

EMERGING ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF HIGHER EDUCATIONS IN INDIA

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Abstract

India's higher education system is the world's third largest in terms of students, next to China and the United States. Unlike China, however, India has the advantage of English being the primary language of higher education and research. India educates approximately 11 per cent of its youth in higher education as compared to 20 per cent in China. The main governing body at the tertiary level is the UGC (University Grants Commission) in India, which enforces its standards, advises the government, and helps coordinate between the centre and the state. Universities and its constituent colleges are the main institutes of higher education in India. Higher education makes individual free from ignorance and superstitions, it is the directive to bridge the knowledge gap between countries and communities enriching dialogues between people, culture, international living and networking of ideas, research and technologies. It is the quality of higher education that decides the quality of human resources of the country.

This paper highlights the issues and challenges which are the real hindrances for harmonious development in higher education system and the suggestions for overcoming it because the quality higher education can only eliminate the root of the problems.

Key words – Higher Education, challenges, issues, Quality, human resource etc.



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INTRODUCTION

Higher education is education provided by universities, colleges, and other institutions that award academic degrees. It includes both the undergraduate (i.e., college) and the graduate (or postgraduate) levels. Higher education also includes most professional education and is strongly vocationally or professionally oriented. It differs from other forms of post-secondary (after high school) education such as vocational education.

Hence Higher education is a powerful tool to build knowledge - based society. It is considered one of the important instruments for the development of any country. Primary

education is necessary for creating base while higher education is extremely important for providing cutting edge. Higher education encompasses teaching, research and applied work, training, imparted as undergraduate, postgraduate or vocational degree programs . The goal of higher education is to develop the younger people of the country in such a manner that they not only have a satisfying personal life but can also make a worthy contribution to the progress of the society to which they belong. Higher educational institutions provide the necessary trained and educated manpower required for the development and implementation of various programmes needed for the growth and development of nation. Therefore development of higher education is of utmost significance for the growth and development of a country, especially a developing country like India.

NEED OF THE STUDY

The National policy of Education (1986) defines Education in terms of empowerment of men through Knowledge. It is no wonder why the former president A.P.J.Abdul Kalam emphasizes on the fact that if India is to keep pace with other developed countries it has to create a knowledge society. Whereas the educational institutions are being reformed, restructured and re-engineered to meet the new challenges in the developed and fast developing countries. India has not yet come out of its conventional and colonial way of imparting education. For the creation of a knowledge society knowledge cannot remain within the custody of selected individuals, rather people should be open to more information and knowledge. Higher education plays an important role to bring about a transformation in the society. In the wake of globalization where higher education in India is facing so many challenges to come up to the International standard.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To know the current scenario of higher education in India
2. To identify the issues and challenges.

METHODOLOGY

The study is based on secondary data collected from reputed articles of research journals, books, websites magazines, etc. The study is all about to focus on higher educational scenario in India.

Issues in Indian higher education:

After more than 70 years of independence, India's higher education system has still not been developed fully. It is evidenced by its poor performance in institutional rankings (not a single Indian university in top 100 universities of the world), the poor employment

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status of its students, poor track record in receiving national awards and recognition, poor share in research funding and so on.

Today, 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 per cent of its population is still illiterate; only 15 per cent of Indian students reach high school, and just 7 per cent graduate (Masani, 2008). The quality of education in India whether at primary or higher education is significantly poor as compared to major developing nations of the world. As of 2008, India's post-secondary institutions offer only enough seats for 7 per cent of India's college-age population, 25 per cent of teaching positions nationwide are vacant, and 57 per cent of college professors lack either a master's or PhD degree (Newsweek, 2011). As of 2011, there are 1522 degree-granting engineering colleges in India with an annual student intake of 582,000 (Science and Technology Education, 2009) plus 1,244 polytechnics with an annual intake of 265,000. However, these institutions face shortage of faculty and concerns have been raised over the quality of education (Mitra, 2008). Despite these challenges higher education system of India equally have lot of opportunities to overcome these challenges and have the capability to make its identity at international level. However, it needs greater transparency and accountability, the role of universities and colleges in the new millennium, and emerging scientific research on how people learn is of utmost important. 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 commonly stated reasons for these observations are:-

Enrollment

According to the All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) report 2018-19, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in Higher education in India is only 26.3%, which is quite low as compared to the developed as well as, other developing countries. With the increase of enrollments at the school level, the supply of higher education institutes is insufficient to meet the growing demand in the country.

