GOVERNANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (HEIs) IN WEST BENGAL – AN EMPIRICAL INQUEST

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Abstract

Education in its general sense is a form of learning, in which the knowledge, skills, and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, training, or research. Higher education institutions are an important part of - and play an important role in – society. The institutions are societies unto themselves, but they are also part of the larger society. If they remained only societies unto themselves, higher education institutions would be locked up in the proverbial ivory tower and their future would most likely be considerably shorter than their past. On the other hand, higher education institutions without some distance from society at large would run a serious risk of losing their capacity to reason in terms of principle, to take a long term view somewhat detached from the immediate issues of the day and to identify sustainable solutions to the most serious and long term challenges facing our society. Student participation as defined by this conference is an aspect of the broader area of higher education governance, so it may be useful to recall that higher education governance is at the heart of the Bologna Process and will be a key feature of the European Higher Education Area to be set up by 2010. To an extent, this is taken for granted, and many institutional representatives and higher education policy makers refer to academic freedom and institutional autonomy – or sometimes a mixture of the two – as if these were obvious features of higher education in Europe, freedoms earned at the dawn of time and destined to be with us until some distant academic sunset. While discussing quality in the field of education, the focus of students is on the facilities provided, of the teachers is on the teaching-learning process, of management and parents is on the scores or grades achieved, and of prospective employers is on the nature of the output. The present study investigates the issues of governance in Higher Education Institutions in India, with a specific and pin-pointed analysis on the degree colleges in the district of Howrah, West Bengal. The study is based on Primary Data Analysis. Statistical tools like frequency distribution table and factor analysis have been used for the study.

Keywords : Governance, HEIs, Howrah, Factor Analysis.

1.0 Introduction

Education in its general sense is a form of learning in which the knowledge, skills, and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, training, or research. Education frequently takes place under the guidance of others, but may also be autodidactic. Any experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels, or acts may be considered educational. The English word "Education" has been derived from two Latin words Educare (Educere) and Educatum. "Educare" means to train or mould. It also means to bring up or to lead out or to draw out propulsion from inward to outward. On the other hand the term "Educatum" denotes the act of teaching. It throws light on the principles and practice of teaching. The term Educare or Educere mainly indicates the development of the latent faculty of the child. But child does not know these possibilities. It is the educator or the teacher who knows these and takes appropriate methods to develop those powers.

In traditional sense, education means controlling or disciplining the behaviour of an individual. In Hindi, the term "Siksha" has come from the Sanskrit word "Shash". "Shash" means to discipline, to control, to order, to direct, to rule etc. Education in the traditional sense means controlling or disciplining the behaviour of an individual. In Sanskrit "Shiksha" is a particular branch of the Sutra literature, which has six branches –Shiksh, Chhanda, Byakarana, Nirukta, Jyotisha and Kalpa. The

Sutra literature was designed to learn the Vedas. Siksha denotes rules of pronunciation. There is another term in Sanskrit, which throws light on the nature of education. It is "Vidya" originating from "Bid" meaning knowledge.

If one goes through certain definitions of education of eastern and western thinkers one may have some idea of nature and meaning of the term education. Some of the definitions are presented below:

- Swami Vivekananda was of opinion that education is the manifestation of perfection already in man. Like fire in a piece of flint, knowledge exists in the mind. Suggestion is the friction which brings it out.
- Rabindranath Tagore observed that education is that which makes one's life in harmony with all existence and thus enables the mind to find out that ultimate truth which emancipates us from the bondage of dust and gives us the wealth, not of things but of inner light, not of power, but of love, making this truth its own and giving expression of it. Regarding higher education it was his opinion that the highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence.
- Radhakrishnan while discussing about the concept of education stated that, education according to Indian tradition is not merely a means of earning a living; nor it is only a nursery of thought or a school for citizenship. It is initiation into the life of spirit and training of human souls in the pursuit of truth and the practice of virtue.

- Socrates stated education means the bringing out of the ideas of universal validity which are latent in the mind of every man".

- Plato observed that education develops in the body and soul of the pupil all the beauty and all the perfection he is capable of.
- Aristotle was of opinion that education is the creation of sound mind in a sound body. It develops man's faculty specially his mind so that he may be able to enjoy the contemplation of supreme truth, goodness and beauty.

From the   above definitions it appears that the field of education is so vast and varied that to give a specific definition of education about which all educationists agree is very difficult. Some educationists have defined only one aspect of education whereas the others emphasize its other phases. The reason of this difference of opinions is that different educationists, most of whom are philosophers, have different views about their aims of lives. According to Idealists, the aim of life is spiritual development and they regard education as a spiritual process, which aims at bringing together the soul and the creator leading to self-realization. Pragmatists think about education as a process of social progress. Because of this difference in the philosophy of life, different educationists define education differently. The fact is that the real concept of education is not related solely to any of the above-mentioned views. It is more than either of them. In a real sense, education is a sort of synthesis of all the above viewpoints. In this sense, education includes the individuals, the society, the environment, the social fabric and the prevailing traditions. Hence, the definition of education ought to be a very comprehensive and all inclusive one.

From the discussions made so far one should think that education should have a comprehensive definition. And in this context an attempt has been made to have an acceptable definition of the concept of education which has been presented below:

Education may be defined as a purposive, conscious or unconscious, psychological, sociological, scientific and philosophical process, which brings about the development of the individual to the

fullest extent and also the maximum development of society in such a way that both enjoy maximum happiness and prosperity. In Short, education is the development of individual according to his needs and demands of society, of which he is an integral part.

