The concerned proceedings of this conference would be published subsequently.

KEY WORDS

World Class Educational Institution

Autonomy

Funding

Public-Private Partnership


Knowledge Creation

Accountability

- What is the contribution of Indian institutions in knowledge creation? What are the critical gaps? How to close them?
- What should be the role of the government and the industry in supporting these institutions?
- Are these institutions accountable? If yes, to whom? How to balance the freedom of action and accountability?
- What is the role of the funding mechanisms and enabling administrative structure?
- What has been the track record of India in this area so far and what should be the way forward?

Several distinguished academicians who are actively involved in managing higher educational institutions in India responded positively to our invitation to make a presentation in this seminar.

We had specifically requested the invited speakers to focus on the enabling role of the government, organizational imperatives to create outstanding academic institutions, role of academic leadership, academic and infrastructure enablers to identify, nurture, and develop talent, effective institutional governing mechanisms, source and means of funding, and the Indian experiences in creating and sustaining world class educational institutions.

We had speakers representing a wide spectrum of institutions representing law, medicine, management, science and technology. In the next few pages, we summarize the presentations made in this seminar for wider discussion. 

N R Narayana Murthy

Chief Mentor
Infosys Technologies
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The first basic requirement for creating a world class educational institution is freedom of action and choice. The major difference that I have observed between the institutions abroad (like Cornell, Wharton, Stanford, etc.) and in India is that, in the case of the former, the

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leaders of the institutions are the ultimate decision-makers on what needs to be done to further the cause of the university or the graduate school of business, whereas in India, we still have not graduated to a level where we can take our own decisions.

Given this frame of reference, we can identify some critical requirements of a world class institution.

Leadership

First and foremost, we need good quality leadership. Leadership is about raising the aspirations of the people. Aspirations build civilization and lead to economic and societal progress. Therefore, leaders have to create a vision that is noble, aspirational, and inspirational, which will make people enthusiastic and energetic to make sacrifices that are required for moving towards that grand vision. The leader also has the responsibility of translating the vision into a very clear set of action items which could be executed over a specified period. This would require paying attention to the details, putting in place a good metric for each dimension of progress, and ensuring that it is measured with actuals versus budgets. The term budget here encompasses not just the financial aspect but also the issues of brand equity, research, quality of the faculty and the students, their impact on the society and the industry, and so on.

Mindset

It is important to be open-minded and create an environment where we are willing to listen to people who are better than us, have more experience than us, are from other cultures, and have treaded the path of progress before us. It is the responsibility of the leaders to create an open environment.

Meritocracy

We need to create and respect meritocracy. Unless we embrace meritocracy and have the freedom to give opportunity to the best and the brightest, we will not make significant progress. This is based on my own experience of leading a corporation. I strongly believe that it is valid for educational institutions too.

Further, we need to benchmark ourselves with the best in the world in each of the dimensions of progress and learn from those practices and improve. In order to move fast on the various dimensions of progress that have been earmarked, we need to be innovative. Unless we create an environment where leadership of ideas prevails rather than the leadership of men and women or leadership of hierarchy, it is unlikely that we would make progress.

Humility

Finally, we need a sense of humility. Unless we practice humility, we cannot aspire for higher things. Humility is about saying "God has been kind to me to come so far, I am still in the initial steps, and I have a long way to go; there are people who are much better than me." We have to embrace humility if we want progress. ❖

V L Mote

Retired Professor
IIM, Ahmedabad

Need for This Debate

A discussion of the challenges we face in building world class educational institutions of higher learning is timely and opportune. It is timely because, to succeed now, a nation must develop its economic, scientific, and technological capabilities so that it can compete with the best in the world. A nation cannot get this competitive strength without developing world class educational institutions within its boundaries. Without MIT, Harvard, California Institute of Technology, and other such renowned institutions, would America have got its industrial, economic, and military might? Therefore, if India wants to shake off the 'third world country' label, then the responsibility of doing so must fall on the shoulders of the nation's elite academicians. They must identify the nation's impediments in building world class educational institutions and remove them with the greatest urgency. For, leaving this task to the Indian politicians and bureaucrats would mean condemning our present and future generations

to live forever with the label of 'third-world-citizens.'

The recent US India nuclear deal and the Indian IT firms' outstanding success across the globe are tributes to India's higher educational institutions. These institutions have given the nation the best scientists and technologists who, in turn, have brought glory to India. Without the Indian Institute of Science, could Bangalore have become the global centre for microelectronics? Could the recognition that India got as a responsible nuclear power have been possible without BARC's outstanding contribution to the development of the nation's nuclear capability?

How to Judge our Institutions?

While we must publicly applaud the institutions of higher learning for their contributions to the Indian society, we must not rest content with their achievements. How do we judge the performance of the institutions of higher learning? Should their contributions to building the nation's might be an important yardstick in judging their performance? What impediments do these institutions face in achieving global standards of excellence? We must constantly ask these questions to avoid falling in the deadly trap of complacency and mediocrity.

