DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTENANCE OF EFFICIENT
GOVERNANCE IN UNIVERSITIES - AN EXPLORATORY
STUDY

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ABSTRACT
The study vitally examines the development and sustenance of efficient governance in universities and the level to which efficient governance has contributed for the management in the universities. The specific objectives of the study were to; identify obstacles in implementing measures of efficient governance, identify and portray the steps taken in the development and sustenance of efficient governance. Under this backdrop, this paper is an attempt to identify and study the existing practices for the development and sustenance of efficient governance in universities and to broaden the horizons of existing knowledge about the practices of governance in university system. A qualitative research methodology has been utilized for gathering data for the present study. A qualitative survey has been carried out with various participants experienced in the field of higher education institutions and universities. Face-to-face questions were asked regarding development and sustenance of efficient governance in universities and acquire a thorough understanding of the problem. Questions were asked from the administrators like vice-chancellors, members of various boards and committees, registrars, deans, heads of teaching departments, other academic staff and also the students. The qualitative data was organized into separate categories and on the basis of which a perception has been developed about the development and sustenance of governance in a university system with the help of appropriate decision-making. The qualitative data gathered assume that the universities are governed by various committees and boards. Other findings were indicative of having various obstacles in universities which are restraining efficient governance. The conclusion suggested that performance of universities has been seen as an important factor so that their functioning is justified. The suggestions also indicate that higher education institutions like universities need improvement in governance so as to reduce the challenges posed by upcoming knowledge economy.

Keywords: Universities; Governance; Obstacles; Knowledge Economy; Performance; Decision-making

INTRODUCTION
Over the last thirty years, universities have seen profound changes. There has been significant shift in the entire history of the university like institutions. It has been from imparting instructions to chosen elite to educating a great percentage of the populace, which has been referred to as a mass or universal system of imparting higher education. For meeting the new challenges posed of higher education, their purposes have also changed significantly. It appears that the universities of the future will cater to begin a process of providing life-long education to a huge populace. They will serve as centres for
generation of knowledge and also a type of service provider providing training and advancements in the technological skills to the community in what has come to be called as knowledge economy or society (Mora, 2001). Due to the adoption of new trends and technologies, there has been an enormous shift in the horizons of the universities which are now looking at manufacturing positive changes to their systems and modes of governance. These kinds of changes can be understood by keenly observing their functioning and efficient delivery measures (Sporn, 1996).

The Higher Education system of India is the third largest in the world after USA & China as far as the enrollments are concerned and largest in the world in terms of number of institutions with 31926 institutions (602 universities and 31324 colleges) during the year 2010-11, having reached a praiseworthy increased number of teachers and students enrolments. The higher education system in India has seen considerable growth in recent years. Catering the need of higher literacy rate in the country, private sector is also involved as a result of increased student enrollment, hence showing a positive trend to foster the upcoming knowledge economy (Gupta & Gupta, 2012).

With the expansion of higher education institutions in India, there was a subsequent deterioration in the quality, which was the result of not having proper governance methods (UNESCO, 2004; Agarwal, 2006). Despite having a huge number of universities and higher educational institutions in India, the major limitation is that not even a single higher educational institution, may it be a university or a college, is amongst the leading institution of the world. The Higher Educational Institutions lack proper infrastructure and technology as a result of which high quality research is lacking. As per United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), “higher education is no longer a luxury; it is essential to national social and economic development.”

For the development and sustenance of efficient governance in the universities, the broad operational and management practices adopted by universities are needed to be evidently understood and the stakeholders (administrative staff, academicians, decision-makers, students and civil society) need to acknowledge to the mission of the university and the part each member plays forthe accomplishment of university objectives, how authority is mutually shared and the extent and shape of their participation in governance (Edwards, 2006). To achieve development and sustenance in efficient governance of the universities, universities require the skilled academicians, administrative staff, students and external element like civil society, to be part of budgetary, policy and decision making processes. This can be achieved through appropriate representation in the university council, various committees and bodies and also through appointment of proper consultants.

Therefore, University system requires a qualitative focus on developing and placing efficient governance structures, which is only possible if all the stakeholders like faculty, scholars, industry, civil society, etc. especially the students play a proper role and emancipate responsibilities in right direction. The focus of proper governance mechanism should incorporate structures, processes and activities that are involved in the planning and direction for attaining overall institutional excellence. Therefore, the present study is in the direction to identify the necessary steps for the development and sustenance of efficient Governance mechanisms from the perspectives of the people involved in the decision-making process.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Since the 1990’s, numerous studies have been carried out on the issues related to university governance across the world. Centre for Higher Education Policy Analysis in California, USA (2003) has identified the postulates of shared governance and decision-making, while some regard university organization and performance, freedom of faculty members, collegial and disciplinary organization as essential elements of university governance. Sporn (2008) argues for efficiency, downsizing and decentralization, excellence and public service as necessary elements in making universities functional in a proper way. Unfortunately, there is very little empirical or theoretical work on the issues related to governance in university systems to support the above statements.
Issues related to efficient governance of universities have been centre of debate in the international front (Coaldrake et. al. 2003). Changes have been witnessed in the settings in which universities operate and therefore, a stronger corporate management of universities is required (Gallagher, 2001). Many challenges have been noticed the way universities are governed, managed and held accountable. Evidences of universities losing their position in the international rankings, inadequacy in funds generation, and inability for investing in latest educational practices have been observed.

