

Good Governance Practices in State Universities of Gujarat

Rajeshveer Maurya¹ and Satya Narayan Singh²
^{1,2} *corresponding authors*

*Department of Business and Management, Institute of Advanced Research,
Gandhinagar, Gujarat -352355, India.*

Abstract—This study looks at the implementation and effectiveness of good governance practices in the state universities of Gujarat, including their organisational structures, decision-making processes, accountability systems, and stakeholder engagement techniques. Data from numerous institutions will be collected using a complete case study technique to assess the extent to which ideals of transparency, accountability, participation, and efficiency are reflected in their governance structures. The findings show a diverse landscape of governance practices among the studied universities, with some institutions demonstrating impressive commitment to good governance principles and others displaying room for improvement. Institutional leadership, institutional working culture, regulatory frameworks, and resource allocation all have a substantial impact on each university's governance landscape and developmental phase.

Key components of good governance are more termed for effective implementation with the legal and ethical way forward, such as defined roles and duties, effective communication modes, and stakeholder involvement processes, are identified as critical determinants of institutional effectiveness and performance. Furthermore, the study emphasises the significance of creating a culture of integrity, ethical practices, and continuous improvement in order to improve governance practices, institutional outcomes, and the performance of next-level achievement. The ramifications of this study stretch beyond Gujarat, providing insights into the broader conversation on higher education governance and institutional management. Recommendations for policymakers, university administrators, and key stakeholders are presented to help state universities embrace best practices and improve their overall governance practices' effectiveness. The legal policies are providing way forward to the authorities to behave and implement the administration with ethically to justify the natural justice and implementation of orders of law and

its framework provide the successive pathway for more innovation and research scope.

This study adds to the continuing conversation about increasing institutional capacity, fostering accountability, and ensuring excellent education and research outcomes by bringing light on the difficulties and opportunities connected with governance in state educational institutions. Additional research routes are proposed to improve our understanding of governance dynamics in higher education institutions and their impact on organisational performance and societal development.

Index Terms— Institutional leadership, Decision-making processes, Regulatory frameworks, Institutional capacity, Governance dynamics and Societal development

I. INTRODUCTION

Good governance practices in the state universities of Gujarat are critical for ensuring quality education, receivable outcomes, transparency, accountability, and effective management within higher education institutions. The need for such good governance practices is underscored by the significant role that state universities play in shaping educational quality and institutional integrity in the Gujarat state region. Despite legislative efforts like the Common Public Universities Act of 2023, which aims to regulate and maintain standards across state government-funded universities, governance challenges persist, including limited female representation in decision-making roles and political interference that can undermine institutional autonomy.

This pilot study investigates the use of good governance concepts in Gujarat's public university, emphasizing the influence of governance frameworks

on academic performance, research outcomes, and institutional culture. Key findings indicate that a limited proportion of these universities satisfactorily demonstrate governance practices regionally, but a significant number of students express favorable views of the decision-making processes inside their universities. Although the universities have a common public university act, they have failed to implement it effectively at many levels because of unclear acceptance and implementation processes, which are complicated by differing perspectives among government departments like the Finance Department and Legal Department and the universities themselves. Furthermore, the study identifies crucial barriers such as inadequate transparency and a lack of accountability that contribute to a trust deficit among stakeholders, ultimately affecting educational quality. The study employs a mixed-method approach to collect qualitative and quantitative insights from a diverse range of stakeholders, including university administrators, faculty, and other relevant parties. This methodology reveals that effective representation and participation of all categories in governance are essential for enhancing institutional accountability and responsiveness. However, the ongoing influence of local politics and a dual authority system complicate the governance landscape, calling for reforms to empower universities and address existing challenges. Overall, the study expresses the need for robust governance frameworks that prioritize inclusivity, transparency, accountability, and stakeholder engagement to foster a conducive and cohesive learning environment and elevate the standards of higher education in Gujarat to increase the dominance of civilians in the state's growth engine. The findings serve as a foundation for future recommendations aimed at improving governance practices, ultimately contributing to the advancement of educational system for the quality education and institutional integrity within the state's universities.

