INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, ECONOMICS & MANAGEMENT

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

OBJECTIVES

HYPOTHESIS (ES)

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RESULTS & DISCUSSION

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- Bowersox, Donald J., Closs, David J., (1996), "Logistical Management." Tata McGraw, Hill, New Delhi.

- Hunker, H.L. and A.J. Wright (1963), "Factors of Industrial Location in Ohio" Ohio State University, Nigeria.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO BOOKS

- Sharma T., Kwatra, G. (2008) Effectiveness of Social Advertising: A Study of Selected Campaigns, Corporate Social Responsibility, Edited by David Crowther & Nicholas Capaldi, Ashgate Research Companion to Corporate Social Responsibility, Chapter 15, pp 287-303.

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- Schemenner, R.W., Huber, J.C. and Cook, R.L. (1987), "Geographic Differences and the Location of New Manufacturing Facilities," Journal of Urban Economics, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 83-104.

CONFERENCE PAPERS

- Garg, Sambhav (2011): "Business Ethics" Paper presented at the Annual International Conference for the All India Management Association, New Delhi, India, 19–23

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- Kumar S. (2011): "Customer Value: A Comparative Study of Rural and Urban Customers," Thesis, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra.

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PROMOTING TRANSPARENCY IN UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION THROUGH E-GOVERNANCE

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ABSTRACT

The advances in information and communication technology (ICT) has created opportunities to transform the relationship between universities, students and other stake holders in new ways that contribute to the attainment of good governance. They provide choices for the universities and its stake holders to involve in the process of governance at all levels. They facilitate larger participation and better service delivery, thus making governance more efficient and effective. In addition, e-governance may lower transaction costs both for the university and its stake holders. E-governance presents many avenues for improving administrative transparency and performance efficiency. It has opened up new opportunities for universities to manage things differently and in a more efficient manner by utilizing information and re-engineering the processes. Many universities have launched specific initiatives for transparent administration. Students are being perceived as clients rather than beneficiaries. The Internet revolution has proved to be a powerful tool for student-centric governance of universities. An important dimension of the Internet potential is the possibility of providing educational services anytime, anywhere. This paper investigates the role of e-governance in promoting transparent administration in the universities.

KEYWORDS

transparency, efficiency, e-governance, university administration.

INTRODUCTION

The progress in information and communications technology (ICT) has enhanced effective communication, efficient storage and retrieval of data, as well as exchange of information to its users, be they individuals, groups, organizations or governments. What had begun as a faster, accurate and simpler means of word processing, has gradually lent itself to being used as a tool for processing and tabulating data for decision making. With growing computerization and increased internet connectivity, this process has now reached a stage where more and more users are motivated to change their ways of doing things in order to harness the advantages of technological innovation. In other words, this has led to business process re-engineering. In government organizations, the coming together of computerization and internet connectivity in association with process reengineering, promises better processing of information leading to effective decision making, greater reach, accountability, better utilization of resources and overall good governance. In the case of service users, it holds the promise of enhanced access to government information, efficient service delivery and transparency.

Government organizations are expected to be transparent in their functioning, accountable for their activities and faster in their responses. This has made the use of ICT imperative in any agenda drawn towards achieving good governance. Good governance is generally characterised by participation, transparency and accountability. It has also led to the realization that such technologies could be used to achieve a wide range of objectives and lead to faster and more equitable development with a wider reach. In its Fourth Report entitled 'Ethics in Governance' the second administrative reforms commission of India, had clearly stated that the tools of modern technology such as information and communications technology (ICT) should be used to transform the relationship of the government with its constituents, citizens and businesses, and also between its own agencies. While recognizing the potential of ICT in transforming and redefining processes and systems of governance, the commission had suggested that e-Governance is the logical next step in the use of ICT in governance, in order to ensure wider participation and deeper involvement of citizens, institutions, civil society groups and the private sector in the decision making process of governance (Planning Commission, 2001). Hence the purpose of implementing e-governance is to enhance good governance.

