Higher Education System in India: Issue & Challenges

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Abstract- A person's body, intellect, and character are all shaped and reinforced throughout the course of education. It's a way to unite the mind, heart, and body of a person so that they can discover their own unique set of strengths and abilities. Since independence, higher education in India has grown significantly, yet it is not available to everyone. At around 9 percent each year, India is currently one of the world's fastest-growing economies. As of this writing, many people are still illiterate and many children are not receiving even elementary education. While many individuals have been left out of this country's growth, they have also been unable to completely benefit from it. Globally, states' educational institutions are now understood to be a key factor in their economic prosperity. Our strength lies in our education system. A highly educated populace is a given in every advanced economy. The Indian higher education system has 51,649 institutions, making it the third biggest in the world. The present paper aim to identify issues and challenges in the fields of Higher Education in India.

Keywords- Higher Education, Issues, Challenges

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1. INTRODUCTION

India's higher education system is the world's third biggest in terms of students, second to China and the United States. In future, India will be one of the greatest education centres. India's Higher Education industry has experienced a phenomenal expansion in the number of Universities/University level Institutions & Colleges since independence. The 'Right to Education Act' which requires compulsory and free education to all children within the age categories of 6-14 years, has brought about a revolution in the education system of the country with figures reflecting a stunning enrolment in schools over the previous four years. The engagement of private sector in higher education has witnessed substantial developments in the industry. Today almost 60 percent of higher education institutions in India are pushed by the private sector. This has hastened development of colleges which have arisen during the previous decade giving India home to the biggest number of Higher Education institutions in the world, with student enrolments at the second highest (Shaguri, 2013). (Shaguri, 2013). The number of Universities has risen 34 times from 20 in 1950 to 677 in 2014. Despite these statistics, international education rating organisations have not put many of these schools inside the best of the world list. Also, India has failed to develop world class universities. Today, Knowledge is power. The more information one possesses, the more empowered one is. However, India continues to confront tremendous hurdles. Despite increased

investment in education, 25 per cent of the population is still illiterate; barely 15 per cent of Indian pupils enter high school, and just 7 per cent graduate.[1]

2. HIGHER EDUCATION

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 in dependence. 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. It has proved its tremendous potential by its performance in nuclear and space domains. In the coming few decades will be heralded by space craft, satellites, internets and others offshoots of scientific enquires. Higher Education provides opportunities to the people to reflection the critical social, cultural, moral, economic and spiritual issues facing humanity. Higher education provides specialized knowledge and skilled persons for national development. In next few decades, India will have world's largest set of young people. While the correlation between people and higher education is not up to the mark. The increasing youth population

can be a great asset if potential employability is brought to fruition. Conversely, if we fail to provide education and employment then it will open a downside gate for Indian economy. Education is an essential tool for achieving sustainability. The Education Commission1964-66 described the role of education in social and economic transformation through a statement-the density of a nation is shaped in its class rooms. Education creates human capital which is the core of economic progress and assumes that the externalities generated by human capital are the source of self-sustaining economic process.[2]

3. AFFORDABILITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

For a long period, India did not have an organized way of educating its population. The gurukula system was prevalent in India in ancient times, which rendered access to education very difficult for the common person. The organized system of education is a British legacy, introduced by the British in the middle of the nineteenth century. There was a progressive quantitative expansion of the system in the early part of the twentieth century, and at the time of independence in 1947; there were approximately 21 universities and 500 colleges in the country.

Although the increase in the number of higher education institutions and student enrolment seems to be impressive, it is no different from the experience of other nations. Unlike in other countries, however in India, its impact is nullified due to the growing population. Quantitative expansion resulted in the increase in expenditure on higher education.[3]

4. EXPANSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

The expansion of higher education system in India has been chaotic and unplanned. The drive to make higher education socially inclusive has led to a sudden and dramatic increase in the numbers of institutions without a proportionate increase in material and intellectual resources. As a result, academic standards have been jeopardised (Béteille, André., 2005). There are many basic problems facing higher education in India today. These include inadequate infrastructure and facilities, large vacancies in faculty positions and poor faculty, outmoded teaching methods, declining research standards, unmotivated students, overcrowded classrooms and widespread geographic, income, gender and ethnic imbalances. Education in basic sciences and subjects that are not market friendly has suffered. Research in higher education institutions is at its lowest ebb. There is an inadequate and diminishing financial support for higher education from the government and from society.[4]

Many colleges established in rural areas are non-viable, are under-enrolled and have extremely poor infrastructure and facilities with just few teachers. Apart from concerns relating to deteriorating standards, there is reported exploitation of students by many private providers. Ensuring equitable access to quality higher education for students coming from poor families is a major challenge. Students from poor background are put to further disadvantage, since they are not academically prepared to crack highly competitive entrance examinations that have a bias towards urban elite and rich students having access to private tuitions and coaching. A series of judicial interventions over the last two decades, knee-jerk reaction of the government to the judicial pronouncements, both at the centre and state level, and the regulatory bodies without proper understanding of the emerging market structure of higher education in India have added further confusion to higher education in the country.[5]

5. EMPLOYABILITY SCENARIO IN INDIA

The services sector has been the growth engine for India's economy. Its share has grown to around 52% in 2004-2005 from 41% in 1990-91. The key growth factor has been the shortage of right skilled talent in major markets of the world and its abundance in India. The road ahead is not expected to be smooth with rising wages and retention challenges, driven by shortages of 'employable' workforce.