Allport (2001) has observed that the universities in the European countries have upheld and sustained efficient governance with the help of new and innovative models of management. Management practices like corporate and shared governance have been regarded as a paradigm shift in the efficient governance of universities. This has been supported by Sporn (2003) who maintains that universities in the European countries have established new models of efficient governance by rebuilding higher education through new policies of public management. These policies involve distinctive trends, such as:

1. Effectiveness in generation and utilization of finances.
2. Decentralizing and downsizing various activities like research.
3. Structuring a model for achieving excellence through proper role allocation for better decision-making

As illustrated by Allport (2001), each global pattern of governance reproduces an exclusive history of the sector and the needs of those specific institutional types. For having efficient governance in universities, a centralized authority for education in the universities is required, public and private interests, a layout of citizen governing board and the roles that departments among universities and institutions should perform.

Coaldrake et. al. (2003) contends for the development and sustenance of efficient governance that there should be an open consultation, effective modes of communication in organizational strata, and participation in decision-making processes. Sustenance in efficiency can be observed if there is shared responsibility and authority among all the members of university fraternity.

The reason of having efficient governance in universities is to endow with an opportunity for faculty, staff, students, administrators, and other stakeholders to provide recommendations in the decision-making process so as to meet the global trends and challenges posed by the upcoming knowledge economy. The practice of establishing a governance structure, especially as it relates to curricular matters and academic policies, is a common practice in higher education. The advantages of a collegial, decision-making process or “shared governance” are well documented in publications of professional nature and outlined in the standards of various accrediting agencies, such as the NAAC and AICTE in India.

The abilities of each of the staff members are required to be enhanced so as to meet the above challenges for the purpose of sustaining and strengthening the fundamental nature of university and also facilitate responsiveness to the aspirations of the people. Universities are required to implement governance that follows rule of law, which is participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, in order to support university management in its efforts to increase efficiency and effectiveness.

**Structures of Governance in Universities**

University organization is guided by structures presenting an acceptable and organizational framework within which the decisions are made. These structures fix the limits of power to be enjoyed by different administrative heads of the university. The same structures are necessarily be instituted so that there is no obstruction in the overall institutional development of the universities (Kasozi, 2003).
Chancellor of the University

In most of the Universities, a Chancellor is the titular and formal Head of the university. The Chancellor confers degrees, approves awards and also signs certain certificates in accordance with the laws governed for the purpose.

The University Council

The University Council is the sole policy making body of most of the universities. It consists of different representatives appointed by the body and other stakeholders. In case of public universities, the government appoints the certain members of the University Council including the ex-officio members.

The Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor is the chief executive of the university and he is the head of administration and the policy implementing organ of any university.

The Boards/Schools of the Studies

The Board/School is an ordered consortium of teaching departments. Boards/Schools of Studies deal with formulation of curricular design, research, approval of academic regulations and also administer examinations.

The Academic Department

An Academic Department is the nucleolus of any university. It focuses on the study and teaching of a discipline or disciplines. The academic department is the foremost architect of academic policy in the university.

According to Kasozi (2003), other structures in a university system include academic staff, non-academic staff and the Student Union.

The measures of efficient governance are based on four distinctive but interrelated divisions such as, students’ affairs, academic affairs, finances and control, and institutional excellence. Apart from university council and other committees in the governance structure, the universities recognizes various faculty and student centric advisory groups like Teachers’ and Students’ Association. Though, these organizations are not formally accepted in the governance structure of universities but at the same time they play significant roles in policy recommendations. Moreover, the universities embrace the contribution of other stakeholders and civil society and work together with these units, for upholding the ideal of shared governance.

Key Governance Models

The present study will rely on the following university governance models: -

Shared Model

Inclusive and informal decision-making, accountability, mutual respect, trust, transparency and proper communication between and among all the members and components of the universities, forms the basic core values for shared governance (Coaldrake et. al., 2003). Shared governance includes four principle bodies: the university council, the faculty, the staff and the student association.