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 requirements laid down by the UGC and our universities are not in a position to mark their place among the top universities of the world.

Poor Infrastructure and Facilities

Poor infrastructure is another challenge to the higher education system of India; particularly the institutes run by the public sector suffer from poor physical facilities and infrastructure. Faculty shortages 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.

Inadequate Research

There is inadequate focus on research in higher education institutes. There are insufficient resources and facilities, as well as limited numbers of quality faculty to advise students.

Most of the research scholars are without fellowships or not getting their fellowships on time which directly or indirectly affects their research. Moreover, Indian Higher education institutions are poorly connected to research centres and to industries.

Poor Governance Structure

Management of Indian education faces challenges of over-centralization, bureaucratic structures and lack of accountability, transparency, and professionalism. As a result of the increase in the number of affiliated colleges and students, the burden of administrative functions of universities has significantly increased and the core focus on academics and research is diluted.

As India strives to compete in a globalised economy in areas that need highly skilled professionals, the quality of higher education becomes increasingly important. So far, India's large, educated population base and its reservoir of at least moderately well trained university graduates have aided the country in moving ahead, but the competition is severe. A stunning 86 per cent of Indian students in the fields of science and technology who obtain degrees in the United States do not return home immediately following their graduation. The present system of higher education does not serve the purpose for which it has been started. In general education itself has become so profitable a business that quality is lost in the increase of quantity of professional institutions with quota system and politicization adding fuel to the fire of spoil system, thereby increasing unemployment of graduates without quick relief to mitigate their sufferings in the job market of the country. So, the drawbacks of the higher education system underscore the need for reforms to make it worthwhile and beneficial to all concerned.

There is clearly a lack of educated educators and teaching is not an attractive profession. It's a last choice in terms of career. Number of Ph.D produced each year is very low and those required by academia is far higher. In fact, at many institutions fresh graduates are employed to teach, leading to poor quality of classroom instruction. Most observers of higher education in India feel that performance of higher education institutions has been less than satisfactory in terms of access, equity and quality. Now there is an urgent need to work for the development of the educational sector to meet the need of the emerging opportunities, increasing younger generation population and challenges of the 21st century.

Challenges of higher education system in India

From the time when we have got independence we are facing challenges to establish a great and strong education system. India can no longer continue the model of general education as it has been persisting in for the large bulk of the student population. Rather, it requires a major investment to make human resource productive by coupling the older general disciplines of humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and commerce to their applications in the new economy and having adequate field based experience to enhance knowledge with skills and develop appropriate attitudes.

Concepts of access, equity, relevance and quality can be operationalised only if the system is both effective and efficient. Hence, the management of higher education and the total networking of the system has become an important issue for effective management. The shift can occur only through a systemic approach to change as also the development of its human resource, and networking the system through information and communication technology.

There are so many people in various parts of country which are still out of reach. This is when we have emphasized more on our education programs and made our system reachable to all areas. Government has to rethink on these areas to implement more on the policies. Money also plays a vital role for the education system which needs to unique for all globally recognized syllabus and curricula. Take a look on our constitution which says that this is the responsibility of central and state government to build good education system. For that we need to have funds. But despite there was a large expenditure on the funds every year on Education where the fund goes and our system remains intact. There is a great need to revolution in higher education. These are just some challenges which should cover all the aspects in the present scenario of education and we have to implement hard on them.

Conclusion

The problems facing higher education are coming at the sector fast and furious, and from all angles. Multiple books would be needed (and have been published) that attempt to address some or all of these challenges. This brief paper aims neither to be comprehensive nor to suggest solutions to these vexing challenges; rather, it's only goal is to offer a simple framework that might help leaders simplify, focus, and assess the challenges in their own contexts. Ultimately, we need for our rich diverse ecosystem of colleges and universities, public policy makers, and the organizations that support and partner in their work, to be positioned to defend, protect and sustain higher education's extremely important role as a trusted source of knowledge, education, and freedom of inquiry.

Higher education in India has suffered and also suffering a lot in the wake of liberalization, privatization and globalization. The educational institutions have to take care of imparting an education that adds value to students' personality and not merely providing degrees. Higher education in India should be focused on sustainable use of resources – ecological, cultural and human. With so many challenges it's high time to bring about necessary changes.

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