The recent advances in communication technologies provide opportunities to transform the relationship between governments and citizens in a new way, thus contributing to the achievement of good governance goals. The use of information technology can increase the broad involvement of citizens in the process of governance at all levels by providing the possibility of on-line discussion groups, continuous feedback to government and development of effective of pressure groups.

MEANING OF E GOVERNANCE

E-governance or 'electronic governance' is basically the application of information and communication technology(ICT) to the processes of Government functioning in order to bring about 'simple, moral, accountable, responsive and transparent' (SMART) governance. This would generally involve the use of ICTs by government agencies for any or all of the following reasons: (a) exchange of information with citizens, businesses or other government departments (b) speedier and more efficient delivery of public services (c) improving internal efficiency (d) reducing costs / increasing revenue (e) re-structuring of administrative processes and (f) improving quality of services (Gartner, 2000). E-governance is an evolving discipline which is being implemented in different degrees and at different levels across the world. Hence its definition also varies from one organization to another.

According to United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2014), governance refers to the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country's affairs, including citizens' articulation of their interests and exercise of their legal rights and obligations. E-governance may be understood as the performance of this governance via the electronic medium in order to facilitate an efficient, speedy and transparent process of disseminating information to the public, and other agencies, and for performing government administration activities. E-governance is generally considered as a wider concept than e-government, since it can bring about a change in the way how citizens relate to governments and to each other. E-governance can bring forth new concepts of citizenship, both in terms of citizen needs and responsibilities. Its objective is to engage, enable and empower the citizens.

Although the term 'e-Governance' has gained currency in recent years, there is no standard definition of this term. Different organizations have defined it to suit their own aims and objectives. Sometimes, the term 'e-government' is also used instead of 'e-Governance'. According to the World Bank, "E-Government refers to the use by government agencies of information technologies (such as Wide Area Networks, the Internet, and mobile computing) that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government. These technologies can serve a variety of different ends: better delivery of government services to citizens, improved interactions with business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information, or more efficient government management. The resulting benefits can be less corruption, increased transparency, greater convenience, revenue growth, and/or cost reductions (World Bank, 2013). Thus, the stress here is on use of information technologies in improving citizen-government interactions, cost-cutting and generation of revenue and transparency.

E governance means the use by the Government of web-based Internet applications and other information technologies, combined with processes that implement these technologies, to (A) enhance the access to and delivery of Government information and services to the public, other agencies, and other Government entities; or (B) bring about improvements in Government operations that may include effectiveness, efficiency, service quality, or transformation (E-Government Act of 2002). This definition reflects the strategy of the US Government regarding the use of ICT in improving Government operations on the one hand and enhancing the access and delivery of information and services to citizens and government entities on the other.

EVOLUTION OF E-GOVERNANCE

Global shifts towards increased deployment of IT by governments emerged in the nineties, with the advent of the World Wide Web (www). The technology as well as e-governance initiatives have come a long way since then. With the increase in Internet and mobile connections, the citizens are learning to exploit their new mode of access in wide ranging ways. They have started expecting more and more information and services online form governments and corporate organizations to further their civic, professional and personal lives, thus creating abundant evidences that the new 'e-citizenship' is taking hold.

The concept of e-Governance has its origins in India during the seventies with a focus on development of in-house government applications in the areas of defence, economic monitoring, planning and the deployment of IT to manage data intensive functions related to elections, census, tax administration etc. The efforts of the National Informatics Centre (NIC) to connect all the district headquarters during the eighties was a very significant development. From the early nineties, IT technologies were supplemented by ICT technologies to extend its use for wider sectoral applications with policy emphasis on reaching out to the rural areas and taking in greater inputs from NGO's and private sector as well. There has been increasing involvement of international donor agencies under the framework of e-governance for development to catalyze the development of e-governance laws and technologies in developing countries.

