

Directorate of Higher Education

In India, after 12 years of schooling, higher education consists of three years of study leading to a Bachelor's degree. In the case of professional fields such as engineering, agriculture, dentistry, engineering, pharmacy, technology and veterinary medicine, this takes four years. Bachelor's degrees in architecture and medicine take at least five years. This is followed by two years of study for a Master's degree, and at least three years beyond that for a PhD.

In Delhi, the Directorate of Higher Education was set up in 1997, prior to which the higher education was under the Directorate of Education. Earlier, subject matter pertaining to higher education was assigned to the 'College Branch' under the Education Department. According to the estimates of the University Grants Commission (UGC), enrolment was 1,72, 218 till 2002-03. To promote excellence in the field of higher education Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University (GGSIPU) was established in 1998 through the Indraprastha Vishwavidyalaya Act, 1998. The Delhi Government sponsors 28 colleges through the Directorate, out of which only 12 are fully funded. The other 16 colleges are funded by the UGC and the Delhi Government on a 95:5 sharing basis.

Organisational Structure

A Director heads the Directorate and is assisted by a Deputy Director and an Assistant Director. There are officers responsible for administration, accounts and research. Dealing assistants basically issue/revalidate No Objection Certificate (NOC) for non-AICTE courses for affiliation to Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, issue grants to government-sponsored colleges, and manage legal disputes of the Department. The number of sanctioned posts in the Directorate in 2004 was 15, but has only 9 employees.¹

Functions and Responsibilities

The Directorate is responsible for regulating higher education in Delhi. Some of the main functions are listed below:

- Implementation of 14 Plan schemes in pursuance of the objective of promising higher education.
- Providing grants-in-aid to 28 colleges affiliated to Delhi University. Out of these 28 colleges, 12 are fully funded by the Delhi Government for both recurring and non-recurring expenditure and 16 colleges are funded by the Delhi Government and UGC in the ratio of 5:95 for recurring and 50:50 for non-recurring expenditure.
- The Directorate also acts as the administrative department for Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University (GGSIPU). The Directorate provides grant-in-aid to the University for both its recurring and non-recurring expenditure. The University runs 8 schools of its own. It has two centres of learning and has given affiliation to 10 government institutions and 63 privately managed self-financing institutions. The total intake of the university is now more than 9,000 seats.
- Providing grant-in-aid to the Indira Gandhi Institute of Technology which is a constituent college of GGSIPU offering engineering and technology courses exclusively for women.
- The Delhi Institute of Heritage Research & Management (DHIRM) is an institution set up by the Delhi Government for the study and preservation of cultural heritage. This institute is also being provided grants-in-aid by the Directorate.
- The Directorate allots land to colleges sponsored by the government.
- The Directorate provides grants up to 50% of the expenditure incurred by the teachers of government-sponsored colleges for attending international academic conferences abroad.
- Restoration and preservation of Delhi University colleges/ institutions of heritage value by providing grants-in-aid up to an amount of Rs 1 crore to each college/ institute.
- Issue of NOC for non-AICTE courses to private institution for

affiliation to GGSIPU. Processing fee of Rs 15,000 per course is charged for the issue/ revalidation of NOC.

- Collection and compilation of statistical data relating to higher education.

Financial Allocations and Expenditure

The approved outlay for the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07) is Rs 240 crore. Approved outlay and expenditure over the years is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Approved Outlay and Expenditure (Rs in lac)

| Year | Approved Outlay (BE) | Revised Outlay (RE) | Expenditure Up to Feb that year | % <i>w.r.t.</i> BE |
|---------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2002-03 | 3,750 | 3,300 | 1,252 | 33 |
| 2003-04 | 6,000 | 3,138 | 1,725 | 28.75 |
| 2004-05 | 7,000 | 2,098 | 548 | 8 |
| 2005-06 | 3,201 | -- | 202 (Up to August 2005) | 6.3 |

Source: Government of NCT Delhi. Data abstracted from the Annual Plans: Scheme-wise Plan outlay and Expenditure for the years 2002-03, 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06. Department of Planning

After analysing the budget and its utilisation, it can be deduced that in the Tenth Five Year Plan, the money spent is marginal to the funds demanded from the Delhi Government on the pretext of implementing various schemes. The percentage of funds utilised against the approved outlay is dismal, as evident from the Table 1. Out of Rs 70 crore approved in 2004-05, only 8 percent, that is, Rs 548 lac was spent till February 2005.

