

Planning Commission-FICCI-E&Y report identifies six levers to enhance quality of Indian Higher Education Institutes

- *Merit-based student financing*
- *Internationalization of education*
- *Enabling a research environment*
- *High quality faculty*
- *Improved technology for education delivery*
- *Employability*

NEW DELHI, November 3, 2012. Despite a near 11 per cent increase in student enrollment in higher education and a 9 per cent growth in institutions during the last decade, the Indian higher education sector is still plagued with various challenges such as Low Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER), inequitable access to higher education by community, geography and gender and lack of quality research and education, says a **Planning Commission-FICCI-Ernst & Young report on 'Indian Higher Education: The Twelfth Plan and Beyond'**.

According to **Prof M Anandkrishan, Chairman FICCI Higher Education Committee** "Private unaided institutions and universities are the fastest growing segment of Indian higher education and accounts for 59% share of total enrollments in 2012. This report is an attempt to look at the Twelfth Plan recommendations pragmatically from the private sector perspective and suggest strategies for quality improvement in higher education in India".

The report notes that to address these challenges, the Government has proposed several initiatives in the 12th Plan in the areas of expansion, equity, excellence, governance, funding and implementation and monitoring. The accent is on augmenting capacity in existing institutions, creating targeted schemes for the backward and minority communities and building excellence in higher education institutions (HEIs) through research and innovation, faculty development and internationalization. However, there are several systemic barriers that restrict entry of credible private higher education providers contributing effectively.

Mr. Pawan Agarwal, Advisor (HE), Planning Commission highlights 'The issues in higher education are complex and thinking and action on them is needed at different levels by a variety of stakeholders. I hope that this report is used as a thinking tool for different stakeholders to build their own agenda in higher education'.

Commenting on the industry scenario, **Mr. Amitabh Jhingan, Partner & National Leader, Education practice, Ernst & Young said**, "The Government intends to achieve enrollment of 35.9 million students in higher education institutions, with a GER of 25.2%, by the end of the Twelfth Five Year Plan period through the co-existence of multiple types of institutions including research-centric, teaching and vocation-focused ones. The private sector can be expected to play an instrumental role in the achievement of these outcomes through the

creation of knowledge networks, research and innovation centres, corporate-backed institutions, and support for faculty development”.

A key concern in India today is the creation of an ‘employable’ workforce in order to harness its demographic dividend. The report emphasizes that the need of the hour is not just growth but quality growth to be able to compete with international institutes of repute. It identifies six key levers which can significantly enhance quality of HEIs.

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