



'Effective education needs teacher-student interaction'

Dr. Sanjeev P. Sahni

Director, Center for Innovative Leadership and Change, Center for Victimology and Psychological Studies, Professor of Organizational Behavior, Human Resources and Criminal Psychology, O P Jindal Global University

Q&A

MA What have been the major initiatives taken during your tenure with this institution.

I have long been associated with this organization. I could utilize my earlier experience in various industries and assist Shri Naveen Jindal in this philanthropic activity. We as a University have the sense of responsibility for maintaining the expectations and trust of the students enrolled with us. Our faculty members continue to demonstrate a passionate commitment to maintain the highest standards of academic excellence. Since its establishment in 2009, we have grown from strength of 100 students with 12 faculty members to presently 1300 students and 120 faculty members. We expect the numbers to grow to 1800 and faculty strength to 160 in the coming year. With various challenges ahead, we expect to strive and equip the leaders of future with competence and excellence to address emerging social issues.

MA How do you look at the ranking of Indian Universities done by the international agencies? How relevant are their parameters for Indian institutions?

The system of ranking universities all over world that is conducted by well-known agencies is rigorous, robust and transparent. The ranking is based on serious tools and major weightage given to research work in indexed journals and other publications, applied teaching methodologies, curriculum, facilities etc. The parameters used are absolutely valid and universally accepted, though not many Indian Institutions feature in such rankings.

MA What are your views about the recent trend of adopting performance management system in education sector in India? Does NAAC play an important role in this regard?

Performance management system has to be transparent and must have focused objectives. At our University, we follow the KARA model. It stands for Key Academic Result Areas.

KARA makes evaluation in these parameters:

- Teaching aptitude
- Research & publications
- Role in community development
- Responsibilities in administration/Institution building

The assessment is done at par with global settings and rating is done on a scale of 5.

The students' feedback and pedagogy offered by administration is also taken into consideration. The remuneration is also linked with the performance of the incumbent, and it is the best in the industry.

Presently, as per my view the educational Institute's under government control are not using this sort of assessment. Moreover, other private universities do not have such a robust system of assessment either.

The PMS as adopted by NAAC is tedious and complex.

MA In this competitive scenario cost effectiveness is a burning issue. How do you evaluate the education sector in India in this context?

Education cannot be business proposition in India.

Unfortunately some have made it a profitable business, caring less for society. Majority in India are unable to afford education for their career. On the other hand, some Institutes do not bother much for the quality of delivery but charge high tuition fees upfront.

Universities established by corporate houses have different views in regard to education and they look at it from the angle of societal development. They come up with industry-specific courses that cater for challenging economic demand. This not only becomes cost effective for the students but also increase their employability.

For example, we have established: School of International Affairs, School of Government and Public policy, School of Liberal Arts & Humanities. These offer very specialized courses having unique subjects and producing students who are cut-out for specific job sector. There needs to be more such courses taught by expert faculty members run by Institutes that are set up by corporate houses.

MA Indian government provides huge subsidy in education sector, many students, inspite of being financially sound, take the facility of subsidy. Do you believe an efficient and prudent pricing mechanism can solve this problem? Do you have any personal opinion on it?

Lack of proper accountability and responsibility in the administration of pricing mechanism in the system is the cause of ineffective use of finance provided by the government. Efficient and prudent pricing mechanism may solve the issue to some extent. Pricing has to be done in such a manner so as to have some demarcation between people who are able to afford education and those who may not be able to afford that specific education. Merit could be one parameter under consideration. Only providing subsidy may not solve the problem. It calls for proper regulation, administration and fund management.

MA What are the basic differences you find in the teaching - learning environment under public and private education system?

In most of the public education system the process of delivery is only a one way process, where a professor delivers his theory lectures, students listen and goes back home.

Private education system provides wider range of electives to choose from. Their courses, to some extent, are contemporary and updated to the need of the hour. Performance assessment of students is all round. Over a particular period, there is 50% to 70% internal assessment, and rest based on examination performance. Here the learning process is more interactive and based on solving situational crises rather than on learning theories only.

MA How do you compare and benchmark the regulatory aspect and the teaching - learning environment in India with that of the advanced countries?

We need to catch up a lot in terms of regulatory aspect of the teaching and learning environment as compared to advanced countries.

MA Do you believe online education system can

add value towards quality education in Indian scenario?

Distance education is not at all effective. It is very important that teacher – student interaction takes place in a regular manner. It is also important that peer group interaction, fellow feeling and community feelings develop among students.

I am totally in favor of classroom teaching that helps improve communication and social belongingness. Moreover, courses such as management, sciences, technology papers, that require to solve case studies, and practical issues cannot be taught through online mode or distance mode either.

MA Do you think performance evaluation/appraisal of educational organizations is the need of the hour?

Yes

MA How proper Cost Management system plays an important role in the overall growth of education sector in India?

Cost management is absolutely an important aspect for growth of education system in India. In our University we spend approximately 50% of revenue on salary of professors. Both infrastructure and intellectual content are a must in education industry. Cutting down costs on faculties or student comfort cannot work.

There is the need to take in students with right aptitude and as per merit. Further, there is also the need to categorize them into people who are able to afford the course and those who need financial help. Both the categories have to be provided education.

MA Do you think present higher education system is effective for producing sensible and accomplished human being to build our nation?

The higher education system in India needs lot of change and orientation towards producing responsible citizens of the country.

MA How do you evaluate your existing faculty quality and strength of your institution?

Already explained in point no. 3

MA What are the infrastructural strengths and weakness of Indian education system?

The infrastructure of Indian education system is pathetic. There has to be proper light, machines, workshops and other facilities that enhance learning processes.

There is also a total mismatch between industry and academia here. The industry people do not go and teach. Academic people do not come to industry to learn. Both have to move in sync.

MA How much change have you experienced in the Indian education scenario in past few decades? What is your opinion regarding the future panorama of education sector in India?

There has not been much change in public universities and not much change in teaching methodologies either. But elite private universities are doing better and improving. There needs to be proper government regulation to give permission to set up academic institutes which have the right vision and system to go academic; only business motive and profit through sale of education need to be discouraged.