While the emphasis has been primarily on automation and computerization, state governments have also endeavoured to use ICT tools into connectivity, net-working, setting up systems for processing information and delivering services. At a micro level, this has ranged from IT automation in individual departments, electronic file handling and workflow systems, access to entitlements, public grievance systems, service delivery for high volume routine transactions such as payments of bills, tax dues to meeting poverty, alleviation goals through the promotion of entrepreneurial models and provisions of market information (Bhatnagar, 2010). The thrust has varied across initiatives, with some focusing on enabling the citizen-state interface for various government services, and others focusing on bettering livelihood. Every state government has taken the initiatives to form an IT task force to outline IT policy document for the state and the citizen charters have started appearing on government websites. For governments, the more overt motivation to shift from manual processes to IT-enabled processes may increased efficiency in administration and service delivery, but this shift can be conceived as a worthwhile investment with potential for returns.

In 1970 the Government of India (GoI) has established Department of Electronics and subsequently in 1977 GoI has taken first major step towards implementation of e-governance by establishment of National Informatics Centre (NIC). By 1980 most of the government offices were equipped with computers but their role was confined to word processing. With the span of time and advent of ICT, the GoI has taken a remarkable step for fostering e-governance by launching the national satellite based network NICNET in 1987, followed by District Information System of the National Informatics Centre (DISNIC). [1] NICNET was the first government informatics network across the world equipped with facilities like TELNET, FTP, and internet along with database services (GISTNIC and MEDLARS). Upto 1990, NICNET has extended its scope from state headquarters to district headquarters. In year 2000, the GoI has established Ministry of Information Technology and identified minimum 12-points minimum agenda for e-governance. Finally, in year 2006 the GoI has launched National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) with various Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) to automate essential mundane tasks.

PHASES OF E-GOVERNANCE

Gartner (2000), an international consultancy firm, has formulated four-phase e-governance model. This can serve as a reference for governments to position where a project fits in the overall evolution of an e-governance strategy. An effort as tremendous as complete realization of e-governance has to be addressed in these phase. This approach would allow for retrospection after each phase, and the ability to retrace steps if required, within a feasible frame of time and money. The design and purpose of each step would have to serve the relevant needs of all G2C, G2B and G2G sectors.

1. **Presence:** This first phase calls for making the intentions and objectives of the government known. Development of an inclusive government website, or a network of sites dedicated to different ministries and departments would set the stage for further advancements. These sites would convey the government's initiatives, providing information such as official addresses, working hours, as well as forms and applications to the public, economic reviews, corporate regulations for business and budgetary allocations and spending as a reference for government agencies. With this first phase, the very critical task of building the infrastructure, such as telecommunications would be undertaken.

2. **Interaction:** This phase would allow for basic interaction with the government. Besides hosting search engines on the sites for easy navigation, information detailing social records and job application forms for the public, permit and license documentation for businesses and census details, submission of requests and approvals to the centre by local government officers would have to be provided. The task of building the underlying infrastructure would have to be sustained through these two stages, allowing for rapid implementation of advanced applications as endorsed by the consequent phases.

3. **Transaction:** This phase onwards would signify direct interaction of the government and relevant entities. With the infrastructure in place, complete online service suites can be put forth for the public, businesses and governmental agencies. Services for the public such as bill and fine payments, license renewal, aggregating opinion etc online procurement tax returns etc for businesses, cooperative budget preparation, tax records, etc., for governmental agencies can be envisaged here.

4. **Transformation:** This final phase would strive to achieve the true vision of e-Governance. A single point of contact to constituent entities would provide an integrated platform for government services and organization totally transparent to citizens and businesses. Focus on 'virtual agencies' where government information is readily available to all allowing a seamless interface to respective agencies involved in the transactions. State-of-the-art Intranets linking government employees in different agencies extranets allowing seamless flow of information thereby facilitating collaborative decisions among government agencies, NGO's and the public.

It is evident that e-Governance is intrinsically linked with the development of computer technology, networking of computers and communication systems. In developing countries, such technologies and systems became available with a perceptible time lag as compared to developed nations. However, in the case of India, with the liberalization of the economy from the early 1990s onwards, there has been a convergence in the availability of cutting edge technologies and opportunities in the field of e-Governance. Generally speaking, the Indian experience demonstrates that the onset of e-Governance proceeded through the following phases (Punith et al, 2014):

(a) *Computerisation:* In the first phase, with the availability of personal computers, a large number of Government offices got equipped with computers. The use of computers began with word processing, quickly followed by data processing.

