Introduction

Higher education contributes to the growth of a nation through knowledge production and dissemination. The process of knowledge production and dissemination is affected by the quality of higher education. The accountability in higher education also includes assurance of qualitative higher education. All the stakeholders including the private financiers benefit by providing quality higher education in the long run. Discerning stakeholders, in particular, the students and the employers demand higher quality standards to make more judicious decisions regarding employing their resources.
In contrast, a low quality higher education system results in wastage of scarce resources and subsequent inefficient higher education system. Further, the opportunity costs of scarce resources including the time spent by students in pursuing higher education increases in absence of qualitative higher education. Besides, low quality education may delay the objective of a nation to become knowledge economy. Therefore, all nations are putting great efforts in fostering the quality of higher education to benefit the stakeholders and thereby contribute to the economic growth and development of the nation. It is common to observe in writings an assertion that in many countries, both developed and developing countries, the higher education landscape has changed during the post 1990s period, and India does not seem to be exception to this proclamation (Joshi and Ahir 2014). The higher education in India has moved from elite to mass. This change has brought many new dimensions to the shape of Indian higher education as reflected in the enrolments, institutions, private participation, equity, quality, etc.

The current chapter is an attempt to understand the quality assurance mechanism existing in Indian higher education. A brief outline in the beginning of the paper describes the current landscape of the Indian higher education. The subsequent section discusses the retrospective quality assurance in India, the present quality assurance mechanism, the agencies involved, outcome and impact. Performance of Indian higher education institutions as measured by international quality assurance agencies and selected global university rankings have also been then described briefly. The chapter attempts to provide an appraisal of the quality of higher education in India.

Indian Higher Education – A Brief Overview of the Status and Growth

During a period of almost six decades in the post-Independence era from 1950-51 to 2013-14, the number of colleges increased from 578 to 38,056. For the same period, the number of universities increased from 27 to 757 (Ministry of Human Resource Development [MHRD] 2014; 2015c).

The exponential growth in the number of institutions can be observed in the post 2000 period. The colleges increased with a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 9.9 per cent during 2000-01 to 2014-15. During the same period, the universities increased with a CAGR of 8.11 per cent. Considering the institutional count, the Indian higher education system is the largest in the world (Joshi and Ahir 2016b).

The appropriate financing provision can play a detrimental role in enhancing capacity and quality of higher education. In India, the budgeted estimate of expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP for 2013-14 was 4.44, and it was
Few Pages are not available
performing institutions and are not aided deemed universities. The government
colleges are managed by the government and funded by it. But private aided
colleges are not managed/owned by the government, rather a private trust/
individual manages the college and it receives financial assistance from the
government.

2 Private universities (including private deemed universities) and private unaided
colleges do not receive financial support from the government.

3 http://data.uis.unesco.org
4 http://data.uis.unesco.org
5 http://www.icar.org.in/en/node/10345
6 http://www.naac.gov.in
7 http://www.efmd.org/accreditation-main/equis/accredited-schools
8 http://bestbizschools.aacsb.edu/search-by-location
9 http://www.ambaguide.com/find-an-accredited-programme/schools/asia/?page
   =1&pp=10
11 http://www.sriramachandra.edu.in/university/colleges.php?cid=1
12 http://www.sriramachandra.edu.in/university/colleges.php?cid=4
13 http://www.scimagojr.com/countryrank.php

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