II. BACKGROUND

The concept of good governance is critical in the context of higher education, particularly in state universities of Gujarat. It encompasses a range of practices aimed at ensuring transparency, accountability, and effective management within educational institutions. Good governance is essential

for fostering an environment conducive and cohesive to academic excellence and institutional integrity for easy of learning and life quality index enhancement, to serve to contribute in the individual's life and the ecosystem of National growth.

III. HIGHER EDUCATION IN GUJARAT

Gujarat's higher education landscape has been shaped significantly by the Gujarat Public Universities Act, 2023, which was designed to regulate the establishment and functioning of State funded common public universities, the state also designed the specific acts similar to it for the sector specific universities as per their speciality and deliverables accepted for the state & national direct and indirect growth story. The legislation sought to maintain high academic integrity and ensure quality standards across these institutions. As of now, there are 30 state funded government universities and 66 state private universities, deemed to be Universities 02 & central universities 02 registered under the University Grants Commission (UGC) in Gujarat, showcasing the potential for institutions to contribute to the state's educational framework through robust governance and leadership.

IV. GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES

Despite the regulatory framework, the governance structures of state universities face numerous challenges. One prominent issue is the limited participation of educated manpower, which results in a reduced role for women in the decision-making process, even though reserved seats for women representatives are available. Many women educators, despite being elected, frequently remain subject to patriarchal social norms, which can impede their efficacy. Moreover, the ability of local politicians to influence state governance remains constrained, often due to the dominance of a single political party over an extended period, which creates an environment of political indifference to local demands.

IMPORTANCE OF GOVERNANCE

Effective governance in higher education institutions is paramount, as it directly impacts academic outcomes and institutional culture. The governance

structures are not merely about constitutional arrangements but also involve how decisions are made, the interplay of various governance levels, and responses to internal and external pressures on the management. Therefore, exploring good governance practices in Gujarat's state universities is crucial for enhancing educational quality and fostering an atmosphere of accountability and responsiveness towards the academic development and state ecosystem.

V. METHODOLOGY

The pilot study on good governance practices in state universities of Gujarat employed a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies to gather comprehensive insights into governance structures and processes. The methodology was designed to assess the effectiveness and challenges of governance within these institutions, with a focus on stakeholder engagement and decision-making processes.

COLLECTION OF DATA

1. Qualitative Insights

Qualitative data were collected through interview questioners designed in-depthly with the objective of study of governance, wherein participation from university Administrators, Academic members, students, and representatives from civil society. This approach aimed to capture diverse perspectives on governance practices and to identify best practices and areas for improvement.

Interviews questioners structured based on objective and allowed with the flexibility to responses while ensuring that core topics related to governance were covered properly. The qualitative analysis focused on themes such as transparency, accountability, and stakeholder participation in decision-making processes.

2. Quantitative Data

Simultaneously, quantitative data were gathered through surveys distributed to a broad sample of individuals affiliated with the state universities, including faculty, administrative staff, and students. The surveys included questions designed to measure perceptions of governance effectiveness, the level of

engagement in governance activities, and the frequency of communication between stakeholders. Statistical analysis was employed to evaluate the responses, with results indicating that a significant majority (76.9%) of respondents perceived a good decision-making process within their institutions.

VI. FRAMEWORK OF ANALYTICAL STUDY

The analysis utilized a framework that integrated principles of good governance, emphasizing factors such as stakeholder engagement, effective communication, and accountability of respondent. By analysing various subject matters from universities and academic institutions, the study aimed to identify various factors influencing that contribute to successful governance deliverables & outcomes. The research also considered the implications of existing governance models and the potential for reform to enhance overall effectiveness in the context of educational institutions.

VII. CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS

The study identified several challenges and barriers to implementing effective governance practices, including technological limitations, resistance to change, and the need for better integration of data across various university departments.