After having a minute study through the basic concept of education one point naturally arises regarding its quality. It is of no use to mention that the growth and development of any country to a large extent depend on imparting quality education to its citizen. If the country fails to impart quality education to its citizen the country won't be able to produce responsible citizen.

2.0 Higher Education –Overview

In a society full of diversity, ideologies and opinions, higher education means different things to different people. The pluralism of views is quite inevitable and some would opine it should be like that only. However, as one intends to discuss and learns about quality in higher education, one should ask oneself, what is higher in higher education? As a stakeholder of higher education, one should agree that it is not just about the higher level of educational structure in the country. There is more to it. In terms of the level, higher education includes college and university teaching – learning towards which students' progress to attain higher educational qualification. Higher education imparts in-depth knowledge and understanding so as to advance the students to new frontiers of knowledge in different walks of life. It is about knowing more and more about less and less. It develops the student's ability to question and seek truth and makes him/her competent to critique on contemporary issues. Although it broadens the intellectual powers of the individual within a narrow specialisation, yet it also gives him/her a wider perspective of the world around. According to **Barnett (1992**) there are four predominant concepts of higher education:

i)   Higher education as the production of qualified human resources. In this view, higher education is seen as a process in which the students are counted as products absorbed in the labour market. Thus, higher education becomes input to the growth and development of business and industry.

ii)   Higher education as training for a research career. In this view, higher education is preparation for qualified scientists and researchers who would continuously develop the frontiers of knowledge. Quality within this viewpoint is more about research publications and transmission of the academic rigour to do quality research.

iii) Higher education as the efficient management of teaching provision. Many strongly believe that teaching is the core of educational institutions. Thus, higher education institutions focus on efficient management of teaching-learning provisions by improving the quality of teaching enabling a higher completion rate among the students.

iv)   Higher education is a matter of extending life chances. Following this view, higher education is seen as a means to improving individuals through a flexible, continuing education mode.

All these four concepts of higher education stated above are not exclusive; rather they are integrated and give an overall picture of what higher is in higher education. If one looks at the activities of colleges and universities one will realise that teaching, research and extension form the three main functions of higher education.

3.0 Growth of Higher Education in India -A Brief Idea

Higher education institutions 'in India are of varied growth levels and also have varying funding mechanisms. We have higher education institutions under the category of Institutes of national

importance like IITs, IIMs, AIIMS and the Central universities, all funded 100% by the Central Government. State Univer¬sities are funded mainly by the State Government, however, some marginal financial supports are provided by the Central Government as plan grants through various schemes of the UGC. Another category of institutions are designated as Deemed to be Universities.

Broadly, the size of the State University sector is reported to be 57 % of the total, 8% is the Central University sector, 1 % are the institutions other than universities established under the State Legislation and likewise, 7% are the institutions of national importance and almost 27% institutions are under the category of Deemed-to be-Universities. The number of the universities up to the year 2010 has been reported to be 518 by the UGc. The total student enrollment under all these institutions is over 12.3 million students (123 lakhs). There has been a rapid growth beyond the year 2000. The number of universities in year 2000 was 266 and there is almost 100% growth in less than 8 years. period. Also in 1947, the total number of universities were only 20, with student enrolment of about 0.2 million (2 lakhs). We thus have come a long way!

Likewise, the College sector which is primarily affiliated to the universities recorded its growth to reach a mark of 25951 in the year 2010. This number was 500 in the year 1947. Total percentage of enrollment for Undergraduate programmes is almost 90%, 10% is for Postgraduate Education & Research. Likewise, if we look at stream-wise enrollment in India, Humanities & Arts stream constitute the largest percentage among all i.e. 45%; Sciences constitute 20%; Commerce & Management constitute 18%; Engineering & Technology constitute 7% and remaining 10% for streams like Law, Agriculture, Medicine and all others ranging from 1 % to 3% each. The Government of India has emphasized the need for further growth of higher education institutions incorporating the recommendations of the National- Knowledge Commission and also similar recommendations by the Planning Commission of India from time to time. In the current plan period, the Govt. of India has already established 8 new IITs, 6 IIMs, 20 NITs, 3 IISERs, and 20 new NITs are proposed and 2 more SPAs. The spectacular growth in the number of higher education institutions at all levels including the affiliating college system, the universities including deemed-to-be universities etc has elevated India as a country leading globally in higher education sector along with USA and China.

After going through glimpses of study in the above idea, one point that necessarily arises relating to the maintenance of quality in higher education through good governance practices. Before venturing into this discussion one should have some idea about the concept of quality and quality in higher education. From the following lines, one can have some idea about the same.

4.0 Concept of Quality – A Brief Discussion

Quality is a much-debated term. To some it is like 'beauty' that lies in the eye of the beholder. Those who believe in this are 'relativists', whereas those who believe quality can be specific attributes that can be identified, they are 'objectivists'. The word quality comes from the Latin word 'qualis' meaning 'what kind of'. With a variety of meanings and connotations, it has been referred to as a 'slippery concept' (**Pfeffer** and **Coote, 1991**). Webster's dictionary describes it, amongst other things, as 'a degree of excellence' and 'superiority in kind'. The British Standard Institute (BSI) defines quality as the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs (**BSI, 1991**). **Green** and **Harvey** (**1993**) have identified five different approaches to defining quality:

- in terms of the exceptional (exceeding high standards);

- in terms of consistency (exhibiting through 'zero defects');

- as fitness for purpose (meaning the product or service meets the stated purpose, customer specifications and satisfaction);

- as value for money (through efficiency and effectiveness); and

- as a transformative (in term of qualitative change).