The education system has to be aligned to employment trends. The Indian education system has had its focus on scholastic achievements with little focus on skill development. Shaswat Kumar (2006) feels that developing the right core skills at early age is important for long-term employability. Research shows that threshold skill levels in language, cognitive ability and ICT literacy help the individual absorb domain inputs rapidly and be employable.[6]

6. CHALLENGES OF PRESENT HIGHER EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN INDIA

Since we have got independence we are facing challenges to establish a great and strong education system. Various governments came and gone. Off course they tried to establish new education policies in the system but this is very sad to dictate that they were not sufficient for our country. Still we are facing lot of problems and challenges in our Education System. India recognises that the new global scenario poses unprecedented challenges for the higher education system. The University Grants Commission has appropriately stated that a whole range of skills will be demanded from the

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graduates of humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and commerce, as well as from the various professional disciplines such as agriculture, law, management, medicine or engineering 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.[7]

7.   CHALLENGES & ISSUES

Since independence we are facing challenges to establish a good and strong education system. Various governments tried to establish new and effective education policies in the system but they were not sufficient for our country. Still Indians are facing lot of problems in our Education System. Indian government recognizes that the new global scenario poses unrivalled challenges for the higher education system. The UGC stated that a whole range of skills will be demanded from the graduates of commerce, humanities, natural sciences and social science, as well as from the various professional disciplines such as hospitality, tourism, agriculture, law, management, medicine or engineering. [8]

There are many basic problems faced by higher education system in India. These include inadequate infrastructure and facilities, vacant seats in academic field and poor faculty thereof, low student enrolment rate, out dated and old teaching methods, declining research standards, unmotivated students, overcrowded and small classrooms and widespread geographic, income, gender, and ethnic imbalances.[9] Apart from these concerns relating to deteriorating standards and lack of facilities, there is reported exploitation of rural area students by many private education providers.

The demand-supply gap: India has a very low rate of enrolment in higher education (18%) as compared China (26%) and 36% in Brazil. There is huge demand-supply gap. By 2020, the Indian government aims to achieve 30% gross enrolment in higher education, which mean providing 40 million university places with an increase of 14 million in six years.

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 classrooms. Internet and Wi-Fi facility is still out of reach of many students.

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 shortage   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 raising questions on Indian education system.

Research constraints: India has a very low level of PhD enrolment. India does not have enough high quality researchers. In Indian education system there is a lack of early stage research experience; a weak ecosystem for creativity and innovation, and low levels of industry engagement.

Uneven growth and access to opportunity: In India, access to higher education is uneven in enrolment   across   population   groups   and geographies. This uneven growth of higher education is major challenge for India. India has the largest number of out-of-school students in the world, more than the whole of sub-Saharan Africa, and also 69% of India's population still lives on less than 2 dollar per day. The World Bank categorises India as "an extreme dual economy".

More concentrated on theories and rather than practical knowledge: Indian education system is more focused on theoretical knowledge rather than practical knowledge. In many jobs there is also a minimum requirement of percentage which is high.

Lack of involvement in and control of educational matters by Professors: Most of the professors or higher authorities do not like to take part in education related activities. They stick to their own growth.

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

Abroad settlement after education: Many students after doing IITs and IIM try to search opportunities in foreign countries like Australia, USA, and Canada etc. They look forward for MNCs and get settled abroad. There must be a fix criteria that students after higher education have serve his country first.

Security and Confidentiality: Collages have to Increased security and confidentiality with role-based permissions to users. There will be proper record of time and attendance system of students and as well as teachers.

Quota system: Bringing the reservation and quota system for different categories in education lost its

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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.

Quality - Reflecting on: National Assessment and Accreditation Council gave a report in which the concern was over the fact that two thirds (68%) of the country's universities and 90% of its colleges are "of middling or poor quality" and that well over half of the teaching faculty in India's colleges does not have the appropriate degree qualifications.

Enrolment: As compared to developed and developing nations, India's Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in higher education is merely 15 percent. The country's demand for higher education is outpacing the supply of colleges and universities, which are struggling to keep up. [10]

Equity: In GER, there is no equality amongst the many strands of society. GER in higher education in India is more variable between men and women than in other countries, according to prior research. Regional variances exist as well; some states have high GER, while others lag well behind the national GER, illustrating the serious inequities in the higher education system.

Quality: The idea of quality in higher education is a multidimensional, multilayered, and constantly evolving one. In India today, ensuring the quality of higher education is one of the most pressing issues. In spite of this, the government is always concerned about the quality of education. Even now, a large number of Indian colleges and universities fall short of the basic standards set by the UGC, making it difficult for our institutions to compete with the world's best.

