Can India Build World Class Universities?

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Does India have a strategic plan to build world class universities?
Outline

• What is the cause for optimism?

• When will Indian universities begin to appear in world rankings?

• India’s Vision and Strategy to build World class Universities

(1) Size

• Huge and growing population - 1.28 billion
• Large and expanding higher education - 24 million
• 700 universities, 38,000 colleges and 12,000 sub degree institutions
• Tiny top - IITs, IIMs, IISc, Few Central / Some private institutions
• Highly competitive merit-based admissions – talent concentration
(2) Awareness & Engagement

• Public at large
• Institution level
• Government
• Policy and legislation

“We can not hide behind that excuse (criteria used by rankings is irrelevant to India’s priorities). We must play the same game as the rest of world is playing. We need not be shy about it.” – Ashok Thakur, Secretary, Higher Education, Govt of India

• Greater participation in providing institutional data

(3) Multiple initiatives to enhance quality

1. Set up new high quality institutions
   – National government - 5 IISERs, 8 IITS, 21 CUs and 31 others
   – Several State governments
   – Some private institutions

2. Selective support to existing institutions
   – Universities with potential for excellence – 15 Universities (up to US $ 6 million)
   – Innovation Universities - up to US $60 million

3. Merger of institutions?
Enablers

Present
- Concentration of talent
- Liberal funding
- Autonomous governance

Missing
- Culture
- Competition

Indian Universities in Global Rankings

- Shanghai Ranking (2013)
  - IISc, B’lore: Overall (301-400); Math (151-200)
  - IIT Madras: Engg & Tech (101-150)
  - Jadavpur University: Comp Sc (101-50)
  - IIT Delhi: Comp Sc (151-200)
  - ISI, Kolkata: Comp Sc (151-200)

- Times Ranking (2013)
  - Punjab University (226-250); IIT Delhi, IIT Kanpur, IIT Roorkee and IIT Kharagpur (351-400)

- QS Ranking (2013)
  - IIT Delhi (222) – 11 others in top-800: all except one in top-400 in employer reputation
Will it improve in near future?

- Lack of sense of urgency
- Slow / bottom up process
- Still small investments
- Focus on research / research focused institutions – recent origin
- Strategy / Long-term vision

Strategy?

1. Provide data to ranking agencies
2. Spend to aggressively market Indian universities in US and Europe?
3. Increase number of foreign students
4. Remove ceilings on income of foreign faculty
5. Create network of academics and encourage them to cite each-other (scratch each-others back)
6. Strive to improve quality and quantity of research, teaching and industry interaction

Source: ‘Rank Inconsistency’ by Gautam Banerjee, former Director IIT Guwahati in Indian Express dated 5 Oct 2013
Committee - Terms of Reference

- **Review existing arrangement** for funding of research - both core funding of research facilities and infrastructure and project funding in academic institutions with a view to identify gaps and ensure a more coordinated approach in research funding;
- **Develop strategy** for selective approach in **allocation of research funding** to academic institutions in order to ensure that resources for research are used to the best advantage;
- **Develop a framework** for **excellence in research** to ensure that increased funding supports country's most talented researchers and most effective research institutions and departments and also to ensure that some of the country's institutions reach the global benchmarks in research performance;
- **Create a framework** for **evaluation of research** and rankings with a view to develop healthy competition amongst institutions, departments, centres and Individual researchers.

Vision 2030

"Despite these strides of progress, India’s HE institutions are not yet the best in the world – India has **fewer than 25 universities in the top 200**. Yet, **India’s higher education system is increasingly recognized as being the best for the world**. The promise of excellence and equity has made the Indian HE system **worthy of emulating**, certainly in the developing world that faces the same challenges as India did in the previous decade, but less obviously in pockets of the developed world which is under tremendous pressure to provide HE in cost-effective ways. **Students, faculty and employers now flock to India to learn, teach and recruit** as India dons the mantle of a higher education leader and emerges the role model for delivering high-quality education to vast numbers at low cost."
World Class Higher Education System

- Research Universities
  - Small numbers, high prestige
  - Liberal funding and autonomous governance, concentration of faculty and student talent

- Multi-disciplinary universities
  - Larger numbers, but not the bulk of higher education
  - Strong linkages with research universities

- Professional & general colleges
  - Middle tier, mostly unidisciplinary institutions
  - Forms bulk of higher education

- Vocational institutions
  - Very large, less expensive and dispersed institutions
  - Vertical mobility of students

Thank you