These different notions of quality have led **Reeves** and **Bednar** (**1994**) to conclude "…the search for a universal definition of quality and a statement of law like relationship has been unsuccessful". According to **Gummesson** (**1990**) it might be useful to create an insight into the many dimensions that form a fuzzy entity referred to as quality through social consensus rather than defining it. **Garvin** (**1988**) classified the various definitions of quality into five major groups, viz., transcendent definitions, product-based definitions, user-based definitions, manufacturing-based definitions and value-based definitions.

Quality has a few central ideas around which the whole concept revolves: quality as absolute, quality as relative, quality as a process, and quality as culture.

From the above observations one can realise that the concept of quality is amorphous and contextual. It ranges from meaning 'standard' to 'excellence'. Both are deeply rooted in their respective values operationalised in individual, institutional, and national practice. "Standards can be defined in terms of a minimum 'threshold' by which performance is judged" (**Ashcroft** and **Foreman-Peck, 1996**). In this context quality is assessment in terms of a set of norm-referenced standards that are built around what is expected at the minimum and beyond. At the other end of continuum is the consideration of quality as excellence. Excellence is a performance stage of exclusiveness that is distinctive from many others and stand out as demonstration of 'zero effect' and highest level of satisfaction of the stakeholders.

While discussing quality in the field of education, the focus of students is on the facilities provided, of the teachers is on the teaching-learning process, of management and parents is on the scores or grades achieved, and of prospective employers is on the nature of the output.

The idea of quality has been mainly drawn from industry. Education and industry functioned independently of each other and displayed very contrasting ethos and values in recent pasts. But, at present, it is not true. The gap between education and industry is narrowing down significantly. At present each depends on other. In industry, the paradigm of hierarchy, power and control are being replaced by the concepts associated with the world of academia. Similarly, educational institutions are adopting corporate patterns of organization, including strategic planning, delineation of responsibility and accountability. Thus, the concepts of standards and quality used in industry are being considered for application in the field of education.

5.0 Quality in Higher Education – An Overview

Quality in higher education means the educational process is such that it ensures students achieve their goals and thereby satisfies the needs of the society and help in national development. It is very important for its stakeholders. Many academicians argued that in the field of education the assessment of quality of education cannot be only student-centric for it is mainly the society that pays for the operation of the educational system. Therefore, the views of other constituents of society have also to be considered. Accordingly, the definition adopted by most educationists is that of 'fitness for purpose'- the ability to meet the stated purpose for which the service is offered.

Education has adopted from industry a variety of terms like *quality control, quality assessment, quality audit* and *quality assurance* along with the concept of *quality.* Quality assurance has been defined by **Green and Harvey (1993**) as " those mechanisms and procedures designed to reassure the various 'stakeholders' in higher education that institutions accord a high priority to implementing policies designed to maintain and enhance institutional effectiveness".

The International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) was established in 1991 in the Netherlands. According to its view "....quality assurance may relate to a programme, an institution or a whole higher education system. In such case, *quality* is aft of those attitudes, objects, actions and procedures which, through their existence and use and together with quality control activities, ensure that appropriate academic standards are maintained and enhanced in and by each programme. Quality assurance extends to making the process and standards known to the educational community and public at large".

In India, with the expansion of educational institutions, the policy-makers started thinking about maintaining quality in higher education. The Constitutional amendment in 1976 brought education to the concurrent list making the Central government more responsible for quality improvement. In the 1980s, it was strongly felt that the Indian higher education required quality assurance systems, over and above the then existing built-in checks, to ensure superior quality. Although the expansion of the system of higher education in the country had been impressive in terms of numbers, providing access to higher education to millions across the length and breadth of the country, simultaneously criticisms were voiced about the quality of education being imparted. As a response to this issue establishment of quality assurance agencies has become a necessity. The National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986) as adopted by the Parliament and the Programme of Action (PoA, 1986) document that followed argued the need for setting up a council for ensuring and enhancing quality. The NPE and the PoA *inter alia* recommended that "excellence of institutions of higher education is a function of many aspects: self-evaluation and self-improvement are important. If a mechanism is set up which will encourage self-assessment in institutions and also assessment and accreditation by a council…the quality process, participation, achievements, etc. will be constantly monitored and improved". It is in this context that the University Grants Commission (UGC) of India initiated measures for setting up a quality assurance agency under its Act, and Accreditation and Assessment Council, an autonomous body, was established.

It is undeniably true that the agenda of ensuring quality assurance in higher educational institutions is not possible until and unless good governance practices can be adopted by such institutions. So there is a close link between quality assurance and governance practices adopted by the institutions imparting higher education. From below one can have some idea about the concept of governance in higher educational institutions..

