

CURRENT ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA: A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

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Abstract:

Education is one of the significant factors instrument to the development of a country. India's higher education system is the world's largest in terms of students, next to China and the United States. Since independence, India as a developing nation is contentiously progressing in the education field. Although there have been lot of challenges to higher education system of India but equally have lot of issues to overcome these challenges and to make higher education system much better. It needs greater transparency and accountability, the role colleges and universities in the new millennium, and emerging scientific research on how people learn is of utmost important. India need 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 current study aims to highlight the issues and to point out the challenges in higher education system in India.

This paper aims to identify issues and challenges in the field of Higher Education in India. The study is based on secondary sources. Hence it is purely a theoretical study.

Keywords: Education. Issues. Challenges. Colleges. Universities.

1.1 Introduction

Higher education is very important for a developing country like India and it is encouraging to increasing human development. Higher education in India has experienced phenomenal expansion since independence. India has produced scientists, engineers, technologists, doctors, teachers and managers who are in great demand all over the world. Now it is one of the top ten countries in our industrial and technological capacity, because of the significant contribution of manpower and tools provided by higher education, especially technical education. India has already entered into the era of knowledge explosion. Higher education provides opportunities to the people to reflect on the critical social, cultural, moral, economic and spiritual issues facing humanity. Higher education provides specialized knowledge and skilled persons for national development. Education is an essential tool for achieving sustainability. The education commission 1964-66 described the role of education in social and economic transformation through a statement the density of a nation is shaped in its class rooms.

1.2 Objectives

- 1 To identify on the issues of higher education in India.
- 2 To identify on the challenges of higher education in India.
- 3 Suggestions for improving quality of higher education and Conclusion.

1.3 Growth of Higher Education Sector in India:

A higher education systems grow and diversity, society is increasingly concerned about the quality of programmes, public assessments and international rankings of higher education institutions. However these comparisons tend to overemphasize research, using research performance as a yardstick of institutional value. If these processes fail to address the quality of teaching, it is in part because measuring teaching quality is challenging (Hernard, 2008)

India has been always been a land of scholars and learners. In ancient times also, India was regarded all over the world for its universities like Taxila, Nalanda, Vikramshila and its scholars. By independence India had 20 universities, 500 colleges enrolling about 2,30,000 students. Since independence India has progressed significantly in terms of higher education statistics. This number has increased to 659 universities and 33023 colleges up to December 2011-12. Central Government and state Governments are trying to nurture talent through focusing on the number of universities and colleges for expansion of higher educations. There is no doubt to the fact that much of the progress achieved by India in education has come from private sector. In fact the public sector and private sector is not in opposition to each other but they are working simultaneously in Indian education sphere. UGC is the main governing body that enforces the stands, advises the government and helps coordinate between center and states.

1.4 Issues Of Higher Education In India

The role of higher education in the emerging scenario of knowledge economy is very crucial and multifaceted for any country in general and India in particular. There are many basic problems faced by higher education system in India. These include Lower level of teaching quality, Financing of higher education, More concentrated on theories and rather than practical knowledge, Traditional methods of teaching, Privatization, Inadequate facilities and infrastructure, Quota system.

Lower level of teaching quality:- Our education system is torture by issues of quality in many of its institutions and universities. Many of the issues like lack of faculty, poor quality teaching, Traditional teaching methods, outdated and rigid curricula and pedagogy, lack of accountability and quality assurance and separation of research and teaching are raise questions on Indian education system.

Financing of higher education:- One of the most important things that have to be noticed is the issue of financial constraints regarding higher education before the government. Expenditure on education in common and on higher education in particular by the government, is one of the parameters to judge the quality in education for at all nation. The State Government have already been spending 20-30 per cent of its revenue budget on education. It cannot afford to spend more. In India, higher education has received less attention in terms of public spending than other levels. Indian education system is more focussed on theoretical knowledge rather than practical knowledge. In many jobs there is also a minimum requirement of percentage which is high.

Traditional methods of teaching:- Professors still stick to those methods of teaching like board, marker. They don't like to make use of audio visual aids in teaching. Also they are not up to date with the information available and what global industry demands.