We can use the following yardsticks commonly used to judge the performance of educational institutions of higher learning: How many Nobel laureates have our educational institutions produced? How many patents have our technological institutions got? How many world class research journals, widely acclaimed by scholars in the respective fields, do we publish in India?

From 1913 to 1998, six Indians got the Nobel Prize. If we include Sir Naipaul in the list of Indians who have won the Nobel Prize, the number in our list would increase to seven. However, we must note that Sir Naipaul is of Indian origin but is not an Indian citizen. Further, of these seven, only four were Indian citizens when they got the Nobel Prize and only three out of these four lived in India. To see how dismal this performance is, we need

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to see the number of Nobel laureates that MIT has produced in different fields. The statement in its website about the Nobel laureates in MIT is illuminating and, therefore, I reproduce below some excerpts from this statement:

Sixty-one current or former members of the MIT community have won the Nobel Prize. They include 25 professors, 24 alumni (including three of the professors), 14 researchers, and one staff physician. Twenty-six of the Nobel Prizes are in physics, twelve in chemistry, thirteen in economics, eight in medicine/physiology, and two in peace.

The sheer number of Nobel Prizes that the MIT community has won, by any standard, is impressive. The wide range of subjects in which it has won the Nobel Prizes is, in fact, more impressive than the mere number of Nobel Prizes that it has won. This list of prizes spans nearly all the prize categories from physics to economics to peace.

It is hardly necessary to stress the beneficial impact these Nobel laureates have on the quality of education in the educational institutions to which they belong. They do teach courses for beginners giving them rare insights into the subjects that even the best of professors would find it difficult to provide. Therefore, is it surprising that many of these beginners blossom into high calibre researchers? Thus, the presence of these Nobel laureates produces a virtuous circle. These eminent persons produce high calibre researchers who, in turn, become Nobel laureates and the circle continues.

The dismal record of Indian educational institutions of higher learning in producing Nobel laureates has a natural corollary which is that their performance in publishing high quality research journals or getting many patents is not very much better.

We can, of course, argue that the financial resources at our disposal are nowhere near the financial resources that either MIT or Harvard

Undoubtedly, availability of financial resources does matter in producing high quality research.

However, the zeal for doing research and the environment that creates a passion for undertaking such research matter even more.

has. Therefore, is it correct to expect that we would match their performance in producing the number of Nobel laureates these universities produce? There is some merit in this argument but it is not entirely convincing. India was not even a sovereign nation when Rabindranath Tagore and Sri C V Raman won the Nobel Prize. In addition, the financial resources that India has now are far higher than what the nation had in the early 20th century. Undoubt-

edly, availability of financial resources does matter in producing high quality research. However, the zeal for doing research and the environment that creates a passion for undertaking such research matter even more.

Institutions' Contribution to the Economy

The other argument is that the Indian educational institutions of higher learning are under considerable pressure to address the practical problems that the nation's industry and governments face. Therefore, the educational institutions use their resources more for applied research and less for basic research. Perhaps our educational institutions would be more comparable to the educational institutions in Japan or in Switzerland where the emphasis is more on applied research and less on basic research. This argument is also not very convincing. Let me cite three observations in support of my point.

The *Economic Survey*, 2005-2006, highlights the need for achieving high productivity levels in Indian manufacturing industries. Also, it points out the productivity growth that Indian manufacturing has achieved. While Japan and Korea have distinguished themselves by achieving outstanding levels of productivity in manufacturing, their Indian counterparts are floundering. Have the institutions of higher learning failed the Indian manufacturing industries trying to upgrade productivity?

The flagging levels of productivity in Indian manufacturing industries cause more concern when

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we see it along with the large deficit in the current account for the year 2005-06. The reason for such a large deficit was the rise in non-oil, non-bullion imports.

The economists argue that such a sharp rise in imports is because of the high imports of capital goods which the nation's industry needs because of its rising exports. Therefore, they conclude that this large deficit in the current account need not be a cause of concern. We would accept this argument if the Indian industries' productivity was high and rising. However, as I have pointed out earlier, the productivity in the Indian manufacturing has declined in the post-reform period. Therefore, the high current account deficit is symptomatic of a deeper malady in India's trade pattern.

My concern is that the Indian industry is importing high value-added products and services and exporting low value-added products and services. In other words, we are importing sophisticated submarines and fighter aircrafts and exporting 'four dollar garments' and low-priced, small cars such as Indica and Santro. If our trade pattern continues on these lines, then we are abdicating our responsibility to "provide high and rising standards of living to all citizens." Are the institutions of higher learning aware of this impending danger? Are they willing to face the challenge of working with the governments and industry to change the pattern of trade? Would these institutions point out that the nation must import less sophisticated products and export more sophisticated products?