6.0 Governance in Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs)

The term governance—derived from the Greek *kybernan* meaning to steer a ship and was used for the first time in a metaphorical sense by Plato. It then passed on to Latin and then on to many languages. It is loosely used to describe the process by which decisions are made and carried out on behalf of the members of an organization, the stockholders of a corporation, or the citizens of a nation. However, in common parlance the term governance means the act of governing. It relates to decisions that define expectations, grant power, or verify performance. It consists of either a separate process or part of decision-making or leadership processes. In case of a business or of a non-profit organization, governance relates to consistent management, cohesive policies, guidance, processes and decision-rights for a given area of responsibility. In case of HEIs "governance" is what a "governing body" does. Here the objective of the governance is to frame policies in the matter of planning human resources, recruitment, training, performance appraisal, financial management and the overall role of leadership in institution building keeping in view of vision and mission of the HEIs, and to look into whether such policies can be effectively implemented. Having gone through these it may be stated that the key aspects of governance of the HEIs are to evaluate the institutional vision and the leadership style, strategy development and deployment, faculty empowerment strategies, financial management and resource mobilization and internal quality assurance system.

Like the Indian economy underwent a liberalizing in the 1990s, the education system is gradually being opened up for change and decentralization. In particular, the federal and state governments are gradually giving higher education institutions more decision and spending power. This represents a move away from detailed government control over spending, teaching, and curriculum decisions, which required frequent approval from federal or state government officials. Besides the 11th Five Year Plan, several facts pay witness to this movement:

> Many institutions have become autonomous during the 10th Five Year plan through an increase in the number of autonomous institutions: Central Universities (2), State Universities (39), "deemed-to-be" Universities (50), and Private Universities (to).

> Two recent reports from the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) on 'the autonomy of higher education institutions' and 'financing of higher and technical education' respectively recommend changes to governance of the higher education institutions.

> The Oversight Committee on the Implementation of the New Reservation Policy in Higher Educational Institution equally recommends increased autonomy to institutions within recruitment and remuneration of faculty and admission policies to find the right balance between equity and excellence for each institution.

In India, the higher education institutions exist in two significant categories- University and Colleges. Universities are autonomous bodies whereas colleges are affiliated to universities. Universities therefore, have the prime responsibility of developing the higher education system and maintaining quality of it. The dimensions of 'Our higher education system warrant a very serious consideration of the issues of management and accordingly the theme of the Issue is of utmost importance. Here we need to review the governance issues for all aspects of higher education system prevalent in India. We should begin examining the manner in which the governance had been evolving since pre-independence period to the present context. Models of institutional governance and administration with particular reference to autonomy and accountability are the most important issues of governance which need much pondering. Besides the above, governance issues of higher education in the current scenario of establishment of Institutions under Public Private Partnership (PPP) model; establishment of Foreign Institutions in India jointly with Indian education providers or otherwise; and issues concerning the role and responsibility of statutory bodies interacting and dealing with the university system vis-a-vis the State and Central Governments also needs discussion.

6.1 Issues of External and Internal Governance

We may divide issues of governance of institutions into two major groups:

1. Issues of external governance of higher education

2. Issues of internal governance of higher education

Issues concerning interaction with the Governments, statutory bodies etc. are issues of external governance of higher education system/institutions. Likewise, the issues of academic and administrative matters of the institution; and matters of its own vision and mission are considered as issues of internal governance within.

6.1.1 External Governance

The agencies/authorities for external governance are the Central/State Governments and their organizations/bodies, and national/international accreditation authorities. This includes any policy directive concerning the national agenda! scenario through the statutory bodies like UGC and other bodies responsible for governing the performance of the higher education institutions in terms of course content/duration of courses of study etc, particularly, with respect to matters concerning

maintenance of uniformity of norms and standards of higher education. For this purpose, UGC and other statutory bodies such as AICTE, NCTE are apex authorities as per provisions of their respective Acts for prescribing norms and standards etc. with regard to the respective weightages of course contents for various courses of studies of the higher education spectrum. Details include considerations about the number of teaching hours for a given programme of studies etc. and prescriptions of various courses of studies at the first degree level, the postgraduate level and also guidelines for the quality etc. for the doctoral programmes. Similarly, the national bodies like Council of Scientific & Industrial Research, Indian Council of Social Science Research, Indian Council of Historical Research, Indian' Council of Philosophical Research and likewise the Departments of Science & Technology, the Electronics and many other departments dealing with Scientific, Social Sciences and Humanities subjects of studies also give comprehensive directions to higher education Institutions which are of utmost importance to build India as a Knowledge society.

6.1.2 Internal Governance

Likewise, the internal governance within the institutions is mostly carried out by the Governing structure of the institution as per provisions of respective Acts; MoAs etc. The internal governance of the University is conducted by different names viz., University Court, the Senate, Governing Council, Executive Council etc. These apex authorities are supported through various other bodies namely, Academic Council, Board of Studies, Research Board, Planning Board, Admission Committee, Faculty Council, Faculty Selection Committee and likewise many other committees.

In case of college the highest body of governance is Governing Body. The Governing Body of every college shall be responsible for the proper management of the affairs of the college and may exercise all such powers and functions as may be necessary for the purpose. The Governing Body of the college shall be responsible for creating good academic environment and maintenance of academic standards, creation of teaching and non-teaching posts, creation of infrastructure etc. which can directly contribute to the improvement of overall quality of education of such colleges.

Under this backdrop an attempt will be made to explore the evaluation of the governance of the general degree colleges affiliated to the University of Calcutta in the Howrah district, West Bengal.

7.0 Brief Review of the Available Literature
While finding out the objectives of the present study, different relevant literatures, Indian and Foreign, had been thoroughly reviewed. Some of the important literatures are presented below which seem to be pertinent here.

Prasad (2006), a noted educationist observes that quality is the nation's collective agenda. According to him, quality is not something that a single institution can do on its own. He mentions the four challenges that UNESCO has identified for the 21^{s1} century to improve the quality of higher educational institutions (HEIs) and discussed on the requisites of an educational system for ably dealing with these challenges. His writings, while not trying to offer any scholarly analysis of problems, stress on quality.