Addressing these challenges was crucial for fostering an environment conducive to effective governance and ensuring that stakeholder voices are heard and acted upon.

VIII. FINDINGS

Overview of Governance in Gujarat State Universities
The governance structures of universities in Gujarat reveal a significant variation in effectiveness and compliance with good governance principles. A quantitative analysis indicated that only 24.09% of universities demonstrated satisfactory governance practices, highlighting the need for substantial improvements in this area.

The study also noted that 76.01% of the academicians exhibited a good decision-making process, which is indicative of a proactive approach to governance among the student body.

CHALLENGES IN GOVERNANCE

The research identified several challenges hindering effective governance in Gujarat's state universities. Issues such as inadequate transparency in administrative processes, lack of accountability, and political interference were prominent. These factors have resulted in a trust deficit among students and faculty, ultimately affecting the quality of education and institutional performance.

GOOD GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

The study underscored the importance of adhering to good governance principles, which include transparency, accountability, responsibility, equity, and inclusivity. These principles serve as a foundation for fostering an environment where Administrator and faculty can engage meaningfully in governance processes. However, the findings suggest that these principles are not consistently applied across all institutions, leading to disparities in governance quality.

ACADEMICIAN AND ADMINISTRATOR REPRESENTATION AND INVOLVEMENT

Effective Academician and Administrator interpretation constituted a critical variable in improving governance efficiency and practices. The research highlighted that when Academic and non-academic both are actively involved in decision-making, there is a notable enhancement in the quality of governance. Despite the existing barriers, such as lack of awareness and administrative resistance, there have been positive trends in collaborative initiatives between faculty and administration, which turns into the institutional growth and achieving the quality deliverables in the innovation and research areas along with quality education.

CASE STUDIES

Implementation of Digital Initiatives

A significant case study highlighting good governance practices in state universities in Gujarat is the implementation of digital case management systems and online citizen grievance portals. These initiatives aim to enhance transparency and efficiency in

university administration, allowing students, faculties, civilians and stakeholders to access services and address grievances more effectively. The use of digital technology streamlines administrative procedure and also fosters a more responsive outcomes for governance framework within these institutions.

EXAMINATION PRACTICES

Another notable example is the collaboration between Gujarat state universities and foreign universities, delivering the excellency in the education. Now, the Gujarat State Universities are first choice for the West African countries (Nigeria, Senegal, Ghana, Burkina, Mali, Benin, Cabo Verde, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, Niger,, Sierra Leone and Togo) to study Law, and Business Management, medical subject and many more. The Gujarat Technological University and Cambridge University, resulting in the introduction of online examination methods such as the Cambridge Placement Test (CPT). This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) underscores the importance of adapting to modern educational practices that enhance assessment quality and accessibility for students. Such initiatives are instrumental in promoting academic integrity and standardizing evaluation processes across universities in the state of Gujarat and benefiting at the global reach out & delivering into the ecosystem development cross boarder too.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Common Public Universities Act of 2023 and sector specific university Act also serves as a foundational case study regarding the regulatory framework governing higher education institutions in Gujarat State. This act was established to oversee the establishment and operation of State universities, ensuring compliance with academic standards and maintaining educational integrity. The effectiveness of this regulatory framework is evident in the successful establishment of 30 State funded Universities and 66 state private universities, which have emerged as significant players in the higher education landscape of Gujarat. These institutions demonstrate that adherence to quality assurance measures and

regulatory guidelines can lead to sustainable growth and excellence in education ecosystem.

