

Issues and Challenges of Higher Education in India



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Abstract

The vision of higher education in India is to realize the - Country's human resources potential to its fullest with equity and inclusion. The Indian higher education system is the third largest in the world, next to the United States and China. Since Independence India has been continuously progressing in the education field. Although there have been a lot of challenges to the higher education system of India but equally have a lot of opportunities to overcome these challenges and to make the higher education system much better. It needs greater transparency and accountability, the role of colleges and universities in the heat of the new millennium, and emerging Scientific research and how people learn is of utmost importance. India needs well skilled and highly educated people who can drive our economy forward. India provides highly skilled people to other countries therefore; it is very easy for India to transfer our country from a developing nation to a developed nation.

The present paper holds an immediate significance of creating awareness of many issues of concern to be taken care of by the stakeholders in the national as well as the global levels. The study is also unique in the sense that it brings about a better understanding of the present scenario in the higher education system in the country and its pattern of growth given the opportunities and challenges to the system under consideration. The present study throws a gainful insight on financing schemes and enrolment aspects of higher education in India.

Keywords: - Higher education Opportunities and challenges, Enrolment, Privatization.

Introduction

The vision of higher education in India is to realize the country's human resources potential to its fullest with equity and inclusion, the nation has embarked upon Initiating a number of developments linked strategies to promote higher education. As a result of which the higher education sector, in recent decades, has witnessed a tremendous growth in many aspects such as its institutional capacity, enrolment teacher-student ratio etc. The rapid expansion of the higher education system as a whole has brought severe pertinent issues related to equity, efficiency, excellence and access to higher education in the country.

India's Higher Education sector has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of universities/ University level Institution & Colleges since Independence. The Right to Education Act which stipulates compulsory and free education to all children within the age group of 6-14 years, has brought about a revolution in the education system to all countries with statistics revealing a staggering enrolment in school over the last four years nine to ten years. The involvement of private sector in higher education has been drastic changes in the field. This was accelerated establishment of institutes which have originated over the last decade making India home to the largest number of

Higher education institutions in the world with student enrolments at the Second highest. Despite these numbers, International education rating agencies have not placed many of these institutions within the best of the world Ranking. Also, India has failed to produce world class Universities.

Nowadays knowledge is power. The more knowledge one has the more empowered one is. However, India continues to face stern challenges. Despite growing investment in education, 25 percent of its population is still illiterate, only 15 percent of Indian students reach high school, and just 7 percent graduate. The quality of education in India whether at primary or higher education is significantly poor as compared to major developing nations of the world.

This paper presents a bird's eye view of the structure and salient features of higher education sector prevalent in India. An attempt has also been made in this paper to discuss the trends in the growth of enrolment and funding of higher education in India.

Description of the problem

During the colonial era in India, education was consciously kept away from development agenda and the Universities established at that time were on the pattern of the University of London and they were basically affiliating, examining and

regulating bodies. In an attempt to remove the infirmities of these inherited structures Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-49) and Kothari Commission (1964-66) were appointed and their reports formed the base for New Education policy (1986) and programme of Action (1992) adorned with broad goals such as enhancement of the student enrolment provision for equal access to all, quality education and promotion of relevant education.

However, the basic problems facing higher education in the country includes. Inadequate infrastructure and facilities, large vacancies in faculty positions, low student enrolment rate, outdated teaching method, declining research standards, unmotivated students, overcrowded classrooms and widespread geographic, ethnic and social - economic imbalances.

In response to the social need of empowerment and capacity building through post-Secondary education, the number of higher education institutions in India has multiplied with an increase in the number of students. But the growth in terms of improvement is yet to be spotted in the country.

Moreover, structural adjustment in the reform policies of the Government pressurized the higher education institutions to become economically viable. It reshaped higher education as a commodity to meet growing demand in the midst of socio-economic, cultural, and geographical barriers for people who wish to pursue higher education. In the absence of proper information on the relevant aspects of higher education, it is not possible to take a stock of the past achievements and ensure future development of this sector. It is in this background; the present paper relies on the outcomes of the reviews and reports of various government and non-government agencies.

Objectives of the Paper

- Assess the higher education System in India.
- To study specific issues of Higher education.
- To know the growth of Higher education in India.
- To suggest measures to overcome the issues related to enrolment of higher education.

Methodology: -The Present paper is a descriptive study, based on Secondary data from the published and unpublished records, reports and contribution of several institutions, organizations and individuals in India. Specifically, the Secondary sources and other journals, books and Websites. These Secondary sources have obvious limitations of sampling and

dimensional studies the present study I analysis of Issues and challenges in higher education in India

Issues And Challenges in Higher Education

In at least some 30 years, Higher Education in India faces problems ranging from income and gender disparities in enrolment, to poor quality of faculty and teaching and even to a general lack of motivation and interest amongst students. Industries cite skill shortage as one major factor contributing to the mounting number of unemployed graduates. Some of the main challenges faced by the Indian higher education system include.