Privatization:- In the present scenario, privatization of higher education is apparently a fledgling but welcome trend and is essential to maintain creativity, adaptability and quality. The economic trail of

liberalization and globalization demands it. In India both public and private institutions operate simultaneously. Approximately 50 per cent of the higher education in India is imparted through private institutions, mainly unaided involving high cost. However, the situation is not so simple. Private providers, in the interest of maximizing profit, have every incentive to 'minimize costs' by compromising on the quality of education provided in their institutions. Last but not least, quality of teaching staff is one of the considerable issues for higher education sector to sustain in the future. Earlier, they were committed to their subjects and to their profession. Today, high salaries are available but the commitment is less.

Inadequate facilities and infrastructure:- In India, many of the universities don't have adequate infrastructure or facilities to **teach** students. Even many private universities are running courses without class rooms. Internet and wi-fi facility is still out of reach of many students.

Quota system:- Bringing the reservation and quota system for different categories in education lost its quality. Even deserving candidates of general categories are ignored and on quota we have to select other person from reserved category even though he is not suitable.

1.5 Challenges Of Higher Education In India

It is our 72nd year of independence still our education system has not been developed fully. We are not able to list a single university in top 100 universities in the world. Various governments changed during these 7 decades. They tried to boost the education system and implemented various education policies but they were not sufficient to put an example for the universe. UGC is continuously working and focusing on quality education in higher education sector. Still we are facing lot of problems and challenges in our education system. Some of the basic challenges in higher education system in India are discussed below:

1 Enrolment:- The gross enrolment ratio (GER) of India in higher education is only 15 per cent which is quite low as compared to the developed as well as, other developing countries. With the increase of enrolments at school level, the supply of higher education institutes is insufficient to meet the growing demand in the country.

2 Equity:- There is no equity in GER among different sectors 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 as quite behind the national GER which reflect a significant imbalance within the higher education system.

3 Quality:- Quality in higher education is a multi-dimensional, multilevel, and a dynamic concept. Ensuring quality in higher education is amongst the foremost challenges being faced in India today. However government is continuously focusing on the education. Still large number of colleges and universities in India are unable to meet the minimum requirements laid down by UGC and our universities are not in a position to mark its place among the top universities in the world.

4 Infrastructure: 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. There are large number of colleges which are functioning on second or third floor of the building on ground or first floor there exists readymade hostels or photocopy shops.

5 Political inference: Most of the educational institutions are owed by the political leaders, who are playing a key role in governing bodies of the universities. They are using the innocent students for their selfish means. Students organise campaigns, forget their own objectives and begin to develop their careers in politics.

6 Faculty: 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, these deserving candidates are then applying in other departments which is a biggest blow to the higher education system.

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

8 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 institutions. 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 centers. So, this is another area of challenge to the higher education in India.

9 Structure of higher education:- Management of the Indian education faces challenges of over centralization, bureaucratic structures and lack of accountability, transparency, and professionalism. As a result of increase in 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.

1.6 Suggestions For Improving Quality Of Higher Education

1) There is a need to implement innovative and transformational approach from primary to higher education level to make Indian educational system globally more relevant and competitive.

2) Higher educational institutes need to improve quality and reputation.

3) There should be a good infrastructure of colleges and universities which may attract the students.

4) Government must promote collaboration between Indian higher education institutes and top international institutes and also generate linkage between national research laboratories and research centers of top institutes for better quality and collaborative research.

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

6) Universities and colleges in both public private must be away from the political affiliations, favouritism, moneymaking process should be out of education system etc.

7) There should be a multidisciplinary approach in higher education so that students knowledge may not be restricted only up to his own subjects.

1.7 Conclusion

Education is a process by which a persons body, mind and chacater are formed and strengthened .Higher education in India plays many roles. It is of extrodinary importance to many and reforms are often seen as significant threats of specific, social arrangements that provide benefits to powerfull groups. The politics is the result and most often the changes are not implemented language has been a similar issue in which governmrent attempted to solve in difficult social and political problem through policy relating to higher education.

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