
Higher Education In India – Its Dynamics An Analytical Study

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Abstract

Higher Education means integrated development of personality which should be imparted through head, hand and heart. **Rabindranath Tagore** rightly said, “The higher education is that which does not merely give us information, but makes life in harmony with all existence”.

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 University Grants Commission (India), which enforces its standards, advises the government, and helps to coordinate between the centre and the state. Universities and its constituent colleges are the main institutes of higher learning in India.

Keywords- Higher Education In India , Its Dynamics , Analytical Study, integrated development.

Introduction

According to the All India Survey On Higher Education 2014-15, Conducted By Government Of India, Ministry Of Human Resource Development, Department Of Higher Education there are 751 Universities (of different types) in India. Out of them 43 are central universities, 1 central open university, 69 Institutes of National Importance, 316 state universities, 5 Institutes established under State Legislation Act, 13 State Open Universities, 176 State Private Universities, 1 State Private Open University, 37 Deemed Universities (Govt.), 11 Deemed Universities (Govt. Aided), 79 Deemed Universities (Private). Most of these universities in India have affiliating colleges where undergraduate as well as post graduate courses are being taught. According to the **Department of Higher Education Government of India**,* 38056 colleges are functioning under these universities and institutions and there are 6.66 lakh (approx.) teachers and 2.96 crores (approx.)¹ students in various higher education

institutes in India. Apart from these higher education institutes there are several private institutes in India that offer various professional courses in India. Distance learning is also a feature of the Indian higher education system.

Some institutions of India, such as the Indian Institute of Science (Bangalore) the Indian Institutes of technology (IITs), have been globally acclaimed for their standard of education. The alumni have contributed to both the growth of the private sector and the public sectors of India. However, India has failed to produce world class universities like Harvard and Cambridge. According to the London Times Higher Education Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2015-16, no Indian university features among the first 100. * Provisional (2015 - 16) But universities in Asia have been included in the first hundred. Japan has five, ranked at 38, 39, 56, 58, and 74; Hong Kong has four, ranked at 28, 30, 51 and 57; Singapore has two ranked at 12 and 13; North Korea has two ranked at 42 and 87, South Korea has one ranked at 36 and Taiwan has one ranked in the 70th position. Notably, China's Tsinghua University, Peking

University and Shanghai Jiao Tong University are ranked at 25, 41 and 70 respectively. There is only two Indian Universities in the rankings from 100 to 200; The Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore and The Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi ranked at 147 and 179 respectively. The Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay is ranked at 202; The Indian Institute of Technology, Madras at 254; The Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur at 271; The Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, at 286; The Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee at 391 and The University of Delhi at 489.

The Indian Scenario

India has travelled a long way in education, from the “Guru -Shishya” practice of learning under the shade of a tree in medieval times, to becoming the third largest in the field of higher education in the world after United States and China!. In the current world scenario new inventions, modern technologies, growing economy and competition is the order of the day. In this emerging global one upmanship, India is trying to position itself as a knowledge driven economy. Higher education assumes tremendous importance in facing these challenges. During the last few years, universities have increased manifold and colleges have mushroomed all over our country to impart higher education. However whether just the availability of educational institutes means do we have a robust higher education system? In this scenario, a conflicting picture arises with our former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh’s words, “Our university system is, in many parts, is in a state of disrepair. In almost half the districts higher education enrollment are abysmally low. Almost two third of our universities and 90% of colleges are rated below average in quality parameters...”

Unfortunately, we are lacking hugely in terms of quality output from our higher education institutes. This can be confirmed from the fact that barring exception of few institutes mentioned above very little world class research gets published from other institutes, very few new innovations comes from Indian soil.

There are no Nobel prizes awarded to Indian Scientist who has exclusively worked in India and published his research from Indian soil. This is not true for Indians living abroad, so the talent is there but drive to achieve the results from this talent is not there. This has sadly led to a massive “brain drain”. In India, an institution of higher learning should be registered as a non-profit society or trust and approved by appropriate statutory authorities such as the University Grants Commission (UGC) or the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). The system of higher education in India faces numerous problems relating to educational institutions, teachers and students.

Mismanagement of all types in educational institutions and maladministration of educational programmes are quite common. Commercialization of the educational system, particularly technical and professional education, has become a proliferating trade. Opening of private medical colleges, engineering colleges and poly-techniques has become an attractive financial proposition. An incoherent regulatory framework and lack of quality standards in Indian higher education are risking its quality and potential. Driven by market opportunities and entrepreneurial zeal, many institutions are taking advantage of the lax regulatory environment to offer 'degrees' not approved by Indian authorities. And many institutions are functioning as pseudo non-profit organisations, developing sophisticated financial methods to siphon off the 'profits'. Some are effectively misleading students about the validity of their degrees while claiming to offer an alternative choice.