(b) *Networking:* In this phase, some units of a few government organizations got connected through a hub leading to sharing of information and flow of data between different government entities.

(c) *On-line presence*: With increasing internet connectivity, a need was felt for maintaining a presence on the web. This resulted in maintenance of websites by government departments and other entities. Generally, these web-pages/web-sites contained information about the organizational structure, contact details, reports and publications, objectives and vision statements of the respective government entities.

(d) *On-line interactivity*: A natural consequence of on-line presence was opening up of communication channels between government entities and the citizens, civil society organizations etc. The main aim at this stage was to minimize the scope of personal interface with government entities by providing downloadable Forms, Instructions, Acts, Rules etc. In some cases, this has already led to on-line submission of Forms. Most citizen-government transactions have the potential of being put on e-Governance mode.

TYPES OF INTERACTIONS IN E-GOVERNANCE

E-Governance facilitates interaction between different stake holders in governance. These interactions may be described as follows:

(a) *G2G (Government to Government):* In this case, Information and Communications Technology is used not only to restructure the governmental processes involved in the functioning of government entities but also to increase the flow of information and services within and between different entities. This kind of interaction is only within the sphere of government and can be both horizontal i.e. between different government agencies as well as between different functional areas within an organisation, or vertical i.e. between national, provincial and local government agencies as well as between different levels within an organisation. The primary objective is to increase efficiency, performance and output.

(b) *G2C (Government to Citizens):* In this case, an interface is created between the government and citizens which enables the citizens to benefit from efficient delivery of a large range of public services. This expands the availability and accessibility of public services on the one hand and improves the quality of services on the other. It gives citizens the choice of when to interact with the government (e.g. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week), from where to interact with the government (e.g. service centre, unattended kiosk or from one's home/workplace) and how to interact with the government (e.g. through internet, fax, telephone, email, face-to-face, etc). The primary purpose is to make government, citizen-friendly.

(c) *G2B (Government to Business):* Here, e-Governance tools are used to aid the business community – providers of goods and services – to seamlessly interact with the government. The objective is to cut red tape, save time, reduce operational costs and to create a more transparent business environment when dealing with the government. The G2Binitiatives can be transactional, such as in licensing, permits, procurement and revenue collection. They can also be promotional and facilitative, such as in trade, tourism and investment. These measures help to provide a congenial environment to businesses to enable them to perform more efficiently.

(d) *G2E (Government to Employees):* Government is by far the biggest employer and like any organisation, it has to interact with its employees on a regular basis. This interaction is a two-way process between the organisation and the employee. Use of ICT tools helps in making these interactions fast and efficient on the one hand and increase satisfaction levels of employees on the other.

BENEFITS OF E-GOVERNANCE

In the end, e-Governance is about reform in governance, facilitated by the creative use of Information and Communications Technology. It is expected that this would lead to (OECD, 2003):

(a) *Better access to information and quality services for citizens*: ICT would make available timely and reliable information on various aspects of governance. In the initial phase, information would be made available with respect to simple aspects of governance such as forms, laws, rules, procedures etc later extending to detailed information including reports (including performance reports), public database, decision making processes etc. As regards services, there would be an immediate impact in terms of savings in time, effort and money, resulting from online and one-point accessibility of public services backed up by automation of back end processes. The ultimate objective of e-Governance is to reach out to citizens by adopting a life-cycle approach i.e. providing public services to citizens which would be required right from birth to death.

(b) *Simplicity, efficiency and accountability in the government:* Application of ICT to governance combined with detailed business process reengineering would lead to simplification of complicated processes, weeding out of redundant processes, simplification in structures and changes in statutes and regulations. The end result would be simplification of the functioning of government, enhanced decision making abilities and increased efficiency across government – all contributing to an overall environment of a more accountable government machinery. This, in turn, would result in enhanced productivity and efficiency in all sectors.