Collegial model

Trakman (2008) considers collegium as an important instrument for the university. It looks at decision-making, consensus, authority and human education. This model is primarily based on the assumption that a university is a collegium or a grouping of scholars and is required to be governed as per the principles of collegiality and freedoms given to university members. Kezer and Eckel (2004) explain that the success of university governance is based on collegial relationships and a sense of mutual
respect amongst faculty, support staff, professionals, administrators, students and representatives of external entities.

**Political Model**

Political model recommends that in evaluating governance, the prime focus should be on the organizational structure, on interest articulation, on legislative processes and on the policy execution. There are various political activities operating while framing policies for the university (Asimiran, 2009).

**Corporate Model**

The corporate model takes and considers university from a perspective of a business corporation and aligns its activities with concept of market oriented objectives. Baird (2007) argues that a university is established by corporation and its educational process is considered as business in which the courses and programmes are run as per the demands of the industry and needs of the market.

The above mentioned models were derived by various scholars to describe governance as practiced and perceived comparatively (Allport 2001). Each of the models has been derived from different researches performed by various researchers. These models require further researches so that their application in real life situation may be justified. It is, consequently, significant to recognize and observe which of the models could best illustrate the process of governance in universities.

Kezer and Eckel (2004) recommend universities to devise a method of governance that will allow all stakeholders with an opportunity to have a voice and control. This should be in an environment of trust, proper communication, honesty and collegiality. It should allow each entity of the campus to have certain amount of autonomy and independence, and there should be the existence of structures that allow them to work collaboratively with one another when there is a need. The accomplishments of university governance structure depend on collegial relationships and reciprocal respect amongst faculty members, support staff, students, administrative officers and representatives of external entities. Each and every member of the university fraternity must feel accountable for the roles they perform and take formal responsibilities. There is a paramount importance of those policies and procedures which define the roles and responsibilities and also clarification of responsibilities is important for the achievement of mission and goals of the university.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The overall aim of the study is to investigate how development and sustenance of efficient governance in universities be ensured by adhering to the recommendations made in the key Governance Models. In order to achieve this over all aim, the research will be guided by the following objectives:

1. To identify obstacles for the implementation of efficient governance measures.
2. To identify and portray the measures taken in the development and sustenance of efficient governance in the universities.
3. To broaden the horizons of existing knowledge about the practices of governance in university system.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The present study is exploratory in nature. The data has been collected from secondary sources only. The data collected from secondary sources were reviewed through secondary review. The sources include books, journals, published and unpublished thesis etc. the scope of the study extends to the university system.
FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

Obstacles in Implementing Measures of Efficient Governance

Universities, in the present era, are facing certain challenges which require new practices of management and governance. The recent developments that universities are facing have many folds viz. emergence of new stakeholders, challenges of internal factor, globalization and rapid pace. Moreover, certain challenges are related to financing, conditions for accessing knowledge, staff and faculty development, skilled training, timely service delivery, research and extension, significance of courses offered, employability, international associations and cooperation (Gallagher, 2001). All these challenges have elevated serious issues with regard to the way universities are managed and governed (Kasozi, 2003). These challenges have inevitably become an obstacle to efficient governance. Major obstacles in the present scenario of governance of universities include

Politics of Participatory Decision-Making

In university governance, there are about five important decision-making dimensions (Murphy, 2000). These dimensions include decisions on academic activities; decisions on resource mobilization, financial allocations& expenditure; accountability; strategic planning and unforeseen challenges.

In some of the universities across the world, the decisions are made by politicians, civil servants and also by various interest groups. Gayle, Twarie& White (2003) have stressed that such a process of decision-making in the universities is undemocratic and will ultimately lead to dependency on government. This might also kill the capacity of taking institutional initiatives, and will depend on bureaucratic machinery for incentives and innovations in governance.

Governance Crises

In his study about crisis of governance, Obondoh (2000) explains that upright rational leadership, accountable faculty and their departments have been the greatest management challenges. He further argues that with the expansion of institutions, governance of universities will continue with following challenges:

- Visible mismatch amongst authorities.
- Lower units with limited authority.
- Deep-rooted cultural barriers shall enable slow decision-making processes and poor response to the challenges.
- Dependency on committee system.
- Deteriorating institutional culture.

Stakeholder Participation Problems

Greater stakeholder participation in the university affairs has been considered as a one of the serious leadership and administrative problems. Although, participatory governance has its relevance in certain cases when there are issues in achieving directed goals by any of the units or organization and also it is applied where the decision-making process is shared with others.

Problems of Management practice

There is rigid administrative structure in most of the universities and the same cannot be pierced in the present changing scenarios. Shattock (2002) and Scott (2001) argue that administrators are not adequately responsive to the students and the staff affairs and also decisions in this regard flow in a top-down approach. Shattock (2002) maintains that the main problem in flexibility has been the cultural sturdiness among different organs of governance in the universities. There are issues of university governance in managerial activities which are taking roots from a conflict between
academics and managerial cultures which is further causing distrust and tension within the university administration (Baird, 2007).