Powar (1999), advocates that in the field of education the focus of students is the facilities provided, the focus of teachers is on the teaching/learning process, the focus of management and parents is on the scores or grades achieved and the focus of prospective employers is on the nature of output irrespective of quality

Faruqui and **Qureshi (1999),** observe that higher education in modern society seeks to maintain/cherish, disseminate and advance knowledge and should be committed to change. They mention the importance of education as an agent of change and progress in India. However, they emphasise on the recommendations of various committees and commissions in relation to quality improvement in higher education. According to them, the implementation of those recommendations made by different committees and commissions is essential for the development of India. In the field of higher education in India, the recommendations of various educational experts, committees and commissions have been grossly unexplored and, to some extent, ignored.

Kapur (1999), a noted educationist, suggest that quality of higher education can be evaluated accurately. He advocates that, before evaluating anything, it is necessary to define the thing first. Everybody must have clear idea/understanding about what quality of higher education means. It can be expressed in terms of standard for excellence in teaching-learning, research and administration for colleges and universities. According to him, for evaluation of standards, weights are to be assigned to each standard which most of the educationists may agree. However, it is expected that both the standards and the weights are to be selected through national debate and an agreement must be arrived at so that everybody knows the standards and the weights. He observes that every institution tries to optimise the weighted mean according to its quality. Quite often, it may happen that even the standards given are intrinsically for mediocrity. He discusses, in detail, regarding measuring quality in different areas.

Khanna (2005), a noted educationist, observe that the research centres/universities are established to assist the economic, social and cultural development of the country. According to him, these centres/universities should undertake research work relevant to local needs and make their knowledge and resources available to the community through advice and consultancy services as these are public- funded institutions. These institutions are accountable to the society, to the students, i.e., in short, to all the stakeholders of this educational system. It is the responsibility of these institutions to provide an education capable of producing quality human beings so as to match the needs and requirements of the employment sectors. He advocates the quality assurance in higher education. According to him, there is a need to develop a quality culture in India HEIs for which mental infrastructure is more essential than physical infrastructure as quality depends on sincerity, vision and conviction to duties.

Dearlove (1997) emphasises that, under the conditions of mass higher education, no university can avoid the need for some sort of bureaucratic management and organisation, though this does not mean that the importance of informal discipline and profession based authority (internal governance of universities) can totally be ignored.

Kaplan (2001) conducted a survey of Higher Education Governance. The findings of the survey detail the method with summary of the present state of shared governance. The findings include the state of the locus of authority and reforms as well as the analysis of the challenges facing Liberal Arts Colleges with the pressures of the current economic climate.

Coldrake, Stedman, and Little (2003) discussed the shared traditions and history of higher education worldwide. Internationally, tertiary education includes private not-for-profit, private for-profit, and public institutions governed by differentiated structures of management.

Kezar and Eckel, Lapworth, Middlehurst (2004) They point out that next to the concept of shared and participative governance a new form of governance has emerged, i.e. the notion of corporate governance of institutions that has increasingly become a more dominant approach to tertiary management.

Middlehurst, **(2004)** a noted educationist stated that Governance in higher education refers to the means by which higher educational (also tertiary or postsecondary) institutions are formally organized and managed, though often there is a distinction between definitions of management and governance. Simply, university governance is the way in which universities are operated. Governing structures for higher education are highly "differentiated throughout the world.

McMaster (2007) discusses the same changes in university management resulting from the "huge amount of additional administrative work at all levels within the university, and the requirement for a wide range of specialist skills in areas such as marketing, HR management, management accounting, web development and instructional design." and the difficulties with the tensions that have resulted between collegial and corporate models of management.

8.0 Identifying the Ultimate Research Vacuum

Quality as a concept is a 20th century phenomenon that has its root in the industry and management. In the field of education it has been observed that with globalisation and the GATS (Global Agreement on Trade in Services), the educational environment has been seized by increased competition. In order to survive in such a situation, educational institutions become worried about their quality. This has become more prominent in case of private/self-financed institutions. Maintaining standard is the buzzword of the day. And it will be possible only when good governance practices can be adopted by the educational institutions. Although some research work has been done on the governance practices adopted by the HEIs, most of the relevant books and articles are basically conceptual. However, the effectiveness of the governance of the HEIs has not been dealt with in great details, *leaving more scope of doing research in this area.*

1.4 Research Methodology for the Present Study

1.4.1 Nature of Data

The study is essentially empirical in nature. It is mainly based on relevant primary data and information are collected from all the general degree colleges in the Howrah District affiliated to the University of Calcutta, based on *Complete Enumeration Method*, where the population are all the afore-mentioned colleges, of course, depending on the availability of data. **Finally, data were collected from 168 governing body members of 13 degree colleges in the district of Howrah.**

1.4.2 Method of Collection of Data

Necessary data required for the study were collected through a questionnaire supplemented by personal interviews and discussions with the Principals, /Teachers-in charge, coordinators of IQACs, selected members of Governing Bodies, and cross-sections of stakeholders connected with higher education, namely, students, parents, teachers, staff members of the said institutions. Information available in the Annual Quality Assurance Reports (AQARs) has also been used in case of the NAAC - accredited colleges. For the purpose of the study, secondary data and information has also been gathered from the existing literature, such as relevant research based books/articles and reports and some relevant websites has also been visited.