(c) *Expanded reach of governance*: Rapid growth of communications technology and its adoption in governance would help in bringing government machinery to the doorsteps of the citizens. Expansion of telephone network, rapid strides in mobile telephony, spread of internet and strengthening of other communications infrastructure would facilitate delivery of a large number of services provided by the government. This enhancement of the reach of government – both spatial and demographic – would also enable better participation of citizens in the process of governance.

Good governance is fundamental and e-governance is instrumental. No e-governance tool can be successful without focusing attention to process reforms for good governance. Good governance dictates the design and shape of e-tools for improving governance outcomes and processes. E-governance can be an effective and efficient tool for good governance if and only the process reforms have been carried out (Manuel, 2010). One of the principal objectives of is the extensive use of IT within the process of governance for providing better citizen services and for enhancing efficiency, transparency and accountability of Government departments. Simplification of rules and procedures has been an important area for the use of ICT.

E GOVERNANCE IN EDUCATIONAL SECTOR

E-Governance solutions in educational sector incorporates the latest technology to bring systems that combine administrative and university management functions, necessary for successful handling of all issues relating to the academic affairs and the challenges for smooth functioning of educational institution. Through implementation of e-governance in every unit of an academic institution, the real time information processing and knowledge management of the institution is made possible. E-governance solution is an integrated solution that facilitates the processing and maintenance of large volumes of information, including student, faculty, inventory management, facility management, transport, library, staff details, and payroll and accounts among various departments in an academic institution (Sudeep S & Angshu M.S,. 2013).

It generates and maintains whole data and processes of an educational Institution into a unified system, making the process uncomplicated, well-organized and error proof. The solutions are designed to make the system user-friendly, quick and economical (Dlamini, 2008). Many of them are flexible enough to adapt to the changing educational environment. Educational institutions may have various requirements that include computerization and management of processes such as registration, admission, student information, class time table, transport, attendance, library, salary and expenses, examinations, performance, grades, hostels, security and reports. Many of the software providers allow their clients to choose from the available modules to meet their needs (Ashok, 2009).

The Mission of the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) of Government of India, is to focus on education sector that provide greater opportunities of access to higher education with equity to all eligible persons and in particular to the vulnerable sections. It can be extended to various existing institutions, and upcoming institutions supported by State Governments and non-government organizations to supplement public efforts aimed at removing regional or other imbalances that exist at present (Kalyan, 2011). The plan can initiate policies and programs for strengthening research and innovations and encourage institutions to engage in developing the frontiers of knowledge. NeGP can promote the quality of higher education by investing infrastructure and faculty, promoting academic reforms, improving governance and institutional restructuring.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

E governance in higher education institutions like universities has tremendous potential to bring transparency, efficiency, economy and accessibility. Understanding the e-governance practices in universities not only helps in knowing the current status but also to identify the areas of concern and the way forward for improvement. Indian education sector happens to be the third largest globally. Government of India has taken many steps for encouraging the usage of ICT in the education sector. E-governance and education is an institutional thinking that seeks to entrust in building, managing and sustaining students, teachers, and administrators for achieving the larger benefits of e-governance system.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study explores the following parameters of e-governance in the universities. In this age of electronic communication, universities should display all its information (which is not confidential) on the website so that any member of the general public in need, can have access to such information. Such information will educate the members of general public, to help them understand the worth of the university. It is also important that universities should display all the student

centric information in the website, like names of the courses, fees structure, admission procedure, learning methodologies, evaluation criteria etc. The study has examined the nature and extent of university information displayed in their websites from various perspectives like, sufficiency, accuracy and accessibility. Display of adequate and accurate information actually promotes transparency in governance.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY
Since major part of the data was collected through the use of mailed questionnaire and discussions, it is possible that some respondents may not have given accurate data as they have not been able to understand some of the questions correctly. The study is based on the information collected only from the service providing organizations i.e. the universities. The perspectives of service users like, students, staff members and regulating bodies was not obtained due to con-straints of time and resources.

METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH
This study is exploratory in nature, since there has not been enough research in the past. The available literature on the subject is revived thoroughly by visiting reputed libraries across India. The material sources available online through Ebsco and JGate are also made use of. Detailed discussions were held with over 50 subject matter experts to understand the research problem and appropriateness of research methodology. Based on the insights gained through the review of literature and expert discussion the research gaps were identified. The data shared by subject matter experts was cross validated by online verification of university information displayed in the university web sites of sampled universities.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS
Major part of the university education in India is under the control of either central or state universities or under deemed universities funded by the government. But the e-governance measures taken by these universities are at different levels. This study therefore explores the e-governance practices of universities and their implications for the stakeholders in providing, transparency in governance. Hence the authors of this paper have explored the implementation of e-govern-ance, in 50 randomly selected universities in Karnataka state of India. The following research questions were framed for this purpose.
1) Whether the university has displayed all the *administrative* information in its website, for the benefit of general public. For this purpose, all the information that can be revealed under the Right to Information Act 2005 is used as a bench mark.
2) Whether the university has displayed all the *academic* information in its website for the benefit of students. For this purpose, all the information that can be revealed under the Right to Information Act 2005 is used as a bench mark.

TABLE NO. 1: NUMBER OF UNIVERSITIES WHO HAVE DISPLAYED ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION ON THEIR WEBSITES

Type of university	Details of administrative staff			Details of students			Details of revenues			Details of Expenses		
	Lack of information	Insufficient information	Outdated information	Lack of information	Insufficient information	Outdated information	Lack of information	Insufficient information	Outdated information	Lack of information	Insufficient information	Outdated information
State	0	6	7	11	2	0	11	2	1	11	2	1
Central	0	3	9	6	6	0	0	10	2	0	10	2
Deemed universities funded by govt	0	7	6	4	8	0	0	8	4	0	8	4
Private	0	6	8	2	11	0	12	0	0	12	0	0
Total	0	22	28	23	27	0	23	20	7	23	20	7

MAJOR FINDINGS
Administrative information: In the matter of displaying information about administrative staff, 41% universities have displayed insufficient information and 59% have displayed outdated information, which is more fully described in table No. 1. As regards students' information 47% of the universities have displayed insuffi-cient information and 53% have displayed outdated information.
With respect to financial matters about revenue generation, 46% universities have not displayed, 41% have displayed insufficient information and 13% have displayed outdated information. As regards expenditure details, 46% of the universities have not displayed, 41% have displayed insufficient information and 13% have displayed outdated information.

TABLE NO. 2: NUMBER OF UNIVERSITIES WHO HAVE DISPLAYED ACADEMIC INFORMATION ON THEIR WEBSITES

Type of university	Details of the academic pro-grammes			Details of faculty and their ex-pertise			Details of facilities available for education and research		
	Lack of information	Insufficient information	Outdated information	Lack of information	Insufficient information	Outdated information	Lack of information	Insufficient information	Outdated information
State	2	9	1	2	8	4	1	9	3
Central	3	7	2	2	9	1	0	10	3
Deemed universities funded by govt	0	9	4	2	8	2	0	11	0
Private	0	10	3	3	8	1	0	12	0
Total	5	35	10	9	33	8	1	42	7

Academic information: 9% of the universities have not displayed their academic programmes, 72% have displayed insufficient information and 18% have displayed outdated information which is more fully described in table No.2. As regards faculty details, 18% of the universities have not displayed the details of faculty members and their expertise, 67% have displayed insufficient information and 15% have displayed outdated information. In the matter of academic facilities, 2%

of the universities have not displayed the facilities available for education and research, 85% have displayed insufficient information and 13% have displayed outdated information.

CONCLUSION

Universities are supposed to be doing good work and hence there should be nothing to hide. They should keep their administration open for scrutiny by the public. Such a move will enhance public confidence and usher in good governance. But it can be seen from the above data that most of the universities in India have not even thought about bringing transparency in their administration. Hence major part of the administration, whether it is government or private universities, is shrouded in mystery. In the case of Government Universities at least people can seek information under the Right to Information Act 2005, but private Universities are immunised from revealing any information. Truth and openness in globalised economy enhances brand equity. Thus universities should strive to change towards transparent administration in their own interest to become the best and the sooner they do the better they will be.

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