

# The Great Battle of Certificates: An Inclusive Study of How Higher Education Departments in India can Improve

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## ABSTRACT

An individual's level of education has a significant impact on their future trajectory. While many high school students embark on a path of academic success upon entering college or university, it is not uncommon for many individuals to gradually lose interest in their education and engage in behaviors detrimental to society. Understanding the factors behind such profound transformations is a primary concern at present. The attitude of professors, who prioritize acquiring certifications over nurturing skills, emerges as one of the most influential stimuli throughout students' educational journeys. This research focuses on the pervasive pursuit of certifications that has plagued higher education departments in India, aiming to propose potential remedies to this issue. Incorporating case studies, the study necessitates discursive and deductive thinking with the ultimate objective of providing viable solutions to the most pressing challenges. It is hoped that this research will catalyze policy and objective reforms in these departments, which bear the responsibility of shaping the futures of countless students.

**Key Words:** Higher Education, Certificates, Reforms, Solution, Students, Professors

## INTRODUCTION

It is estimated that nearly four million students enroll in college each year in India. The majority attend colleges where they actually attend courses and interact daily with permanent faculty. Despite their academic success in school, many of them succumb to disinterest, procrastination, despair, laziness, etc. Their performance declines, and they eventually become unemployed and engage in antisocial and illicit behavior. What happens when college students who would otherwise make excellent employees, successful merchants, talented entrepreneurs, and experienced artists succumb to corruption and folly? Do they associate with undesirables? Is it because of academic and competitive pressure? Is it due to their newly acquired freedom of choice and abundance of funds? Do they undergo hormonal and psychological changes? This concern may be influenced by multiple variables. However, one of the primary reasons why Students lose focus on their studies when the people they admire treat them disrespectfully. Teachers are always models of knowledge, etiquette, professionalism, and success for their students. Even when they don't follow the teacher's suggestions, students tend to follow the majority of a teacher's personality traits. This dreadful problem has crept into higher education as a result of a teacher's disrespect for the sacred act of learning-teaching-

learning. Over the years, a tremendous deal has been said about the problems of higher education, and numerous scholars have offered their perspectives on how and to what extent these problems arise. Reforms such as the National Education Policy of 2020 have emerged in response to the escalating number of reports of problems in the higher education system. This policy aims to transform the entire system by providing students with a variety of opportunities and integrating multiple disciplines, allowing them to study individualized courses so that they never lose interest in their studies. Although NEP 2020 recommends the formation of the National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC), about which it has been stated that “it will function as the common, single-point regulator for the higher education sector, including teacher education and excluding medical and legal education” (*Salient features of NEP 2020: Higher education*). In order to monitor and improve the quality of education that teachers in higher education can provide, it may be extremely difficult for a single body to provide such rules, regulations, and facilities to all higher education institutions in the country. The National Higher Education Regulatory Council will hence provide orders, regulations, rules, and facilities to institutes of higher education across the country. It would still be difficult to estimate how much this would improve the quality of instruction provided to students if several intermediate bodies were to eventually emerge to direct these directives. Reforms that enhance the quality of education through the use of instructors rather than institutions may be preferable. This may prove to be a Herculean task, but with the assistance of intermediate bodies, NHERC may be able to deliver a remarkable improvement in the overall quality of teaching across the nation. Individual instructors would be registered on an NHERC-controlled portal with the assistance of institutions and state higher education bodies as one of the initial measures to implement this. As a result, the higher

education institutions and agencies in the country would be unable to participate in the process of improving the quality of the content that instructors deliver to students. Each and every teacher in India's higher education system would be regarded as an individual contributor to the institution's overall quality. Certain measures could then be taken in order to maximize the contribution of each individual teacher to the higher education community. Among these measures are:

#### **Observation and Feedback from Peers:**

The continuous enhancement of instructors in higher education is largely dependent on peer observation and feedback. This collaborative strategy entails instructors observing the instructional practices of their counterparts and providing constructive feedback to improve teaching effectiveness. Peer observation provides educators with opportunities to learn from one another, share innovative teaching techniques, and acquire new perspectives on their own pedagogical practices. By engaging in this process, teachers are able to identify areas of strength and areas requiring development, ultimately resulting in improved pupil learning outcomes. Peer feedback fosters a culture of reflection and development, allowing teachers to refine their teaching techniques, integrate new approaches, and adapt to their students' changing requirements. In addition, peer observation and feedback promote collegiality, professional development, and the overall improvement of teaching quality in higher education institutions. Peer observations not only help instructors improve the content of their instruction, but they also benefit the students in the long run. Roisin Donnelley states, "Peer observations are particularly useful for self-assessment and improvement of teaching skills, but it is important for participants to keep in mind that what is gained through peer observation will ultimately benefit students." (Donnelly, 2007)

### **Utilization of Active and Experiential Learning Techniques**

Active learning strategies and experiential learning approaches have emerged as potent instruments for improving the quality of teaching in higher education. These methodologies challenge the traditional paradigm of passive learning by actively involving students in the learning process and providing them with hands-on experiences that cultivate a deeper understanding and greater knowledge retention.

Active learning techniques include group discussions, problem-solving activities, case studies, role plays, and simulations, among others. These methods encourage students to become active participants in their learning, allowing them to investigate concepts, apply theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios, and collaborate with peers. Students develop critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills through participation in interactive activities, preparing them for the complexities of the professional world. Teachers are passively predisposed to imparting their knowledge through the traditional chalkboard or lecture method. A mandatory incorporation of active learning strategies may enable instructors to improve the quality of their instruction.

In contrast, experiential learning emphasizes the application of knowledge to real-world situations. This strategy encourages students to actively participate in their learning environment through internships, fieldwork, or community service. Experiential learning allows students to reconcile the divide between theory and practice, allowing them to develop practical skills, receive insight into their chosen disciplines, and apply classroom concepts to real-world challenges. This immersive approach not only improves students' knowledge retention and comprehension but also fosters their creativity, adaptability, and professional competence.

In order to implement active learning strategies and experiential learning approaches, the traditional lecture-based

teaching model must be modified. It requires the creation of interactive and participatory learning environments, the design of engaging activities, and the provision of opportunities for student reflection and feedback. In addition, technology can be utilized to support these methodologies, such as with online simulations, virtual reality experiences, and interactive multimedia resources.

### **Routine Tests and Capability Evaluations:**

With the imperative need to improve the quality of education, it is essential to determine whether or not teachers are developing themselves. Examining instructors is one of the most effective means of ensuring this. There are numerous reasons why India's higher education instructors must be subjected to routine examinations. Regular evaluations ensure that instructors have the necessary knowledge and expertise in their disciplines. These examinations assess their subject knowledge, teaching methods, and comprehension of current trends and developments in their respective fields. Institutions can ensure that students receive instruction from qualified professionals who are up-to-date on the latest developments in their disciplines by evaluating teachers' competence.

Second, routine exams offer an opportunity for professional development and advancement. They assist in identifying areas in which teachers may require additional training or support, enabling institutions to offer targeted resources and programs to improve their teaching abilities. This ongoing professional development ensures that instructors improve and adapt their instructional techniques, resulting in more effective teaching practices and improved student outcomes.

In addition, routine testing encourages accountability in the teaching profession. Institutions can hold instructors accountable for their instructional efficacy, classroom administration, and student engagement by evaluating their performance. This accountability promotes a culture of

excellence in which educators endeavor to continuously improve their abilities and provide a high-quality education.

Moreover, institutions use routine assessments as a benchmarking instrument. Universities and colleges can evaluate the quality of their education programs and identify areas for improvement by comparing the performance of their instructors to national and international standards. This benchmarking procedure guarantees that institutions maintain high teaching standards and remain competitive in the global landscape of higher education.