GOVERNANCE INNOVATIONS

The Gujarat Governance Model has been recognized for its innovative practices, which have influenced governance reforms at the national level. This model incorporates various strategies aimed at enhancing accountability and service delivery in public sector institutions, including universities. As noted by Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh, many governance innovations initiated in Gujarat have been successfully replicated across India, showcasing the state's role as a leader in governance reforms. This transformation reflects the commitment of state universities to implement best practices that promote good governance and foster a conducive learning environment.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Despite these advancements, challenges remain in achieving optimal governance in state universities. Increased government interference has been cited as a key impediment to the autonomy of educational institutions. It is learnt with the education department and finance department many service-related matters are pending due to the non-availability of rules and regulations with the state universities; however, the power vested with the universities but they are referring the service matters to the government department due to lack of administrative power as government controlling the financial expenditure under their cost cutting policy. This kind of the delay of service matters killing the internal potential of the academics and non-academics and make them liabilities for the government due to their less motivation for promoting education as the lost their satisfactory interest by way of monetary loss to them. To Address governance challenges requires a strong systematic effort from Academician and educationist leaders to balance regulatory framework to implement governance regulations with the need for universities independent demands arises time to time to resolve easily and address with the set of frameworks with statutory policy implementation and decisions. The ongoing dialogue about governance practices indicates

a recognition of the need for continuous improvement in the quality of higher education in Gujarat.

CHALLENGES TO GOOD GOVERNANCE

Good governance practices in state universities, particularly in Gujarat, faces a myriad of challenges that impede effective administration and academic integrity at the verge of individual capacity and single source of leading such as autocratic leadership style kills entire university system. The governance framework often involves a dual authority system, where state governments and governors exert control over university affairs, leading to potential conflicts and inefficiencies. This system can cause delays in critical processes such as the appointment of Vice-Chancellors and faculty, settlement of service matters on time adversely affecting the overall functioning of universities.

POLITICAL INTERFERENCE

The political landscape has significantly impacted the governance of state universities. Governors, who are appointed by the State government, sometimes through act government appointed the famous Industrialist as Chairman of the University, who does not take interest due to their ownability for this kind of allocation of works by the State Government, due to the internal pressure they take charge but not ready to lead from front. Further, the local politician directly interfering in the university management, the Dealing Administrative department does not have mods of operandi to resolve the universities matter on time and lingering the issues long time which kills the university system. Moreover, the involvement of governors or government department officials in the university governance creating disturbance and has historically led to tensions between state administrations and university leadership, complicating the management of these institutions. These leads university to system failure and making non-productive or eco-system driven.

LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND EXPERTISE

Many governors lack the necessary academic qualifications or experience to effectively oversee educational institutions. This can result in reliance on

non-transparent advice and questionable decision-making, further exacerbating governance challenges. The absence of a clear accountability mechanism for governors has also contributed to issues within the governance framework, leading to a situation where university leadership may find themselves catering to conflicting demands from both the state government and the governor's office or government dealing department.

REFORMS AND RESISTANCE

Various commissions have recommended reforms to clarify the roles of governors in university governance, advocating for greater political neutrality and enhanced autonomy for universities. However, these recommendations often face resistance, as seen in ongoing debates about proposed legislative changes that aim to replace traditional governance structures with a centralized board of management. Critics argue that such reforms could stifle academic freedom and eliminate democratic processes within universities, thus threatening the principles of good governance.

RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSIONS

To enhance good governance practices in state universities of Gujarat, several key recommendations have been proposed based on the challenges identified in the existing educational system.

ENHANCING QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

1. **Implement a National Research Policy:** A standardized framework for research and funding mechanisms is essential to improve research quality across universities. This should include promoting collaborative research hubs to encourage interdisciplinary projects and increasing research and development investment to 2% of GDP, aligning with the recommendations from economic surveys.
2. **Improve Access to Research Journals:** Universities should enhance access to high-quality research journals and establish dedicated research funds for state public universities (SPUs) to foster a more vibrant academic environment and encourage scholarly output.

GOVERNANCE AND AUTONOMY

1. **Establish Accountability Mechanisms:** Introduce clear accountability frameworks for both academic and non-academic leaders within the universities. This includes ensuring that all public officials and institutions are held accountable to maintain transparency and efficiency in governance practices and deliver as desired by the system and management.
2. **Enhance Autonomy of Universities:** Move towards granting greater autonomy to state universities, allowing them to make independent decisions regarding academic and administrative matters. This could involve revisiting the roles of chancellors and governors, as previous commissions have suggested, to ensure a supportive rather than authoritative role in university governance.