Reasons, Responses, and Responsibility

Why did we come to such a sorry pass? I believe, there are four reasons. First, the governments did not do their job of pushing and challenging the educational institutions to upgrade educational standards. Rather, they did the opposite by forcing the educational institutions to take students and faculty on relaxed standards. Second, the institutions of higher learning surrendered to this demand without innovating alternate methods for ad-

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ressing a genuine societal problem. Charging low fees to keep the cost of education low was the third reason for the debacle that we are now facing. Lack of demand for highly educated and skilled persons from independence till 1998, is the fourth reason for our present plight.

The society has given the institutions of higher learning the responsibility of creating highly educated, skilled, and responsible persons for the society. These institutions, therefore, must maintain high standards of education and convince the outside world that they are doing so. In addition, they must also convince the outside world that their education is not merely confined to im-

parting knowledge and skills. The education they impart also inculcates values that help the students in controlling their senses, training their understanding, and finding a path to attain wisdom. ♡

P V Indiresan

Former Director, IIT Madras

Nation in Transition

We are neither a fledgling nation nor a mature one — we are in transition. We are witnessing great changes in our economy, polity, and society. We are in the middle of one of the greatest technological revolutions of human history. What we do today will set the course of our future for centuries to come. Academic autonomy is one such issue that is critical for both economic and human development.

Five Freedoms

Academic institutions need five kinds of freedoms to function effectively, to contribute best to the society, and to human civilization. Three of them are academic: the freedom to decide what to teach, whom to teach, and who will teach. The remaining two are economic and administrative: the freedom to decide where to find resources and the freedom to decide how to deploy those resources.

Freedom for Funding

The quality of education is determined by what to teach, whom to teach, and who will teach. The quality cannot be maximized unless there is also the freedom to seek resources from where they are best available and to decide what to do with those resources without interference from outsiders, particularly from the all-powerful government.

Academic institutions need financial help. Yet, they should have the freedom to decide how much to take and from whom to take. Even more important, they should have the freedom not to take when they find the conditions unpalatable. While the private educational institutions do exercise the freedom, the government institutions are still not in a position to tell the government that they do not need its resources.

Freedom to Select Teachers

Regarding the freedom to decide who will teach, the Indian government has not interfered so far in the selection of teachers except in a peripheral way. Teachers are the seeds of intellectual crop of the future; they have to be the best. Insisting on less qualified teachers for any reason whatsoever will harm the very people the policy aims to help. The issue of remuneration of teachers has also become a matter of concern in recent times. This is yet another area where educational institutions need autonomy.

Freedom to Decide Whom to Teach

Currently, freedom to decide whom to teach is mired in controversy. For years now, reservation has been treated as a universal remedy for both social ills and the failures of governance. Reservation at a later stage of a person's education is ineffective and inappropriate. It is ineffective because higher educational institutions cannot correct years of neglect after irreparable damage has already been done. It is inappropriate because what the youngsters need is good school education and not special privileges. Here is a lesson that India can learn, and, in fact, should learn. 'Catching them young and nurturing them well' is better than neglecting them when

they are young and giving them the special privilege of reservation when it is too late.

Freedom to Decide What to Know

Regarding the freedom to decide what to teach, we as teachers think that we enjoy that freedom in ample measure and that we are doing a great job of teaching as evidenced by the reputation our students enjoy. Contrary to all evidence, I believe that we have failed in our teaching responsibilities: we have done well in training the minds of our youth but not their hearts. Institutions will prosper only with the goodwill of the society around them. We have not done enough in that direction.

We have developed entrepreneurs who know how to generate high-wage employment but not to multiply employment among the less skilled persons. We have trained engineers and managers to erect imposing structures in our cities but not how to integrate them with the

rest of the city nor how to spread that prosperity to the adjacent rural areas. What bothers me is not our failure to solve these basic problems but our lack of sensitivity and studied refusal to study those problems. ♡

A Jayagovind

Vice Chancellor, NLSIU
Bangalore

Legal Education: A Paradox

It is a paradox that despite a great deal of importance attached to law in our system of governance, legal education is the most neglected branch of our educational system. The paradox becomes still more evident when we realize that all our top and enlightened leaders including Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, Ambedkar, etc., were eminent lawyers. Partly, it could be the legacy which treated law basically as some kind of a skill to be acquired by way of practice rather than something to be learnt in a university. This perception, given up long time ago in its birth place, namely, the UK, seemed to have persisted in India. However, when this laxity

had taken a heavy toll of the system, there was serious concern all around. The Bar Council of India, therefore, took the initiative to establish a model law school to raise the standard of legal education in the country and the NLSIU, Bangalore, was the result of this effort to treat law as a professional education like engineering and medicine.