### **A Strict De-Emphasis on Certifications for the Selection and Advancement of Teachers:**

A de-emphasis on certificates to verify a teacher's qualifications in higher education can result in a shift toward a more holistic evaluation of teaching skills. Certificates serve as a preliminary screening mechanism, but they may not completely capture a teacher's expertise, passion, and capacity to effectively engage and inspire students. Instead, emphasis should be placed on comprehensive assessments that evaluate practical teaching skills, subject knowledge, pedagogical techniques, and the capacity to foster students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Institutions can consider alternatives to certificates, such as teaching demonstrations, portfolio reviews, interviews, and peer evaluations, if they stop relying solely on certificates. These techniques provide a deeper and more nuanced comprehension of a teacher's capabilities and potential. In addition, a focus on a broader assessment approach promotes diversity and inclusion because it enables individuals with non-traditional educational backgrounds or non-traditional teaching experiences to demonstrate their skills and contribute to higher education. By de-emphasizing certificates and adopting a more holistic evaluation process, institutions can ensure that the best teachers are identified based on their actual teaching abilities, thereby providing students with a more

enriching and effective educational experience.

### **Social Media Connections and Organized Peer Groups:**

Although the government has taken several measures to bring teachers together, there has never been a massive gathering of teachers from a single discipline. Organized teacher peer groups can substantially contribute to the improvement of teaching quality in India's higher education system. Through these communities, teachers can collaborate, share ideas, and learn from one another's experiences. Teachers can engage in meaningful discussions, exchange innovative teaching strategies, and reflect on their practices by gathering regularly. Peer groups provide educators with a supportive environment in which they can seek feedback, advice, and direction from their peers. Teachers can identify areas for development and implement effective teaching strategies by utilizing constructive criticism and observation. In addition, these organizations facilitate professional development by hosting workshops, seminars, and training sessions on various pedagogical approaches and emerging educational trends. By participating in peer groups, teachers can improve their teaching abilities, broaden their knowledge base, and remain current on new methodologies. Additionally, these organizations cultivate a sense of camaraderie and collective responsibility among instructors, thereby promoting a collaborative culture of continuous improvement in institutions of higher education. Overall, organized teacher peer groups serve as catalysts for augmenting teaching quality by fostering collaboration, professional development, and a network of educators committed to providing high-quality education.

### **Essential Course-Integrated ICT Use for Teachers**

It is understandable that many teachers who did not grow up with ICT despise its complexity and modernity, but ICT can

significantly improve the overall output of a teacher in higher education. It is impossible to exaggerate the significance of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in enhancing the quality of higher education instruction in India. ICT provides a vast array of tools and resources that can improve instruction and learning. First, ICT enables access to a vast quantity of information and knowledge via the internet, allowing students and teachers to investigate diverse perspectives, engage in current research, and gain access to relevant resources from around the globe. It facilitates collaborative learning and global connectivity and expands the boundaries of traditional classrooms. In addition, ICT provides interactive multimedia platforms, educational software, and online learning management systems that can make learning more engaging, interactive, and individualized. These technologies enable simulations, virtual experiments, and interactive exercises, allowing students to acquire practical skills and dynamically implement theoretical concepts. In addition, ICT facilitates communication and collaboration between students and instructors, enabling effective knowledge sharing, online discussions, and virtual cooperation. It also facilitates timely feedback and evaluation, which improves the efficiency and efficacy of the learning process. By integrating ICT into higher education, institutions can equip students with digital literacy skills, prepare them for the demands of the digital age, and create a more inclusive and accessible learning environment. In his paper, *Role of ICT in Higher Education*, Dahiya agrees that, "Teaching and learning can further be improved by replacing of conventional teaching instead of the usual age old method of chalk and talk for teaching by innovative methods like power point presentations and animations, modelling and simulations, video clips and using AV aids, LCD projectors, etc." (Dahiya, 2018) Ultimately, the incorporation of ICT into teaching practices improves teaching quality, encourages active learning, and equips

students with the skills they need to flourish in the modern world.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it could be argued that various additions to the NEP and the overall Policy of higher education in order to improve the quality of instruction provided to students at various universities and colleges might be better served by employing the aforementioned methods. Many of these have already been emphasized by regulatory organizations such as AICTE and UGC, but rarely has anyone emphasized their significance in instruction. Search reforms may significantly contribute to the overall improvement of the quality of higher education and provide students with the opportunities and successes they merit.

### *Declaration by Authors*

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