Enrolment: As per the All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) report 2018-2019, the Cross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in Higher Education in India is only 26.3% which is quite low compared to the development as well as other developing countries. With the increase of enrolment at school level, the Supply of higher education institutes is insufficient to meet the growing demand in the country. The population that is enrolled in higher education consists largely of Urban metropolitan dwellers. Rural enrolment in higher education is very low. There still exists a disparity amongst different departments Technology, medicine and commerce are some of the areas of study that are heavily male-dominated while humanities departments show the opposite trend.

Quality: Ensuring quality in higher education is amongst the foremost challenges being faced in India today. However, the Government is continuously focusing on quality education. Still a large number of colleges and universities in India are unable to meet the minimum requirement laid down by the UGC and our universities are not in a position to mark their place among the top universities of the world.

Funding And Financing: The inability of the state to fund the expanding higher education system has resulted in the rapid growth of private higher education. In addition, diminished governmental financing support adversely affects small and rural educational institutions. This in turn limits general accessibility to higher education, by catering to only an elite few.

Shortage of Qualified faculty: Faculty shortage and the inability of the state educational system to attract and retain well qualified teachers have been posing challenges to quality education for many years. Large numbers of qualified candidates are unemployed even though there are a lot of vacancies in higher education.

Lack of facilities and Infrastructure: Poor infrastructure is another challenge to the higher education system of India, particularly the institutes run by the public sector suffer from a lack of physical facilities and infrastructure. Faculty shortage and the inability of the state educational system to attract and retain well-qualified teachers have been posing challenges to quality education for many years. Large numbers of NET/PhD candidates are unemployed even though there are a lot of vacancies in higher education.

Equity - There is no equity in GER among different seats of the society According to previous Studies the GER in higher education in India among male and female varies to a greater extent. There are regional variations too. Some states have high GER while Some is quite behind the National GER which reflect a significant, in balances within the higher Education System.

Political inter interference: Most of the educational Institutions are owned by the political leaders, who are playing key roles in governing bodies of the universities. They are using innocent students for their Selfish means. Students organize. Campaigns, forget their own objectives and begin to develop their career in politics.

Research And Innovation: There are very nominal scholars in our country whose writing is cited by famous western authors. There is inadequate focus on research in higher education institutes. There are insufficient researches scholars are without fellowships or hat getting fellowships on time which directly or indirectly affects their research. Moreover, Indian Higher education institutions are poorly connected to research centres. So, this is another area of challenge to higher education in India.

Accreditation: As per the date provided by the NAAC, as of June 2010, "not even 25% of the total higher education institutions in the country were accredited. And among those accredited, only 30% of the university and 45% of the colleges were found to be of quality to be ranked at 'A' level".

Lack of Flexibility: Lack of flexibility to students in selection of the courses and subject of their choice is also a big issue faced by the Indian higher Education system.

Imbalanced growth in higher education Sector: Higher education sector suffers from imbalanced growth across the county The rural area, which represents about 68.84% of total

population, has just 20% of the total professional colleges.

Inadequate financial support: One of the key issues of higher education is a shortcoming of financial strength. There is a serious problem of inadequate and diminishing financial support from government and society for higher education in India.

No Project based Learning and poor focus on research: Just Theory is not enough for young graduates to need to learn vocational skills. And Research in higher education institutions is at its lowest ebb. India's priorities for research and innovation should be conditioned by our socio-economic realities.

Huge demand and supply gap: There is a huge demand for getting admission. in some particular institutes while other colleges and universities lament about the vacant seats of the college. There are also some courses for which demand is in excess of the available Seats while there is & excess capacity in others.

Quota System: Debating quota System is very controversial. But if we are being honest then I must say the quota is not good for higher education. Talent and merit is more important than any one identity.

Other challenges: - Many more Challenges faced by higher education in India are related with poor Infrastructure of institutions, overcrowded classrooms, traditional and outmoded methods of teaching, political interference etc.

Suggestions To meet The Challenges

Provision of adequately trained and qualified faculty: Student teacher ratio must be brought up to an ideal level and all faculties must possess adequate qualifications and training before taking up education.

Less Political interference: There Should be less political interference In universities and colleges. It should be politics free.

Privatization of Higher Education: Privatization of higher education is very necessary in a vast country like India as the government is helpless. Adoption of PPP (Public, private partnership) model can be a possible solution to many problems faced by higher education in India.