Autonomy and Funding

Autonomy, selection process, and dedication of the staff were the three qualities which distinguished NLSIU from other law colleges in the initial years. There are quite a few old law colleges in the country with an excellent library and top academicians in their rolls. But, they do not have the autonomy to frame the syllabus for meeting the requirements of the society at a given point of time. In NLSIU, we are free to include new courses and define the contents of the courses in order to keep pace with the changing time. In other words, we constantly endeavour to keep ourselves up-to-date. Further, autonomy includes freedom in financial management. Except during our formative years, we raised a substantial portion of our resources on our own and spent them in the way we wanted.

Faculty

No educational institution can survive unless it can attract competent young teachers into its fold. All professional colleges including law colleges face serious problems in this regard as they cannot compete with the outside market in terms of the financial package offered. But, we can still manage to attract young talent if we recognize and reward merit. In other words, we should develop a system of accelerated promotions for those who cultivate the qualities of excellence such as innovative teaching and research publications. We, in India, are very much governed by gerontocracy. The problem is further compounded by

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the regulations concerning sanctioning of posts. An autonomous institution should be in a position to handle these kinds of problems.

Privatization and Funding

The present thinking is that all educational institutions must be as far as possible self-financed. It means that every student must substantially bear the cost of education. If the

proposition is pushed to its logical extreme, it may spell disaster in a country like India. This is a serious problem in the context of privatization of education — how to ensure equity in relation to weaker sections and transparency in financial dealings. All of us agree that education should not be treated as a business proposition to generate profit; but, at the same time, an educational institution should be self-sustaining as far as possible.

Regarding public institutions, there should be substantial governmental assistance for infrastructural development and the current expenditure should be met by the tuition fees. In order to ensure that no meritorious student is denied educational opportunities on account of financial constraints, there should be adequate means-cum-merit scholarships. In NLSIU, we have strictly

adhered to the motto that no student admitted into the law school shall discontinue his/her studies on account of financial constraints. In genuine cases, we waive the fees altogether and help the student concerned in all possible ways.

To achieve privatization without commercializing education, two factors are crucial:

- Students must be admitted into educational institutions on the basis of some objective criteria and this would include reservations for weaker sections as well.
- Private institutions should be able to charge adequate fees in a transparent way without indulging in profiteering.

In the context of education, our priority should be to first grapple with the problem of establishing a proper framework for indigenous privatization of education.

Only after internal consolidation can we think of inviting foreign universities to set up their establishments here.

Unless we develop internal strength, it will be unlikely that foreign institutions can be subjected to our regime.

GATS and its Implications

The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) treats educational services as one of the services to be liberalized internally and externally. In the Indian context, it would mean that foreign educational institutions should be in a position to open their branches in India. The Indian policy in this regard is ambivalent. One point of view is that they may be allowed to enter into the country, subject to all the rules and regulations applicable to private educational institutions. The Indian middle-class seems to welcome foreign institutions with the hope that they would raise the standard of education in the country.

We do not have sufficient experience of globalization of services. But, if we can extrapolate on the basis of our experience in the context of movement of goods and capital, we may derive a couple of lessons. We can never take it for granted that globalization will always be a positive sum game beneficial to the foreigners and the host country. It can benefit the host country provided the host country is competent enough to handle the situation properly. In other words, in the context of education, our priority should be to first grapple with the problem of establishing a proper framework for indigenous privatization of education. Only after internal consolidation can we think of inviting foreign universities to set up their establishments here. Unless we develop internal strength, it will be unlikely that foreign institutions can be subjected to our regime.

India vs Bharat

The philosophy of liberalization is based on the assumption that the wealth generated by private initiative will enrich the entire society. It is said that "rising tide will lift all the boats." But, it has not been conclusively established that all the boats will necessarily be lifted; in fact, quite a few boats are likely to be toppled as well. That is not an argument against liberalization as such, but only a caveat to guard ourselves against pitfalls.

The Institute of Rural Management (IRMA) at Anand was estab-

lished mainly to train the manpower required for managing the cooperatives. However, not many of the products from IRMA are found in our cooperatives. Similarly, our public sector undertakings have been languishing for long but the IIM products who successfully manage global corporate enterprises are not available to manage them. The National Law Schools have been established to raise the standard of the bar and help the judiciary in tackling the problem of justice delivery system. The general complaint from the Chief Justice of India downwards is that our contribution in this area is practically nil. The underlying problem here is the mismatch between the elite and the mass and, in popular terms, the tension between India and *Bharat*. This is the problem of globalization in general: it tends to create enclaves of prosperity in the vast deserts of poverty. The fond hope that the rising tide will lift all the boats has not automatically materialized.

P Balaram

Director, Indian Institute of Science
Bangalore

Academic leadership, academic environment and infrastructure, governance mechanisms, and funding are the four parameters that have a significant impact on the evolution of a world class research institution.

