

# ION EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

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## Technical Education in India: What Makes Good Governance “Good”?



Dr Anil Sahasrabudhe, a dynamic, positive man is the present chairman of All India Council for Technical Education(AICTE) says the term "good governance" often evokes the mental image of a well-functioning political system or the lack of corruption. In the case of engineering education in India, it most closely refers to the governing body that oversees a college or university. These individuals play a more important role than one might think, particularly in regard to institutional

effectiveness, quality of education, and student employability.

India has nearly 4,000 engineering schools and a unique history of affiliated colleges. Affiliates are essentially child organizations of larger universities. These affiliates pay fees to the larger universities in exchange for the use of their curriculum and exams. It is not uncommon for a parent school to have more than a hundred affiliates, in fact, there is one university which has over 600! Quality control is a major challenge and students are often literally taught by textbook with a visiting lecturer reading from it.

Good governance addresses both components by ensuring that dedicated academic and non-academic leaders provide strategic vision and financial oversight, in addition to ensuring that their institutions nurture a cadre of competent faculty and employable students.

Good intentions aside, it is not always easy to implement good governance practices. Many, if not all, colleges struggle with severe faculty shortages. Recent studies have shown that the number of engineering students outweigh the number of available jobs. Some colleges have governing boards that have been unable to meet for months due to scheduling conflicts and/or political instability. However, there are also several institutions like **College of Engineering in Pune (COEP)** that have truly embraced the fundamental principles of good governance and reaped the benefits.

Another example is the **BVB College of Engineering** in Hubli. Located in **Karnataka, Hubli** is a commercial and business center in the northern part of the state. The BVB governing board sought to actively implement good governance practices, including transparency in decision-making and developing a shared understanding of the key attributes, primary accountabilities, and performance norms of the Board of Governors. They embarked on a governance self-review with guidelines laid out by **Technical Education Quality Improvement Project (TEQIP II)** and involved all the institution's stakeholders in the process. They identified several areas for improvement and have a plan that not only lists actionable items but also identifies which resources and actors need to play a role in order for reforms to be sustainable. Through its focus on good governance,

the college has become one of the top five institutions in the state, incubated 24 companies on its campus, and created more than 400 long-term jobs in the region.

## Best practices for governing boards

Good governance can seem somewhat of an esoteric concept – in some cases, institutions can just post a document online and make it appear that their board is very active. However, based on several case studies and firsthand experience from the TEQIP II team, some best practices for governing boards include:

1. **A committed and engaged Board of Governors:** The College of Engineering in Pune (COEP) requires its members to contribute at least 100 hours to activities related to institutional development.
2. **The right composition of individuals:** Many members are appointed, and often hold more than one post. It is important to balance out the membership with motivated and diverse individuals. Conflict of interest is important to consider, especially if there are industry professionals on the board who might be looking for free student labor or additional contracts from the institution or members who sit on multiple Boards.
3. **Transparency and accountability in decision-making:** Minutes from the meetings should be publicly posted so that administrators, faculty, students can see what decisions were made and why.
4. **Performance metrics:** The Board of Governors should hold themselves to a high standard of performance and create benchmarks that demonstrate progress, so that institutional improvements are known and measured. The governors should evaluate their own performance.
5. **Review of the Head of Institution:** Just as it is important to undertake self-review, it is also important to provide honest feedback to the leader of the institution, so that he or she is held accountable for the day-to-day running of the school.

To learn more about the Good Governance program, and for additional resources on the topic, please visit:

1. **Good Governance** - <http://www.teqipgoodgovernance.in/>
2. **YASHADA** - [http://www.yashada.org/yashvc/static\\_pgs/HomePage.php](http://www.yashada.org/yashvc/static_pgs/HomePage.php)

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Scaling is a challenge that Indian education faces - Rick Levin (CEO, Coursera)



*"India is the second biggest market for online education firm Coursera."* In an interview, CEO Rick Levin talks about the opportunities and challenges in India.

**What has Coursera's progress been since it began operations?**

In just four years, Coursera has reached over 20 million registered learners with over 1.6 million in India, now our second largest market. This huge demand is a clear result of a widening skills gap in the country.

Online learning through platforms like Coursera provide an efficient, flexible, and affordable solution for Indian students who are interested in pursuing careers in these high-demand fields.

- **The Indian government is also planning to have its online-based education plan under SWAYAM platform. Your comments.**

I'm encouraged by the Indian government's effort to bring credibility to online education through the SWAYAM program by offering transferable credit. By moving in this direction, the Indian government will help shift perceptions about online courses in general and lead more Indians to use online courses as serious credentials not only in education but on job applications and resumes.

- **What challenges do you see in the Indian education system? How can they be addressed?**

Scaling is the number one challenge that India's education system faces. The Indian government has set an ambitious goal of increasing university enrolment to 30 per cent of the relevant age cohort.

That goal cannot be achieved without embracing online learning as a viable option for delivering education.

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## Integrated system needed to bring change in education



Ajmer: Vice chancellor of Rajasthan University (RU), J P Singhal said that in order to bring positive change in the education system it is important to develop integrated system in occupational, school and university level education. The base of the education should be nationality and culture and not the system of western education.

Singhal was addressing the academicians on the last day of two-day seminar on secondary education and system organised by Rajasthan Board of Secondary Education (RBSE). At present, he further said, exams are only evaluating how much information a student has. "The exam only tests memory of a particular student but this system is not evaluating knowledge and wisdom. The basic reason for this that teachers lack confidence to bring changes and they do not want to experiment" he said. "To bring change in the system, teachers have to go beyond paid workers and perform like Acharyas. Information is overloaded on internet and the role of teacher is to develop students with logic and reason" Singhal said.



Choosing an educational software to integrate into a curriculum can be difficult. Curriculum materials are generally selected for use over the course of several years. Some Learning Management System (LMS) are designed to accommodate hundreds of students but these programs require Internet access. Some vendors host the college data using cloud but they charge heavily for hosting the data.

IonIdea has developed a suite of education products which can work within your campus by utilizing intranet. IonEducation products offer the following benefits:

1. **Best value for money:** Our software solutions provide best value for money and a lowest TCO (Total Cost of Ownership) than any other software available in the market
2. **Security:** Our software solutions are very secure system with multiple level security checks. User Level and System Level security makes the entire application very secure.
3. **On-premise solution:** Full control of our software solutions remains with the client unlike in a cloud only solutions where data resides outside colleges/university campus and there is dependency on the vendor.
4. **Scalability:** Our software solutions are based on open source LAMP architecture enabling maximum scalability.
5. **User friendly:** Our software solutions are very user friendly and very easy to operate.

## FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TRANSFORMATIONS IN ENGINEERING EDUCATION

# ICTIEE 2017

**IonIdea is a silver partner for this conference.**

The Fourth International Conference on Transformations in Engineering Education (ICTIEE 2017) will CONNECT engineering educators from all over India with leaders from across the world as well as from industry. Participants will be able to SHARE best practices and thereby LEARN to TRANSFORM their own institutional efforts to prepare engineering graduates who can address global challenges as well as the targeted initiatives of the Indian government. ICTIEE 2017 is being hosted at three locations sequentially in order to maximize its impact among institutions all over India.



1. **Vardhaman College of Engineering,** Hyderabad: Jan. 6–8, 2017
2. **RK University,** Rajkot: Jan. 9 & 10, 2017
3. **Manipal University,** Jaipur: Jan. 11 & 12, 2017

For more information, please visit <http://www.ictiee.org/>



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