ADDRESSING PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

1. **Implement Well-Being Initiatives:** Universities should adopt policies that reduce academic pressure and prevent psychological harm to faculty and students. Timely interventions in distress situations are crucial to fostering a healthy academic environment.
2. **Mentorship and Support Systems:** Strengthen mentorship programs and provide adequate support for faculty and students to develop essential employability skills, particularly in communication and practical knowledge, thereby preparing them for industry demands.

In the recent times IITs, NIITs, IIITs & Premium Institutions, it is learnt that the post graduate level universities are setting – Clubs in the name of Sports, Cultural and Personality Development, stage for the student's program etc to promote internal potential of the students and make them readily available for industries through science innovation, research and skill-based practices.

By implementing these recommendations, state universities in Gujarat can work towards improving their governance practices, thereby enhancing the quality of education and research while addressing the needs of students and faculty alike.

REFERENCE

- [1] Adolescent and youth – a concise report. New York: Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division United Nations; 2012. United Nations.
- [2] Bangert-Drowns, Robert L.m and Rudner, Lawrence M. (1991) MetaAnalysis in Educational Research. Practical Assessment, Research and Evaluation. 2(8). Article –B: 1-2.
- [3] Bhatt, P., & Shah, A. (2020). "University Governance and Accountability: Case Studies from Gujarat." *International Journal of Public Administration*, 43(7), 638–649.
- [4] Glass, G.V. (1976). Primary, secondary, and meta-analysis of research. *Educational Researcher*. 1,5: 3-8.
- [5] Joshi, S., & Chavda, H. (2020). "Public Universities and Good Governance: The Gujarat Perspective." *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, 66(2), 180–193.
- [6] Kulik, J.A., & C.-L.C. Kulik (1989). Meta-analysis in education. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 13: 227- 340. Part-1: Meta analytical methodology.
- [7] Lambert, R (2003) Lambert Review of Business-University Collaboration, Final Report London: HMSO.
- [8] Moitra M, Buch R, Damor R. Problem solving skills among adolescents in Surat city: A reality check. *Natl J Community Med*. 2019; 10:571–4.
- [9] Patel, N., & Soni, M. (2020). "The Role of Governance in Enhancing University Competitiveness: A Case Study from Gujarat." *Journal of Business and Management Studies*, 7(3), 205–218.
- [10] Pujar LL, Hunshal SC, Bailur KB. Impact of intervention on life skill development among adolescent girls. *Karnataka J Agric Sci*. 2014; 27:93–4.
- [11] Patel, R., & Kothari, J. (2019). "Governance and Quality Education: The Role of Governance Practices in State Universities in Gujarat." *Journal of Indian Education*, 44(1), 45–61.
- [12] Rahman, M. L. (2016). Governance and Good Governance: A Theoretical Framework. *Public Policy and Administration Research*, 6(10), 40-50. doi:2225-0972.
- [13] Singh, M., & Kumar, R. (2018). "The Role of Good Governance in State Universities: A Comparative Study of Gujarat and Maharashtra." *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 12(4), 213–225.
- [14] Sharma, N., & Mehta, R. (2020). "Autonomy and Accountability in Higher Education: A Case Study of State Universities in Gujarat." *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 48(2), 231–245.
- [15] Shattock, ML and Horvath, A (2023) *Universities and Regions: The impact of locality and region on university governance and strategies* London: Bloomsbury
- [16] Shukla, R., & Desai, P. (2017). "The Challenges of Good Governance in Gujarat's State Universities." *Journal of Higher Education Management*, 24(2), 121–134.
- [17] Sharma, P., & Raval, M. (2021). "Impact of Governance on Institutional Performance: A Case Study of Universities in Gujarat." *Journal of Education and Development*, 13(1), 90–103.
- [18] UGC: https://www.ugc.gov.in/regulations/UGC_Regulations_university