

Tool for Enterprise Wide Management of Educational Institutions

Srijat Mishraⁱ

I. Education is one of the largest Industries

Education is one of India's prime Industries. While its contribution to nation building is well known and widely reported, its importance in terms commercial value is less appreciated. Education industry is estimated to be more than Rs. 20,000 crore and this figure is more than the size of the domestic software industry or the automobile industry.

Apart from being among the largest sectors, education sector is also among the fastest growing sectors of the country. With the enviable combination, of large size and high growth, no wonder education sector is among the most attractive industry sectors in the country today.

II. Growing Complexity of Educational Institutes

With the stupendous growth of the education sector, educational institutions are becoming increasingly complex organizations. They are no longer institutions limited to education delivery. Educational institutes are confronted with managing a wide range of activities encompassing marketing of institutes to students for admissions and corporate for placements, managing internal operations (like smooth conducting of classes or recruitment and motivation of the human resource viz. faculty and staff), sophisticated financial and cash flow planning, co-ordination with regulatory & statutory authorities etc. In addition, to all that, educational institutes are also subject to the vagaries of market forces due to stiff competition and demanding customers (read students and corporate).

III. Educational Institutes Need Sophisticated Management Tools

Thus in today's world an educational institute is no less complex than a fledging corporate house. Therefore it goes without saying that educational institutes deserve the best in term of modern management practices and state-of-the-art technology for managing their internal and external operations.

In these days of information overdrive, what is most critical is an efficient Management Information System (MIS) that facilitates cost reduction, responsive & effective decisions and brand image enhancement. No wonder, most progressive corporate spend heavily in beefing up their MIS.

Nowadays most large organizations (across industry sectors) have taken to intensive automation of work processes and have reaped significant improvements in process performance, in terms of cost, speed and accuracy. Surprisingly, education sector (especially in India) has somewhat lagged behind in this automation drive. Probably because of, hitherto, the absence of comprehensive ERP solutions for education institutes.

IV. Options for Institute Automation

The software industry has started to recognize, albeit slowly, the latent demands of the educational institute. A few companies, ranging from proprietary garage companies to reputed international, have come up to fill this need.

While it is a very welcome development, that many software companies have started developing specific automation solutions for education administration. The institute should be careful in choosing a product which has a good client base and which comes from a company that has demonstrated competency in understanding education industry. The company should have top end professionals who can design, develop, test and implement and product of this nature.

A few things to be kept in mind while choosing education ERP:

- **Integrated Software:** Need to go for comprehensive automation products which integrates all the activities (admission, library, payments, hostels, student registration etc) into one data base and MIS
- **Internet Based Product:** In today's world, web enabled technology is always preferred as it can give parents access to students information from home and also gives management access to important information from remote locations.
- **Multi User:** A multi-user solution is preferred as compared to software that has restricted use only for office administration staff. This is avoidable as information usage is sub-optimal.
- **Decision Support System:** A system should provide a decision support system and not mere automation, as only though decision support system one can reap process gains and cost reduction benefits.

V. e-IMS Fills the Void

One of the leading educational institute automation products in the Indian market is e-IMS – An Educational Institute ERP. As the name suggests **e-IMS or e Institute Management System** is a **Web enabled Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software for educational and training institutes**. Some of the key features of the product are:

- Facilitates automation of all key processes of an institute and forms the backbone of a comprehensive MIS.
- Encompasses and integrates all three pillars of an institutes activity – i.e. academic, administrative and finance.
- Addresses the information and data processing needs of all the partners of an institute – viz. students, teachers, parents, support staff and management.
- Access through the internet enables wider and convenient usage.

More than 20,000 hours have been devoted to the design, development, testing and implementation of e-IMS. It is arguably the most comprehensive product in the realm of institute automation. e-IMS has been designed to meet the unique needs of Indian educational institutes. e-IMS endeavors to bring to the door step of Indian educational institutes, international quality products at affordable prices.

GrapeVyn Technologies International Pte, Singapore (GrapeVyn) had initially developed and implemented **GrapeVyn Education Management System (GEMS)**

in South East Asia and Australia. Subsequently, GEMS was redesigned **Kalinga Software Private Limited (KSPL), Bhubaneswar** and **GrapeVyn** for Indian markets and renamed e-IMS. e-IMS and GEMS together boast of a client base of more than two dozen institutes in India and South East Asia.

ⁱ Mr. Srijat Mishra is the CEO of Kalinga Software Private Limited (KSPL). KSPL focuses on educational technology, including educational institute ERPs. The views of the author are his own and do not necessarily reflect that of his organization. He may be contact at srijat@kalingasoft.com for further discussions.