Higher education in India directly affects future of 26.585 million ² youth who are enrolled in our colleges, universities and institutions of higher learning. Their parents are also concerned about cost, quality and outcomes of higher education.

The problems of Indian Higher Education are endemic and are well-entrenched in our socio-political system. Prof Craig Jeffrey of Oxford University, UK, has done extensive researches on Indian campuses and published a book.

In this book, “Timepass: Youth, Class, and the Politics of Waiting in India.” he has termed Indian Higher Education as a “time pass” for the idle middle class youth who are unable to get a decent job on the basis of their degrees. They take admission in courses after courses for “killing” time and always look for a jugaad to grab a government job.

Social and economic changes around the globe have propelled increasing numbers of people into situations of chronic waiting, where promised access to political freedoms, social goods, or economic resources is delayed, often indefinitely. But there have been few efforts to reflect on the significance of "waiting" in the contemporary world.

Prof. Craig Jeffry fills this gap by offering a captivating ethnography of the student politics and youth activism that the lower middle class young men in India have undertaken in response to pervasive underemployment. It highlights the importance of waiting as a social experience and basis for political mobilization, the micro-politics of class power in North India, and the socio-economic strategies of lower middle classes. He in his book also explores how this North Indian story relates to practices of waiting occurring in multiple other contexts.

In spite of big expansion during last two decades, Indian higher education is facing variety of challenges at all levels. Out of these challenges, one major challenge is related to the poor quality of education delivered by state universities and its affiliated colleges. Currently there are 350 state universities ³ and approximately 40760 colleges ⁴ which account for more than 90 per cent of total enrollment in higher education.

These state universities suffer from poor governance, high level of corruption and severe shortage of funds which ultimately lead to low standards. In the forthcoming Union Budget, higher education plans of the state governments can be allocated funds by the Union Budget for academics reforms, better governance and infrastructural upgradation. Incentives can be offered to state universities for raising their own funds through upward revision in tuition fees and other legitimate means.

Emerging Issues

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 rather than practical knowledge, Traditional methods of teaching, Privatization, Inadequate facilities and infrastructure, Quota system. Lower level of teaching quality: Our education system is tortured 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.

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 higher education in

particular by the government, is one of the parameters to judge the quality of education in any nation. In India, higher education has received less attention in terms of public spending than other levels. It seems that it is not possible for India to make massive state investments in research and development as done in the west that produced research led universities such as MIT, University of California, Berkeley in the US or University of Cambridge in Britain. Indian education system is more focused on theoretical knowledge rather than practical knowledge.

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 their profit, have every incentive to 'minimize costs' by compromising on the quality of education provided in their institutions. It is the need of the hour to free the higher education system from unnecessary constraints and political interference. 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 for many students.

Concluding Suggestions for improving quality of higher education in India

Indian economy is facing various challenges regarding higher education, which need to overcome through appropriate policy formation and their effective implementation.

Student-centered education and dynamic methods of teaching should be employed. Methods of teaching through lectures will have to be subordinated by the methods that will lay stress on self-study, personal consultation and academic interaction between teachers and pupils, and dynamic sessions of seminars and workshops.

There is need for more universities because we are more in number and presently the number of universities is too less. On 13th June, 2005, Government of India constituted a high level advisory body known as National Knowledge Commission (NKC) to advise the Prime Minister about the state of education in India and measures needed to reform this sector. It was headed by Sam Pitroda and submitted its report in November 2007. NKC has recommended setting up of 1500 universities by 2015 so that the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) increases to 15 percent.

Academic and administrative audit must be conducted once in three years in colleges by external experts for ensuring quality in all aspects of academic activities. The self-finance colleges must come forward for accreditation and fulfill the requirements of accreditation. Universities and colleges should

realise the need for quality education and come forward with action plan for improving quality in higher educational institutions.

Education must be for the development of personality and not for the suppression of creativity or natural skill. In the globalized world opportunity for the educated people are ample in scope. As a result Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) activities has increased competition in the world trade leading towards the production of quality goods and their easy availability everywhere in the global market. Able and skilful men in this way can develop peace, prosperity and progress in the world. Much is needed to be done by Indian institutions and regulators to restore confidence, coherence and transparency, in the Indian higher education system.

At the institutional level, a code of self-regulation and self-restraint has to be adopted. Institutions have to be led by example, not only by creating good practices but also by curbing malpractices. It is no secret that a genuine knowledge has a prerequisite of solid foundation provided by educational institutions characterized by relevance and excellence in training and research.

Given that the future of the country is dependent on human resource development, it is high time that higher education reforms at institutional and policy level starts moving from good intentions to action.

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