1.4.3 Tools for Data Analysis

The data collected was analysed using appropriate statistical tools and techniques. Based on appreciation of the conceptual issues and analysis of data, an attempt has been made to draw meaningful conclusions.

2.0 Objectives of the Study

Based on the above literature review and more specifically, after pin-pointing the ultimate research vacuum, the major objective of the study has been found to be, to evaluate the governance of the general degree colleges affiliated to the University of Calcutta. With a view to making the study more meaningful, certain specific aspects have to be studied and these are as under:

1. To assess whether and to what extent governance helps improve academic and administrative performance of the said institutions.
2. To measure the extent to which governance helps said institutions internalize and institutionalize quality culture.

3.0 Tools for Data Analysis

The data collected has been analysed using appropriate statistical tools and techniques like frequency distribution, cross tabulations etc. Based on appreciation of the conceptual issues and analysis of data, an attempt has also been made to draw meaningful conclusions.

4.0 Detailed Analysis on the Governance of Higher Education Institutions based on the collected Data

From the above collected data, I got the following information about the governance of HEIs which are presented below :

4.1. Strategic Plan is framed by the Principal/TIC

Table 1 : Strategic plan is framed by the principal/TIC

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	86	51.2	51.2	51.2
	agree	82	48.8	48.8	100.0
	Total	168	100.0	100.0	

Source : compiled from primary data through SPSS 21.0

From the above table it is clear that 51.2 per cent, i.e., majority of the respondents agree on the point that Strategic plan is framed by the Principal/TIC of the institution, **which strongly depicts strategic governance of the Institutions.**

4.2. Principal/TIC Discharges duty for the development of the Institution

Table 2 : Principal/TIC discharges duty for the development of the institution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	54	32.1	32.1	32.1
	agree	57	33.9	33.9	66.1
	neutral	12	7.1	7.1	73.2
	disagree	25	14.9	14.9	88.1
	strongly disagree	20	11.9	11.9	100.0
	Total	168	100.0	100.0	

Source : compiled from primary data through SPSS 21.0

From the above table it is clear that 32.1 per cent strongly agree and 33.9 per cent agree on the point that Principal/TIC discharges duty for the development of the institution, **which strongly depicts the administrative governance of the institutions.**

4.3. Principal/TIC develops the financial strategies in consultation with the Finance Sub-Committee.

Table 3 : Principal/TIC develops the financial strategies in consultation with the Finance sub-Committee

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	95	56.5	56.5	56.5
	agree	45	26.8	26.8	83.3
	neutral	9	5.4	5.4	88.7
	disagree	8	4.8	4.8	93.5
	strongly disagree	11	6.5	6.5	100.0
	Total	168	100.0	100.0	

Source : compiled from primary data through SPSS 21.0

The above table depicts that 56.5 per cent of the respondents strongly agree on the point that the Principal/TIC develops the financial strategies in consultation with the Finance sub-committee, **which strongly depicts the financial governance in the aforesaid institutions.**

4.4. Principal/TIC develops the staffing strategies necessary to achieve its goal

Table 4 : Principal/TIC develops the staffing strategies necessary to achieve its goal

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	115	68.5	68.5	68.5
	agree	45	26.8	26.8	95.2
	neutral	8	4.8	4.8	100.0
	Total	168	100.0	100.0	

Source : compiled from primary data through SPSS 21.0

The above table depicts that 68.5 per cent of the respondents strongly agree on the point that Principal/TIC develops the staffing strategies necessary to achieve its goal, which strongly depicts the governance regarding the management of human resource of the aforesaid institutions.

4.5. The opinion of the Teachers' Council regarding adoption of strategic plan is honoured by the Principal/TIC

Table 5 : The opinion of the Teachers' Council regarding adoption of strategic plan is honoured by the principal/TIC

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	90	53.6	53.6	53.6
	agree	65	38.7	38.7	92.3
	neutral	3	1.8	1.8	94.0
	disagree	2	1.2	1.2	95.2
	strongly disagree	8	4.8	4.8	100.0
	Total	168	100.0	100.0	

Source : compiled from primary data through SPSS 21.0

the above table depicts that 53.6 per cent of the respondents strongly agree on the point that strategic plan of Teachers' Council is honoured by the Principal/TIC, which depicts the situation of democracy in the aforesaid institutions.

4.6. Results of Factor Analysis
4.6.1. Strategic Planning

For strategic planning we have made factor analysis, the results of which are presented in Table 6, 7, and 8 respectively:

Table 6 : Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
strategic plan is framed by the principal/TIC	1.000	.573
principal/TIC discharges duty for the development of the institution	1.000	.435
principal/TIC develops the financial strategies in consultation with the Finance sub-Committee	1.000	.597
principal/TIC develops the staffing strategies necessary to achieve its goal	1.000	.699
The opinion of the Teachers' Council regarding adoption of strategic plan is honoured by the principal/TIC	1.000	.599

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 7 : Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.835	36.709	36.709	1.835	36.709	36.709
2	1.068	21.354	58.063	1.068	21.354	58.063
3	.912	18.247	76.310			
4	.658	13.163	89.473			
5	.526	10.527	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 8 : Component Matrix(a)

	Component	
	1	2
strategic plan is framed by the principal/TIC	-.321	.686
principal/TIC discharges duty for the development of the institution	.652	-.100
principal/TIC develops the financial strategies in consultation with the Finance sub-Committee	.623	.457
principal/TIC develops the staffing strategies necessary to achieve its goal	.738	.394
The opinion of the Teachers' Council regarding adoption of strategic plan is honoured by the principal/TIC	-.613	.473

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
a 2 components extracted.