Infrastructure: Another obstacle to India's higher education system is a lack of physical facilities and infrastructure, notably in public sector institutions. Several institutions are located on the second or third floors of the building while ready-made hosiery and copying businesses may be found on the ground or first floor.

8. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

There are some suggestions and Expectations from Government, Industry, Educational Institutions, Parents and Students for improving quality of higher education-

1. **Towards a Learning Society-** As we move towards a learning society, every human activity will require contributions from experts, and this will place the entire sector of higher education in sharp focus. Although the priorities, which are being assigned today

to the task of Education for All, will continue to be preponderant, the country will have to prepare itself to invest more and more on higher education and, simultaneously, measures will have to be taken to refine, diversify and upgrade higher education and research programmes. [11]

2. **Industry and Academia Connection-** Industry and Academia connect necessary to ensure curriculum and skills in line with requirements. Skill building is really very crucial to ensure employability of academia to understand and make sure good jobs (keeping in view knowledge + skills+ global professional skills = good jobs).

3. **Incentives to Teachers and Researchers-** Industry and students are expecting specialized courses to be offered so that they get the latest and best in education and they are also industry ready and employable. Vocational and Diploma courses need to be made more attractive to facilitate specialized programs being offered to students. Incentives should be provided to teachers and researchers to make these professions more attractive for the younger generation.

4. **Innovative Practices-** The new technologies offer vast opportunities for progress in all walks of life. It offers opportunities for economic growth, improved health, better service delivery, improved learning and socio-cultural advances. Though efforts are required to improve the country's innovative capacity, yet the efforts should be to build on the existing strengths in light of new understanding of the research-innovation-growth linkage.

5. **To mobilize resources-** The decline in public funding in the last two plan periods has resulted in serious effects on standards due to increasing costs on non-salary items and emoluments of staff, on the one hand, and declining resources, on the other. Effective measures will have to be adopted to mobilize resources for higher education. There is also a need to relate the fee structure to the student's capacity to pay for the cost. So that, students at lower economic levels can be given highly subsidised and fully subsidised education.

6. **Coming of Information Age-** The world is entering into an Information Age and developments in communication, information and technology will open up

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new and cost-effective approaches for providing the reach of higher education to the youth as well as to those who need continuing education for meeting the demands of explosion of information, fast-changing nature of occupations, and lifelong education. Knowledge, which is at the heart of higher education, is a crucial resource in the development of political democracy, the struggle for social justice and progress towards individual enlightenment.

7. **Student-Centred 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-centred education and employment of dynamic methods of education will require from teachers new attitudes and new skills. Methods of teaching through lectures will have to subordinate to the methods that will lay stress on self-study, personal consultation between teachers and pupils, and dynamic sessions of seminars and workshops. Methods of distance education will have to be employed on a vast scale.

8. **Public Private Partnership-** PPP is most essential to bring in quality in the higher education system. Governments can ensure PPP through an appropriate policy. University Grants Commission and Ministry of HRD should play a major role in developing a purposeful interface between the Universities, Industries and National Research Laboratories (NRLs) as a step towards PPP. Funding to NRLs by the government should ensure the involvement of institutions of higher education engaged in research activities to facilitate availability of latest sophisticated equipment. There has been some effort both by the government and the private education institutions to develop the teaching staff at various levels. However, this needs to be intensified with appropriate attention to all the aspects related in order to prepare quality and sufficient number of educational staff. Such efforts need a very serious structuring for the research base institutions. We have to be optimistic that private-public partnership and the Industry interface will take place in the field of education at all levels, and particularly in the backward regions, which is the need of the hour. To achieve excellence, we thus need to create a real partnership between government, educators and industry– Partnerships that can provide our high-tech industries with skilled workers who meet the standards of their industry.[12]

9. **To Provide Need Based 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. 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. The programme must be focused on graduate studies and research and developing strategies and mechanisms for the rapid and efficient transfer of knowledge and for its application to specific national and local conditions and needs. Meritorious doctoral students should be recognized through teaching assistantships with stipends over and above the research fellowships. Finally, based on knowledge only vision of the future life and work can be had; based on this vision only a broad ambition can be fixed for oneself; and based on this ambition only one can lead interesting life doing satisfying job to do remarkable achievements in some field in the world.

10. **International Cooperation-** Universities in India have been a 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 that have global dimensions and higher education is one of them.

9. CONCLUSION

The current state of higher education in India was examined in this study. Indian higher education has a variety of obstacles, but addressing these issues and boosting the country's educational infrastructure are critical. The appropriate utilisation of India's enormous human resource potential was an issue that needed to be addressed. Opportunities abound; the challenge is figuring out how to take advantage of them and how to make them available to others. Increasing the number of colleges and improving the quality of higher education in India is necessary to maintain that growth pace. There is a pressing need to reassess the financial resources, access and equity, quality standards, relevance, infrastructure, and

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responsiveness in order to meet and exceed future expectations.

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