

Excellence, equity and ef education :

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EFFICIENCY has been variously perceived. It is an organisation, environment and membership related concept. Efficiency can be variously perceived :

I. Internal efficiency (a) at the higher education institution level ; (b) at the higher education system level ;

II. External efficiency (a) at the total education system level; (b) at the national level.

The efficiency of a higher education institution, however perceived, depends on the set of factors that determine its goals, objectives, targets, availability and use of resources, internal and external environment and the process of teaching research, review, coordination and integration.

The growth of higher education institution deemphasize the concept of the community of scholars and objectives identification through consensus. It indeed becomes a conflict situation with endless bargaining process wherein the allocation of decision making power and its use determines attainment of objectives through distribution of resources.

The administrators who participate in the allocation of resources space, time, books, equipment, man, money, material etc. effect attainment and otherwise of efficiency. A system of continuous evaluation in terms of objectives and responsive adjustment is helpful in promoting efficiency.

Some institutions tend to promote target-efficiency through such preventive measures as restrictive entry without measures for cure. The efficiency use of resources at the institutional level may promote restrictive entry while systemic efficiency would consider it wasteful.

Partial measures of institutional efficiency such as attendance rate, failure rate, employment rate and level capacity utilisation, wastage rate, research output, cost per student, average earning potential, citation of faculty research etc. cannot provide an integrated view.

The internal efficiency at the institutional level requires

mobilisation, allocation and utilisation of human, material, financial and organisational resources through a conscious process of internalised planning and implementation within and between constituent units with built-in mechanism to monitor deviation from objectives as well as planned outlay to permit corrective measures in order to minimise cost and wastage.

The concept of efficiency at the higher education system level initially refers to agglomeration of internal efficiency at the various levels vertically and horizontally. But the concept goes beyond at it has to take into account higher education objective at the aggregate level which is not necessarily the aggregation of the higher education institutional objectives. The system efficiency has to be built upon capability and performance of institutions in the system.

It is not merely a question of institutional planning and implementation but more importantly of coordination through interaction, and integration.

Higher education system is an integral part of the total education system. The efficiency of the former is conditioned by the efficiency of the supporting system and the converse is also true. Higher education system has interactive influence on the supporting system as a whole through its product and entry requirements. Unless the system moves in unison, attainment of standards and reduction of waste becomes very difficult.

Efficiency at the national level can be viewed in terms of contribution of institutional output (i.e. graduates), commu-

nicated knowledge that has been stored (i.e. curricula) and created knowledge (i.e. research) in the social, political and economic transaction which can be perceived and monitored through an accounting matrix that reflect its "nation" output vis-a-vis the inputs that it receives from the national system.

PROBLEMS

A university in Bangladesh is faced with the following problems :

1. There are some principles of administration such as: maintenance of a clear chain or responsibility, delegation of functions and authority, insistence of economy and efficiency which are common to all good organization. A university is also an organization but its character as a society of scholars engaged in pursuit of learning and discovery distinguishes it fundamentally from say department of the government or other profit making organizations. So, the administrative problems faced by a university is different from those of the others. But administrative problems special to university governance have not received adequate attention and the universities in Bangladesh often tend to rely heavily on government rules and practices. What is worse, rules, procedures and techniques once adopted tend to continue indefinitely in their original form even when changed conditions and circumstances have made them obsolete or incompatible with the real needs and interests of the university. Such rigidity seriously retards the progress and development of a university. A resolute effort needs to be made to evolve policies, techniques, practices, and a machinery for decision making

needed for a forward looking and dynamic university. A university should be visualized as an integrated community of teachers and students and its administrative wing is a service agency to both. In a university therefore, academics should have a dominating and controlling position.

2. Representation of the government in the governance of a university is justified in view of the nature of the relationship between the university and society. But the government elements have dominant role and controlling position in the administration of a university. It is contrary to the principle of university autonomy if the lay or non-academic members in the various committee's of the university assume a dominating role. In the administration of a university centre of gravity of authority should be tilted to the academic wing of the university. The functions of the non-academic elements should be to present to the academics the wider interest of the society as a whole, but not to impose them.

3. It is necessary to ensure that universities do not become administration or administrator dominated. The dominance, if one is to use that word at all, must be of the academic element, and the principle function of the administration is to serve the academic interests of the university.

4. In the governance of a university, the principles that good ideas often originate at the lower levels of the hierarchy must be recognized and respected. The tendency to attach importance to ideas and proposals merely because they emanate from persons

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