Funding

As far as higher education is concerned, the debate presently centres around the issue whether the funding should be public, private or a combination of both. Opinion is increasingly building up for much greater private participation in higher education. However, as far as research institutions are concerned, funding by the state is likely to be necessary for a long time to come. Even in a country like the US, the total amount of government funding on research outstrips whatever private industry is able to put in.

Research Focus

The Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) have set standards for under-

The primary problem in developing world class institutions lies in creating an ambience which should be done over a long period of time, sometimes a century or more, and by dedicated individuals who have worked for the institution for a long period. There are also other issues in institution building such as governance, consolidation, expansion, and modernization.

graduate engineering education over the years which have made even institutions outside India quite jealous of the products they produce. Indeed, the hallmark of IITs is the strict selection procedure including the joint entrance examination which selects a small number of candidates from a huge pool. IITs also offer post-graduate and research programmes that are being given greater emphasis in the last few years. There is a possibility of increasing the research programmes as well as the intake of post-graduate and Ph.D. students in the IITs in the near future.

The University Model

The models for IITs are the major universities of the world. One area in which we have a lot to learn is the robustness of the American university research system. If we examine some of the major universities in the world (such as Harvard, Stanford, Berkeley, Cambridge, Oxford, and others) they are characterized by a high level of faculty and student scholarship and are not restricted to management, law, medicine, science, and engineering alone.

The Indian models would have been those universities that existed in the years immediately after independence such as Kolkata, Madras, Delhi, Benaras, and Allahabad, many of them set up by the British. In the pre-independence days, these universities were primarily engaged in teaching and did not include scholarly research. In the post-independence period, in the first flush after independence, there was a huge surge of research in these universities. However, since 1970, the research activities have started going down.

Size and Niche

In any discussion on building institutions, there is a concern about the role of specialized laboratories *vis-à-vis* the broad-based institutions. The broad-based institutions have an advantage as they bring an intellectual breadth into the campus, which is otherwise missing.

Another issue that needs to be debated upon in the discussion on creating world class institutions is: Are we better off with a large institution or a smaller one? The primary problem in developing world class institutions lies in creating an ambience which should be done over a long period of time, sometimes a century or more, and by dedicated individuals who have worked for the institution for a long period. There are also other issues in institution building such as governance, consolidation, expansion, and modernization.

The Indian institutions should ask themselves some soul-searching questions instead of becoming complacent. ❖

Deepak Pental

Vice Chancellor, University of Delhi
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Universities and Society

Worldwide, universities play a vital and critical role in the evolution of societies. They educate young minds and create dynamic

It is the tradition of synthesis rather than the tradition of contradictions and differences that must guide the progress of universities in India in the new millennium. The transformation of our vast human resources into a source of moral correctness, dedication to the job in hand, and innovation both in the use of received knowledge and in the creation of new knowledge has to be the hallmark of our new outlook. The task of renewal would require new policy initiatives at both the micro and the macro levels.

citizens. In fact, they make great contribution in generating new ideas and encouraging innovation. A vibrant democracy like ours, wedded to the ideals of pluralism and secularism must have universities which not only cherish the associated values but also nurture them.

In the post-independence decades, the universities across the country served the cause of both innovation and education. However, since the 70s, there has been a decline in both the activities. Perhaps the ability to innovate has been the biggest casualty at the universities. As an independent country with endemic poverty, chronic destitution, and a hierarchical disposition, it would be natural that there would be turmoil and tensions in the society and, as a consequence, in the universities as well. A search for identities under the changing socio-economic conditions gave rise to dis-

content. That the world was polarized into extreme ideologies in the 70s and 80s only served to aggravate discontent. Somewhere along the way, the spirit of synthesis so well articulated by the architects of India's freedom struggle stood negated. It is this tradition of synthesis rather than the tradition of contradictions and differences which must guide the progress of universities in India in the new millennium. The transformation of our vast human resources into a source of moral correctness, dedication to the job in hand, and innovation both in the use of received knowledge and in the creation of new knowledge has to be the hallmark of our new outlook. The task of renewal would require new policy initiatives at both the micro and the macro levels.

The University of Delhi

The Delhi University has served the cause of the society in the country by teaching and mentoring millions of under-graduate and post-graduate students. The university has 78 undergraduate colleges and 84 post-graduate departments in the liberal arts and science streams and professional institutions for law, education, and management. The University has around 1,20,000 undergraduate and graduate students in regular classroom teaching. More than 1,80,000 students are studying through the correspondence mode. The University has affiliated colleges of medicine and engineering. The large reach of the University holds opportunity for more efficient resources utilization and for promoting inter-disciplinarity. These opportunities, however, have not been exploited fully.