From table 7, it is seen that 58% of the variance is explained by the factors. Further from table 8, we see that 5 variables relating to strategic planning as an important component of Governance are conjoined into 2 factors:

1. *The first factor include the variables like development of staffing strategies, development of financial strategies and development of the institution, having weightage of .738, .623 and .652 respectively. So, this may be termed as* **'Development of Strategies'.**

2. *The second factor includes the variables like framing of strategic plan by the Principal/TIC and honour of opinion of the Teachers' Council, having weightage of .686 and .473 respectively. So the factor may be termed as* **'Participative Planning'.**

4.6.2. Financial Governance

Regarding financial governance, we have taken the KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy which was found to be .600 (>.500) and Barlett's Test of Sphericity which was found to be significant (.000).

Table 9 : KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.600
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1170.860
	df	55
	Sig.	.000

Table 10 : Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
The Principal/TIC in consultation with the Burser designs the financial strategy	1.000	.767
The financial strategy is discussed in the Finance Committee meeting and ratified in the meeting of the Governing Body	1.000	.595
The Principal in consultation with Burser and Accountant prepares the Annual Budget and discusses the same in the Finance Sub-committee	1.000	.311
Finance Committee's decision is approved by the Government	1.000	.786
Governing Body into the day-to-day financial matters of the institution	1.000	.731
Principal does not take any financial decision without consulting the Finance Committee	1.000	.929
Periodic review of the financial actions taken by the Principal is done by the Governing Body	1.000	.753
Governing Body takes effective steps, if any financial irregularities arise	1.000	.745
Internal Audit is done on a regular basis	1.000	.942
Audit Committee necessarily establishes financial discipline	1.000	.863
In preparing annual budget, it is the practice to collect departmental budgets	1.000	.798

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 11 : Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.669	33.351	33.351	3.669	33.351	33.351	3.171	28.823	28.823
2	1.981	18.010	51.362	1.981	18.010	51.362	1.888	17.163	45.986
3	1.406	12.785	64.147	1.406	12.785	64.147	1.681	15.284	61.270
4	1.165	10.589	74.736	1.165	10.589	74.736	1.481	13.466	74.736
5	.923	8.387	83.123						
6	.681	6.194	89.317						
7	.451	4.100	93.418						
8	.292	2.654	96.071						
9	.234	2.129	98.201						
10	.180	1.637	99.838						
11	.018	.162	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 12 : Rotated Component Matrix(a)

	1	2	3	4
The Principal/TIC in consultation with the Burser designs the financial strategy	0.335468	-0.37118	0.715907	-0.06712
The financial strategy is discussed in the Finance Committee meeting and ratified in the meeting of the Governing Body	0.05785	0.755372	-0.08522	-0.11834
The Principal in consultation with Burser and Accountant prepares the Annual Budget and discusses the same in the Finance Sub-committee	0.447808	-0.15096	0.292465	0.048516
Finance Committee's decision is approved by the Government	0.869623	-0.1656	0.010675	-0.04486
Governing Body does not interfere into the day-to-day financial matters of the institution	-0.26312	0.771171	0.084018	0.245155
Principal does not take any financial decision without consulting the Finance Committee	0.941487	0.07974	-0.07284	0.177111
Periodic review of the financial actions taken by the Principal is done by the Governing Body	0.035557	-0.19671	-0.0518	0.842708
Governing Body takes effective steps, if any financial irregularities arise	0.172019	0.274394	0.007341	0.800249
Internal Audit is done on a regular basis	0.954948	-0.12378	0.032622	0.115442
Audit Committee necessarily establishes financial discipline	-0.25436	0.214672	0.866808	-0.03324
In preparing annual budget, it is the practice to collect departmental budgets	0.367061	-0.59406	0.555261	0.043304

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

For governance relating to the financial matters, we have made factor analysis, the results of which are presented in Table 9, 10, 11 and 12 respectively:

From table 11, it is seen that 75% of the variance is explained by the factors. Further from table 12, we see that 11 variables relating to strategic planning as an important component of Governance are conjoined into 4 factors:

1. *The first factor include the variables like Approval of Finance Committee's decision by Government, Decisions only after consultation with the Finance Committee and Internal Audit on a regular basis, having weightage of .869, .941 and .954 respectively. So, this may be termed as* **'Financial Prudence'.**

2. *The second factor includes the variables like Financial Strategy decided by the Finance Committee, and Governing Body does not interfere into day-to-day financial matters, having weightage of .755 and .771 respectively. So the factor may be termed as* **'Independent Financial Strategy'.**

3. *The Fourth factor includes the variables like Financial Strategy is decided by the Principal in consultation with the Bursar, Audit Committee establishes Financial Discipline and in aggregate budgets, the departmental budgets get a prominent roles, having weightage of .716, .867 and .555 respectively. So the factor may be termed as* **'Coherence Principle in Financial Governance'.**

4. *The fourth factor includes the variable like periodic financial reviews by the Governing Body, and effective steps taken by the G.B., in case of any financial irregularities, having weightage of .842 and .800 respectively. So the factor may be termed as* **'Role of Governing Body in Exceptional Financial Decision Making'.**

5.0. Findings and Conclusion

Therefore, in conclusion it can be said that in strategic planning of the HEIs, factors like development of strategies and participative planning take effective role whereas in case of financial governance of HEIs, factors like financial prudence, independent financial strategy, coherence principle in financial governance and role of Governing Body in Exceptional Financial Decision Making play effective role. This study is similar to the studies in Uganda, Liberia and USA (Ksannes, 2007), as those studies also put stress on the role of bodies like managing committee or governing body is financial governance of the Higher Education Institutions in those countries.