For example, the Directorate is responsible for construction of girls' hostels for college students. For the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07), the target was to construct two hostels. For the Annual Plan 2002-03, again the target was to construct two hostels but this was not completed. For Annual Plan 2003-04, the target was to acquire land for girls' hostels, but this too was not done and it is again mentioned for budget estimates in 2005-06 as well. Approved outlay for this scheme in the Tenth Five Year Plan is Rs 500 lac.

Grants-in-aid to colleges managed by trusts and affiliated with Delhi University is one of the major functions of the Directorate. For

the Tenth Five Year Plan, the target was to cover 25 colleges. In 2002-03, the target was five colleges, and grants of Rs 350 lac were released for restoration and repair of three old buildings. Approved outlay for the Tenth Five Year Plan for this scheme is Rs 25 crore. During 2003-04, funds amounting to Rs 65 lac were released to the Delhi Institute of Heritage Research & Management as grants-in-aid to meet recurring and non-recurring expenditure.

Rs 60 lac was approved for strengthening of the Directorate of Higher Education for 2005-06,. However, only Rs 17 lac was spent for the purpose till August 2005. Similarly, the Directorate is responsible for running special coaching classes for students appearing for medical and engineering exams. In 2002-03, these coaching centres were set up to provide coaching to 500 students. Here, not much money is allocated, but the fact that the government runs these coaching classes in the first place is questionable. There are enough private alternatives in all financial categories that would cater to the needs of the students. The Tenth Five Year Plan outlay for this scheme is Rs 50 lac and the annual outlay for 2004-05 was Rs 10 lac.

Problems and Suggestions

Officials of both the Directorates of Education and Higher Education are extremely indifferent and uncooperative. It has been emphasised earlier that the government should not be a part of providing higher education. Private universities have emerged over the years, and as more private alternatives emerge, competition will ensure better quality education. Private universities should be free to fix fees. If the government wants equal opportunity, then it can achieve it providing full or partial scholarships or student loans to deserving students.

The affiliated colleges in Delhi have to procure a No Objection Certificate from the Directorate. This certificate has to be renewed every year at the renewal cost of Rs 10,000 accompanied by an application giving details of infrastructure, teachers and other components. The University also charges a renewal fee of Rs 20,000 every year until the affiliation becomes permanent. The affiliation procedures are too many. One, the foundation has to be registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. This is just a means to keep private entrepreneurs at bay. So

all the self-financing colleges under the Indraprastha University in Delhi, to quote a senior official in the industry "...are functioning with a philanthropist motive."

Another flaw is that the fee to be charged is dictated by the universities and salaries by the UGC. Also, scales of pay must be at par with government colleges. This is done when the UGC does not pay a single penny to these institutions on any grounds. All this only precipitates distortion of the market by not letting forces of supply and demand operate freely. Also, these days, there is a mounting demand for foreign university degrees, institutes in Delhi cannot affiliate themselves to a foreign university along with the home university although they can affiliate a course to run exchange programs.

All this coupled with improper utilisation of funds and lack of schemes that actually benefit the students only make the situation worse. It is necessary to rethink the role of government in providing higher education. For instance, what is the need for the government to provide coaching classes to students? If at all the Directorate wants to help students who cannot afford the coaching for entrances, it can issue vouchers, which can be redeemed at any of the private coaching centres approved by the Directorate. This will not only help students achieve better quality coaching but also dismiss the need of Directorate to incur the expenses of infrastructure, teachers and other prerequisites.

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Notes

- ¹ Government of NCT of Delhi. *Census of employees of Government of Delhi & Autonomous Bodies 2004, 2004*. Directorate of Economics and Statistics.

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The RTI manual on Delhi Government Website: <http://delhigovt.nic.in/rti/default.asp>