Make Curriculum dynamic not dogmatic: The curriculum or the syllabus for students in our country in higher education is outdated in most cases. To infuse dynamism, we need the curriculum to be progressive in nature.

High- tech libraries: Universities, colleges must have a very good collection. of books. A Library must be online. and conducive for serious study.

Enable better funding for institutions: The Government must provide sufficient autonomy and funding for all institutions.

Promote Professional courses in higher education: There is a need to focus on graduate Students by providing them such courses in which they can achieve excellence, gain deeper knowledge of subject so that they will jobs after recruitment in the companies which would reduce unnecessary rush to the higher education.

Higher Education Institute should be open in rural area sector: The Government must ensure proper physical access to rural sectors and emphasis on construction of higher education institutions in closer proximity to villages.

Coming of Information Age: The world is entering into an information Age and Developments in Communication; information and technology will open up new and cust effective approaches for providing the reach of higher education to the youth.

Student-centered Education and Dynamic Methods: Methods of higher education also have to be appropriate to the needs of learning to learn, learning to do, learning to be and learning to become student centered education and employment of dynamic methods of education will require from teachers' new attitudes and new skills.

To Provide Need Bated Job oriented Courses: All round development of personality is the purpose of education but the present-day Education is neither imparting true knowledge of life and nor improving the talent of a student by which one can achieve laurels in the field one is interested in. So, combination of arts subjects and computer science and science and humanities or literature should be introduced so that such courses could be useful for the students to do jobs after recruitment in some companies which would reduce unnecessary rush to higher education.

International Cooperation: Universities in India have been Primary conduit for the advancement and transmission of knowledge through traditional functions such as research innovation, teaching, human resource development, and continuing education. International Cooperation is gaining importance as yet another function." With the increased development of transport and communication, the global village is witnessing a growing

emphasis on international Cooperation and action to find satisfactory Solutions to problems.

Cross- Culture programmers: After education, a tour to all the places in India and world as far as possible with the cooperation of government is necessary, so that one can understand about people, culture, art literature, religions, technological developments and progress of human Society in the world.

Individuality: This is mainly due to parental interference in the education of the children. parental guidance is necessary but it should interfere in the creativity or individuality of the students. Higher education is necessary for one to achieve excellence in the line one is best. But one should be selected four higher educations on the basis of merit only. Further fees for education in general should not be high, especially the fees for higher studies should be within the reach of every class of people in the nation.

World class Education: India Should aspire for the international Standard in education. Many Universities like in the USA, UK, Australia etc allow studies in higher education for foreign students in their countries and through correspondence courses as well. To achieve that goal, it should adopt uniform international syllables in its educational Institutions.

Stipends to Research Fellows: The number of PhDs from Indian Universities should increase with proper standards. This should be seen in the extremely low fraction of PhDs in India in relation to M.Sc. cy compared to what it is in the USA, UK, Germany, & Japan etc. Meritor doctoral students should be recognizing through teaching assistantships with stipends over and above the research fellowship Identifying talented meritorious students and encouraging them through recognition is very important to attract students into research and teaching.

Examination Reforms: Examination Reforms, gradually shifting from the terminal, annual and semester examinations to regular and continuous assessment of student's performance in learning should be implement.

To increase Quantity of Universities: We need more universities because there are more in number and present number of universities is too less.

Fair Quality Assurance System: Colleges and private institutes should set up Internal Quality Assurance cells and must follow a minimum standard to give degrees. The quality assurance system must be Independent of political and operational, financial and academic autonomy

coupled with accountability. **Personality Development:** Finally, Education should be for the flowering of personality but not for the suppression of creativity or natural skill. In the globalized world, opportunities for the educated people are naturally ample in scope. As a result of the business process. Outsourcing (BPO) activities have increased competition in world trade leading towards the production of quality goods and their easy availability everywhere in the world market.

Conclusion

India is today one of the fastest developing countries of the world with annual growth rate above 9%. In order to sustain that growth, there is need to talk about problems of higher education in India and highlight so that government can resolve them. Now the time has come to relook at the financial resources, access and equity, quality Standard, relevance properly to reach and achieve the future requirements We need higher educated people who are skilled and drive our Indian economy forward. Only then can we transfer our country for action to a developed nation.

According to Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi. The time has come to create a second wave! institution building and of excellence in the fields of education, research and capability building, we need an educational system that is modern, liberal and can adapt to the change needs of a Changing Society a changing economy and a changing world. The thrust of public policy for higher education In India has to be to address these challenges, we will be able to match and compete with other countries and the dream to be the world's greatest economy would be difficult to achieve.

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