**Globalization Problems**

With the emergence of globalization in the education sector, there is a subsequent difficulty in its legislation process (Kasozi, 2003). Universities are operating in a borderless world where something happens in one part of the world has its bearing on all the universities. Students studying in different universities are able to acquire higher education from anywhere in the world without the consent from their university officials (United Nations Development, 2001).

**Financing Problems**

A good number of public universities in the world have been receiving government funding so as to function effectively. As a result of inconsistent economic situations in various countries, financial support by the respective governments has steadily declined, which restricted the universities to function under tight budgetary conditions, which further affected the effective governance in these universities.

**Development and Sustenance of Efficient Governance**

Various models of governance vary to a great extent depending on the size, agency, structures and also the legislative provisions. These models for the development and sustenance of efficient governance should continually be tested and accepted to meet current circumstances. This will enable universities to tackle with the performance issues (Stanton, 2007 and Kasozi, 2003).

**Leadership and Communication**

In an efficient university governance structure, strong leadership is significant. Structural support and clear directions are required to be in place. The accomplishments of such leadership practices will depend on efficient management skills. Top management should be responsive and reproduce good and efficient governance behaviours and achieve university governance objectives with the help of various accountability measures (Kasozi, 2003).

**Appropriate Governance Structures**

Structures of governance in university education differ considerably throughout the world. However, despite differentiated university governance structures, they are sharing the same tradition. Coaldrake, et. al. (2003) is of the view that suitable structure of governance committees enables uncomplicated decision-making in the universities and therefore efficient governance can be ensured. Shatlock (2002) maintain that various committees of governance are accountable for planning, monitoring, coordination and evaluation. They highlight freedom in academics and autonomy, performance enhancement in student education and also advancement in the academics, and accountability, transparency, social responsibility, ethics and professionalism.

**Accountability Measures**

For appropriate accountability measures, the universities are required to prepare annual reports and duly audited budgetary and financial statements (Rahim, 2000). This is to present a purpose and autonomous evaluation of financial reporting in the universities so that transparency and accountability is ensured for using financial and other resources of the universities (Schutte, 2007). An external auditor is required to be appointed by the University for conducting an audit of the financial statements. Dooley (2003) argues that universities preserve efficient governance if its accountability measures are good.

**Quality Assurance Systems**

Bartos (2003) explains that quality assurance systems are the standards of good practices that should be regarded by universities as a model for efficiency and accountability. Bartos (2003) further...
supported by Rahim (2000) who is of the view that every university should have a board of directors. The board sets the policies and directs its processes including its budgetary and financial policies. The board is also responsible for creation of such settings in which there are open and healthy deliberations on such issues which require immediate action.

**Planning, Performance & Evaluation**

Engineering institutionalism in the universities involves a planned vision and priorities that are required to be achieved in a given time period. Every university has to create, systematize execute and continually evaluate such strategies which cater to the long-term and overall development. Numerous studies indicate that low performing universities are regularly pre-occupied in solving the internal day-to-day operations, either overlooking or under estimating the potency of long-term planning.

**MAJOR SUGGESTIONS**

For University governance to be efficient, definite key steps are required to be followed. Keeping in view the qualitative and secondary data evidence, development and sustenance of efficient university governance requires the following to be done;

**University Compliance Mechanism**

University administrators should put in place internal compliance measures that administer the internal conduct among the players. These include university charter, university performance procedures, codified standards of service delivery, and quality committees and compliance groups.

**Administration**

The universities should have strong structures, processes, systems and procedures for making decisions and their implementation. These could be in the shape of policy manuals, accounting manuals, decision support systems, students’ manuals, operation manuals, information systems and research manuals.

**Financing**

Universities cannot do well without adequate financial and other resources like physical infrastructure, manpower and supporting equipment. A mechanism is required to be developed which funds the overall activities of the universities both internally and externally. Government should institute such measures of funding crucial activities that are vital for the universities, yet are not in position to mobilize speedy revenues like research, infrastructure and library.

**CONCLUSION**

This study contributes to the deliberations about university governance in the area related to the administrators’, academicians’ and Committee/Board Members’ participation in the governance processes. The study contributes towards a greater understanding on the governance in the universities both in theoretical and practice of governance. The changing patterns of governance and the new realization of the boards’ roles as opposed to the traditional conception of academic governance have call for a more efficient way of power distribution bodies and the university. The governance processes in universities are important for university efficiency and effectiveness which will remain very important for the development and sustenance for today and tomorrow. The study also has helped the researcher to explore a frontier of knowledge on university governance.

**REFERENCES**