New Initiatives at University of Delhi

- Revision of courses and curricula has been done for a very large number of courses in the last three years and the process is likely to be completed within the next two years. However, processes have to be set up for constant up-gradation of courses.
- Development of a system of internal assessment which is resulting in much better interaction between teachers and students.

- Strengthening of the university-wide ICT network which is now being used extensively for receiving journals and databases. This network should be used in future for strengthening under-graduate education to prepare students for a more competitive and challenging world.
- Development of e-learning materials so that teachers and students can learn together.
- Revamping and upgrading of library systems with proper classification and larger access to materials.
- Revamping of the examination system for timely results and proper evaluation.

Developing Indian Universities as World Class Institutions

- *Combine science and technology:* The universities should be in a position to offer to the students a combination of science and technology courses so that they could opt for technology-oriented programmes after studying science and vice-versa. This would keep the option of moving to technology streams open for the students studying science.
- *Strengthen the funding position:* We must strengthen the competitive grant systems of various government agencies like DST, DBT, ICSSR, etc., to ensure that research is funded at adequate levels in the Universities.

Another way of strengthening research is through supplementary funding from industry. If industry starts providing research funding to the institutions, it will have a stake in making them more innovative.

- *Improve the laboratory work and industrial training:* The universities should ensure that there is continuous learning for the students pursuing Ph.D. programmes by improving the laboratory facilities and by introducing some course work. Research on India-centric problems must be given deserving recognition.
- *Encourage researchers:* We should provide teaching assistantships to young research scholars so that

they stay in touch with teaching while they research. We should also enhance stipends to meritorious students. We need to instill confidence in the scientists and faculty who return from abroad to think about solving India-centric problems and back up new ideas. We need to draw faculty from industry and other institutions for teaching purposes particularly for professional course.

In the final analysis, the issue that is more important than achieving world class status is: Are the universities becoming socially more relevant with each passing day? If we focus on the problems facing our country and take initiatives on India-centric problems and solve them either using the available knowledge base or by creation of new knowledge, the world class level will automatically follow. ♡

M R RAO

Dean, Indian School of Business
Hyderabad

Anatomy of Institutions

- **Vision and mission:** This requires the involvement of the board, the faculty, the students, and the alumni.
- **Inputs:** This consists of students and executives.
- **Processing:** This is done by faculty through the curriculum with administrative support
- **Facilities:** This encompasses library, computing infrastructure, classrooms, hostel, recreational facilities, etc.
- **Output:** This includes the students who graduate and the publications of faculty and researchers.

Profiles of World Class Institutions

How do we know we are world class? Harvard, Stanford, MIT, etc., are all considered as world class institutions mainly based on rankings given by various business magazines as well as their faculty's publications in peer-reviewed journals. These institutions also give a lot of emphasis on dissemination of the

findings. In fact, they have centres of excellence which promote inter-disciplinary research and a lot of interaction with the industry.

Some key initiatives by these institutions include:

- hiring research professors with tenure on a contract basis
- supporting presentations by faculty at conferences and giving awards to faculty
- reducing the teaching load on the younger faculty for pursuing research
- conducting curriculum review on a periodic basis
- feedback from students and alumni
- performance review of faculty for annual increments and rigorous tenure process
- fund-raising, image-building, branding, and business development.

Agenda for Action

The top business schools in our country have lot of opportunities to move up the ladder of excellence. For the existing institutions aspiring to be world class, there is a need to encourage their faculty to publish in internationally refereed journals. This is the dimension in which all the institutions are lacking. It is not that the faculty in these institutions are not doing research; it is just that their research is not published in internationally refereed journals.

Another challenge faced by our institutions is the poor faculty compensation. Therefore, attracting and retaining good faculty is an enormous task. Attracting foreign students is also a challenging issue as the facilities in our country may be good by Indian standards but not so by international standards.

Other challenges include gaining international recognition, growth, fund-raising, and managing the transition. Managing the change from a well-known institution within the country to a global, world class institution is particularly challenging considering

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H S Ballal

Vice Chancellor
Manipal Academy of Higher Education
Manipal

MAHE

The major challenges for creating world class educational institutions pertain to infrastructure, finance, faculty, students, and private sector partnership.

The Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE), established in 1953, was the first self-financed institution in the private sector providing medical and technology education in the country under the non-government, non-missionary status. MAHE has 15 constituent institutions with campuses in India and abroad and is a major national and international provider of healthcare and professional education. In all, we have 23 professional colleges, 11 hospitals, and nine associate government hospitals with an approximate bed strength of 2,000 and an employee strength of 10,000.

Resources

The first challenge that any institution faces is regarding infrastructure and finance. Particularly for healthcare institutions, infrastructure is the fine line that distinguishes one institution from the other and finance is essential for setting up world class infrastructure.

Recognition

Apart from finance and infrastructure, recognition from local, national, and international policy makers is extremely important as it brings confidence and encourages institutions to be proactive. For a private education provider, therefore, total recognition is a must.