6.0. Issues of Autonomy and Accountability

Time and again in academic debates, matters concerning autonomy are discussed. Mostly, such discussion panels include issues namely, financial autonomy with provision of block grants, appointment of members on the respective Boards, hiring of faculty with pay beyond minimum prescribed by the Governments, mechanisms of revenue generation and retaining revenue in the Institution over and above usual block grant from the Government. Of late, some of these issues are being raised in the meetings of IIT and IIM Boards/ Councils chaired by the Union Minister and we know through media reports that there is a great deal of mutual understanding on some of the issues listed above and one can believe that these changes would happen. However, issues regarding accountability remain partially answered. There is unfulfilled accountability both to internal and external agenda. Issue concerning horizontal mobility of students for a semester or partial tenure from one Institution/university to another across the States with full transfer of credits is being talked about. Provision of flexible Academic Calendar and joining of the programmes to encourage in-service population for improving the education content and skill as and when individually possible, similar to "drop-out "and "drop- in".

Academic community in closed circuit has been heard saying that there is much less delivered by the academic community with respect to:

I. Innovation in teaching- learning process ;

II. Pursuit of research and its applications ;

III. Bringing laurels to Indian higher education sector; and

IV. Enhancing list with greater number of Indian Institutions/ universities in the honour of ranking list globally etc.

6.0. Some Recommendations on Governance of HEIs in India

Based on the above analysis and discussions, the following recommendations are made on the Governance of HEIs in India :

1. Strategies for higher education should be set within an educational chain extending from early childhood to post- graduate education to career advancement. Improving the interrelationship of all stages and levels of education should be a long - term policy goal.
2. Rural, urban and gender disparities must be kept in mind by policy makers in planning and implementing the higher education system.
3. While quantity is important, say achieving, double digit percentage for higher education, quality is paramount. Higher education should continue to be subsidized by the Government in an adequate manner. For improving the quality in education the role of public sector should be enhanced.
4. While the Western models of higher education should be suitably adopted, the education planners/implementers and the institutions should devise and develop indigenous ones.
5. A liberal milieu in the Indian Universities must be reconstructed. Diversity of opinion and critique of society and its processes need to be encouraged.
6. The appointment of bureaucrats, police officers/generals as Vice Chancellors and Registrars must be avoided as far as possible
7. Policies of higher education should be designed to strengthen indigenous research agenda.
8. One reform that is urgently needed is the right to information in the institutions of higher learning. Transparency in the functioning at all levels is required so that those committing wrong are deterred.
9. It is recommended that the method of selection of Vice Chancellors must be changed urgently, to make them accountable to the academic community and not to the political or bureaucratic bosses.
10. Policies of our country based on simplicity and sharing of facilities within and across institutions must be established and encouraged.
11. The WTO pushing the trade in services will have far reaching consequences in India, particularly for the remote areas and poorer sections of the Society. Therefore, the World Bank, WTO and GATT policies on higher education need serious consideration, National interests must be safe guarded. And, the opportunities for the deprived and under privileged people and regions must be ensured
12. There have been significant changes recently in the policies on financing of Universities in India affecting the pattern of financing and expenditure in the Universities. Given the increasing importance of higher education, it is important that the State continues to take major responsibility of financing the Universities. All other sources of income, including fees should be viewed only as peripheral. It is to be noted that reliance on students' fees has its own limitation.
13. Increasing reliance on the generation of internal revenues through consultancy and interaction with industry may produce imbalances in the Universities across various disciplines of study. So, efforts for the mobilization of resources have to be made extremely cautiously. Keeping in view our concerns of equity, efficiency and excellence in University education. Hence, the best method of financing of the Universities may still be by the State.

14. Universities have to attempt seriously to improve the pattern of allocation of resources between various activities and items of expenditure. Core academic activities should obviously receive top priority.

15. At the Universities, students' welfare, particularly scholarships, stipends etc., should be given due importance. Expenditure on administration and other miscellaneous activities needs to be rationalized.

16. New models for higher education including the following aspects need to be created and adopted in the country: (a) extended traditional Universities (b) technology based Universities, and (c) corporate Universities.. The Governmental control in the Universities must be reduced, so that the University autonomy and accountability are strengthened and academic decisions are taken on merit.

17. New methods and procedures of financial regulations should be devised and direct interference of the finance department in the financial management of Universities, which is counterproductive, should be stopped.

18. As the Colleges are the feeding sources of the Universities, a better coordination in their working and activities is very much required. The participation of the teaching faculty in through a democratic process should be ensured.

19. Complete transparency should be maintained in the working of Executive/Academic Bodies and other Governing Councils of the Universities.

There is an urgency to review the University Acts in different States and revise the same in the light of the new requirements and the challenges being faced by the Universities. New technologies of information and communication should be utilized for obtaining administrative efficiency.

1. Higher Education should be developed as an infrastructure for social and economic growth of the Country.

2. Students involvement in the area of University/College governance should be encouraged.

3. Political interference in the appointment of University teachers and administrators should be totally stopped.

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