Values

While finance, infrastructure, and recognition are major contributors in creating a world class institution, there is a need for value-based education whether it is healthcare, technology or a combination such as in a deemed university which caters to all walks of life. This would require good quality teachers as they are the mainstay in education. This would also involve assessing the faculty, continued education programme, enabling the faculty to visit overseas, inviting visiting faculty from abroad, etc., which would enhance the quality of the teachers and keep them in tune with the rest and the best in the world.

Fees

In the private sector, given the fact that there is a capitation fee and no financial assistance, the student beneficiaries will have to bear the cost of good education. The role of NRI beneficiaries, particularly, is extremely important as they not only derive the benefits from the institution but also keep them alive by cross-subsidizing their Indian counterparts. The Indian counterparts must, however, bear the basic fee structure.

Public-Private Partnership

In recent years, public-private partnerships have become an accepted norm in the education sector in most of the developed and progressive nations. Governments have realized the need for promoting private sector due to the escalating costs of higher education. Partnership allows for sharing of costs and optimal utilization of resources. The shared vision would ensure greater account-

ability, responsibility, and credibility because multiple stakeholders tend to have a more dynamic approach to monitoring the outcomes at each stage.

Accountability

The need of the hour is operational, financial, and aca-

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demic autonomy and social accountability. Further, the stakeholders need to address and resolve issues of admissions, fee structure, and reservation in a totally transparent manner. ♡

A K Bisoi

Additional Professor
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The Context and AIIMS

Educational institutions are not mere buildings or research centres. They are the reflections and aspirations of the whole society and embodiments of the entire socio-cultural, political, and historical ethos and freedom of the nation. Educational institutions of excellence in a country set standards not only for the rest of the country but also provide the guidelines for future development.

In order to create a world class institution along the lines of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), it is important to have the right vision and mission which combines education, research, and patient care. This combination has proved to be unique in creating an environment of excellence at AIIMS unparalleled anywhere in South Asia.

Responding to Aspirations

In creating world class medical institutions, the biggest challenge is not infrastructure or finance but standing up to the aspirations of the people. Everyday, we face numerous challenges in AIIMS and evolve diagnostic therapeutic procedures to deal with human aspirations and hope. When a patient presents himself with a medical condition, the challenge is not just to treat him but to provide a message to the society at large that we are there to take care. Our greatest achievement is in instilling that confidence and hope in the minds of people.

Community Welfare

Our challenges seem to be increasing everyday in the context of progress and explosion of knowledge. We have, to a large extent, succeeded in controlling (most

of the) communicable diseases, reducing the child and maternal mortality rates, and increasing the average life span of individuals. Now, the challenge is shifting to non-communicable diseases, *viz.*, cardio-vascular diseases and various genetic disorders besides life-threatening diseases such as HIV and AIDS. It is vital not only to provide solutions from a particular location but to evolve mechanisms for the dissemination of the same to the lower structures so that the whole community benefits.

Faculty

AIIMS has been rated as a centre of excellence. It is excellent not only in terms of infrastructure but in its quality of the faculty. It is not the infrastructure that makes the difference but the community or the faculty who drives it. AIIMS is well-equipped in terms of library and learning resources. The teacher-student ratio is comparable to the best in the world. There is significant exposure to clinical material and research. ♡

Pratibha Narang

Dean, Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences
Sevagram, Wardha

Mahatma Gandhi once remarked "India is not to be found in its few cities but in its seven lakh villages" indicating that the country can rise only to the extent its villages rise. Realizing that villages in our coun-

try lacked medical facilities, Mahatma Gandhi, in 1944, started a 15-bedded Kasturba Hospital for women and children. Later, in the Gandhi Centenary Year (1969), in order to carry forward Gandhiji's vision, the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences (MGIMS) was established by Dr. Sushila Nayar as the first experimental rural medical institute of India in order to orient medical education towards meeting the needs of the rural poor.

Objectives

In order to fulfill the vision of the Mahatma, MGIMS's aims and objectives are to provide value-based and cost-effective medical education to train doctors to serve in rural areas, provide healthcare service at affordable costs,

evolve comprehensive healthcare delivery system, empower primary healthcare and community activities, and conduct research.

Code of Conduct

MGIMS is probably the only institute in the country which follows a prescribed code of conduct like wearing Khadi, participating in community prayer with weekly *shramdan*, observing vegetarianism, and eschewing from smoking and alcohol.

Innovations

While following the framework of the curriculum prescribed by the Medical Council of India and not in the least compromising with the academics, the institute in order to achieve its objective of value-based and need-based medical education has introduced certain innovations in its programmes. The pre-medical test has a compulsory paper on Gandhian ideology and, after admission, the students are kept for 15 days in Gandhiji's *Ashram* to imbibe what they have read for the paper in theory.

Social Service Camp

The institute identifies one village for each batch of students and in the first vacation itself, the batch is posted there for 15 days. The students, living with the villagers, get an insight into their lives, learn to be understanding, tolerant, and compassionate. Each student is allotted families for whom he/she acts as a mentor for the four and a half years of his/her stay in the college. Towards the end of their training, the students are once more posted in the rural areas for 15 days under the reorientation of medical education (ROME) camp and during the internship. At this stage, they are more mature in their knowledge of medicine and are able to understand and contribute towards the health needs of the community.

Doctors in rural areas: With the objective of bridging the gap between the rural and the urban areas, a rural placement programme was started in 1992 for providing doctors to the rural areas. Under this programme, it was mandatory for graduates from MIGMS to serve for two years in the villages. This is also an eligibility criterion for admission to the post-graduate programme. So far, 102 NGOs, situated all over India, have received the

benefit of this scheme. Thus, the rural placement scheme has turned out to be mutually beneficial to the institute, students, and the NGOs.

General OPD: The Kasturba Hospital has an OPD Section which is a replica of a model Primary Health Centre. Students posted here learn about comprehensive health care and deliver integrated curative and preventive services. All new patients pass through this OPD and only those needing consultation are referred, thereby decreasing the load on the specialists.

Health insurance: MIGMS has an innovative health insurance scheme for the villagers around the institution. Under this scheme, a family of five is required to pay only Rs.150 per year to get the facilities at the hospital. There is also a *Jawar Yojana* which is meant for those villagers who cannot even afford that amount. Under this scheme, the institution collects *jawar* from the farmers, sells the same, and the money thus collected is deposited in the name of the village. The *Sarpanch*, in turn, issues a card to the villagers to avail the medical facilities from the institution. It is based on the concept of people's participation in their own health programme. Emphasis is also on training villagers to manage the collection and use it judiciously for the health of the people.

Faculty, Academics, and Research: These are the mainstay of any good institution. Drawn from all parts of the country, the Institute has fully dedicated full-time faculty residing in the campus. With the intake of only 65 students, it is able to teach and train the students with a personal touch. Excellent library and modern equipments provide sufficient incentive for research and almost all departments have acquired extramural projects from various national and international funding agencies.

In conclusion, driven by the vision of Mahatma Gandhi, several innovative practices, and dedication to core principles and values, MIGMS has made a significant difference to rural health care and has emerged as a model for rural health care delivery.

CONCLUSION

Creating world class education institutions (WCEI) and nurturing them is an exciting and challenging task. While India has created several (world) reputed institutions in diverse fields with the active support of the government,

their transformation into world class entities would need major policy initiatives as well as meticulous execution.

- The basic premise on which a WCEI can be created is aspirational leadership and the freedom of action available to those who manage or lead these institutions.
- Freedom of action involves the decisions related to whom to teach, what to teach, how to teach and those related to selection, seeking, and deployment of resources (capital, faculty, etc).
- There is no simple measure to benchmark WCEI. The reputation, faculty resources, their academic and scientific output, quality of students who seek admission to the institution, the academic rigour practised by the institution, and the social standing of the graduates of the institution are some key attributes to gauge the eminence of an institution.
- The private participation in India, in setting up educational institutions has brought some additional capacity. It has not been able to challenge the quality of existing institutions nor stretch them to do better. Also, there is a declining trend (at least in knowledge creation) among public institutions. There is an urgent need to completely revamp these institutions in terms of direction, focus, content, and management.
- The societal acceptance of the students of higher institutions of learning in India has been very high. Their contribution to transform or influence the much needed social changes in the Indian context has been somewhat minimal. There is clearly a need to retrospect and strengthen the educational processes in these institutions, to make them more socially relevant and appropriate.
- While the reputation and public image of educational institutions (and universities) in India are remarkable, their contribution to knowledge creation in the global context is somewhat limited. The most challenging task is to recognize this gap and initiate remedial measures by which this gap can be closed.
- Educational institutions of repute are not only required to provide quality and skilled manpower, they are also expected to play the role of social change agents to initiate and bring about the necessary social changes in the society. Indian institutions need to reorient and prepare themselves to play this vital role.
- To make an impact (in the society), WCEI should constantly review their performance, reassess the direction, realign their priorities, and rededicate to the academic pursuit and excellence.
- Educational institutions in India need to be a combination of the world reputed institutions and institutions which are socially relevant. Policy planners should enable Indian Institutions to evolve to this important catalytic role.
- This transformation process would need active (resource) support from the government, quality leadership (academic), dynamic priority-setting and policy formulation, freedom of appropriate action by the institutions, and a strong focus on quality of education delivered, contextually relevant knowledge creation and an ecosystem to facilitate generation of new ideas and thoughts. ♡