

PRESENT SCENARIO AND FUTURE PROSPECTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The higher education in India is, generally, seemed to be bleak since post-independence and raises several questions still unanswered. The unplanned expansion of higher education opportunities, spiraling trend of the educated unemployed, commercialization of education, the imbalance of quantity with quality, ignorance equity and excellence, are some of the pertinent cases in point that pose continuous threats to higher education of India. In this light, the new reforms in education to come must address all the above concerns in higher education and involve innovative modalities of how to classify and reclassify information, how to look at problems from new and different directions and at last how to bring about new future society to meet the challenges to come. To meet the futuristic prospects of Indian higher education, teachers should not be spared in such meaningful reforms since teachers provide with the best trained manpower for a nation such as technologists, scientists, doctors, engineers, policy makers, businessmen etc. It is therefore teachers too should be empowered as a part of reforms for Indian higher education meeting the growing demands of liberalization and globalization going on in the world. Hence, the emerging Indian society needs to make the system of their higher education must innovative and futuristic to face the changing demands of the modern Indian Society.

Keywords: Scenario, Higher Education, Prospects.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education refers to the education beyond the secondary level that is imparted to the students in colleges and universities. Indian higher education system is the third largest in the world after United States and China. University grants commission (UGC) is the main governing body of the higher education in India. It enforces its standards, advises government and helps in coordinating centre and state. An incredible increase has been witnessed in the number of universities and colleges in India since independence, so that knowledge can be imparted to the youth of country. The central point of economic development is human capital that can be created through knowledge and education. Private sector is strongly playing its part in

education sector in India. Today over 60% of higher education institutes in India belong to private sector. This resulted in accelerated establishment of institutions in India. India is the home of more than 800 universities and over 39,000 colleges, which includes education in the field of technical, medical, social sciences, law, etc. Despite such a huge number of educational institutes, India has failed to produce world class universities. This unplanned expansion and commercialisation of higher education has raised various questions about the quality of the education being imparted. Low quality education will produce unemployed human resources that are produced because of ignorance of excellence. Such failure to provide education and employment can take the Indian economy on the pathway of unsustainability.

The new reforms in this sector must address these challenges, so that Indian education system can make its identity at international level. There is the need of greater transparency and accountability in the system. Teachers too should be empowered as a part of reforms for Indian higher education meeting the growing demands of liberalization and globalization going on in the world. Hence, the system of higher education should be restructured according to the changing needs of the society.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has the following objectives:

1. To study the present scenario of higher education of India.
2. To bring out the challenges faced by the higher education system.
3. To provide suggestion to improve the future prospects of higher education system of India.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present research study is descriptive in nature. Considering the objectives of the study, secondary data from journals, articles, newspapers and magazines is used. The accessible data is used intensively for the research study.

PRESENT SCENARIO OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

India faces a complex and challenging situations in respect of its higher education system. Increased population has led to an outpour in the number of students seeking admission in universities and colleges. This has led to the commercialisation of education. Deterioration in the quality is the obvious outcome of this quantitative increase in institutions. Quantitative increase of institutions headed toward poor quality of infrastructure and lack of relevance. This unplanned expansion resulted in poor quality of education that lead to educated unemployment. Educated unemployment has snatched away the incentive for higher education. This is the reason that we find a number of students interested in studying abroad. There are various factors that encourage Indian students to take admission abroad including quality education, employment

opportunities and increasing prosperity, social prestige and exposure. Indian education system is trying harder to achieve its goals of expansion with inclusion and ensuring quality education to students.

CHALLENGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

In spite of 70 years of independence, we are still a developing nation. The main reason for it can be our education system that is not developed fully. We are not having a single university ranking in top 100 universities of world. Government has also implemented various education policies but they not proved to be fruitful. UGC is continuously working for quality education in higher education sector. But still we are facing a lot of challenges in this field. Some of them are discussed below:

- **Commercialisation of education:** The unbalanced expansion of private sector has made higher education a profitable business. This sector works on the principle of demand and supply, ignoring the quality and relevance of higher education. This has created a big challenge for higher education system.
- **Issue of quality:** Still large number of universities and colleges are not able to meet minimum requirement laid down by the UGC. Providing quality textbooks is yet another issue especially in case of teaching in regional languages. Quantity aspect also leads to appointment of lower quality faculty making this issue more challenging.
- **Poor infrastructure:** Yet another issue of concern is the poor infrastructure. Particularly the public sector suffers from poor physical facilities and infrastructure. There is also a lack of modern teaching equipment and accessories with the institutes.
- **Access to education:** The challenge in front of government of India is to make the higher education equally accessible to everyone by breaking the barriers of rich or poor, male or female or belongs to rural area or urban area, or is from lower caste or upper caste. There is wide inaccessibility of higher education in case of female, students from rural areas and lower caste students.
- **Research and innovations:** There is lack of attention on research in higher educational institutes. Resources and facilities provided are not sufficient for quality research. Most of the research scholars are without fellowships or not getting their fellowships on time that directly or indirectly affects their research. Moreover, Indian Higher education institutions are poorly connected to research centres.
- **Political interference:** Most of the educational institutes are owned by the political leaders, who plays a key role in managing and governing institutes. They make students to organise campaigns, leading to distraction from the main objective and make students to develop a career in politics.
- **Management problem:** Management of the Indian education faces challenges of over centralisation, bureaucratic structures and lack of accountability, transparency, and professionalism. Because 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.

SUGGESTION TO IMPROVE FUTURE PROSPECTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Despite of challenges in the way, Indian higher education system is growing very rapidly. Future of the higher education system can be improved and challenges can be faced with reforms in the education system, which can bring paradigm shift in the country's higher education system. There are some of the suggestions that can improve the future prospects of higher education in India:

- **Global collaboration:** Government can allow foreign educational institutions to enter into collaboration with Indian institutions on large scale. This will enhance the capabilities of educational institutions. This will also results in quality education and reduction in politically motivated institutions.
- **Audits for improving quality:** Colleges must conduct academic audits by external experts to ensure quality in academics. Universities and colleges must prepare action plans to improve quality in higher education system. Continuous improvement will leads to attainment of higher standards in higher education sector.
- **Employability of students:** Colleges and universities understand the need for employability of students. Vocational trainings are being offered to students. There should be such an arrangement between educational institutions and entrepreneurs, so that students can be trained in entrepreneur skills and entrepreneurs can update themselves with new skills and information.
- **High-tech libraries:** Due to manual management of library, students are not able to utilise the library resources to the fullest. This not only interfere with the students learning but also possess a great problem for researchers. Therefore, library must be online and it should provide serious study environment to the students.
- **Cross cultural programmes:** The government should cooperate in arranging cross-cultural programmes with in India as well as across border. It will help students to know about business culture, technological development and economic and social progress of humans societies in different parts of world.
- **Personality development:** Education system should leads to the development of creativity and natural skills in student. It should not supress their unique attributes but should develop their personality. Plenty of opportunities are available for skilled and talented personnel worldwide.
- **Role of faculty:** The final onus of quality education in quantity education falls on the faculty members. Teachers can provide with the best trained manpower to the society. Institutes should set standards for employment of teachers. NET qualified and Ph.D. holders should be the faculty for the students. Teachers should be empowered so that global level of teaching can be imparted to students.

CONCLUSION

In a nutshell it can be said that, higher education is growing in India in terms of importance, awareness, institutions and enrolments but it seems to be inadequate. Indian economy is facing various challenges in the present situation of its higher education sector that can be overcome through appropriate changes in the traditional viewpoint and effective implementation of appropriate policies. Future prospects of higher education can be lightened up with the efforts of every one of us. With such an energetic country with huge population properly educated, the potentials are infinite. With the use of digital teaching and learning tools and by overcoming the weak points in Indian system, India can easily emerge as one of the most developed nations in the world.

WEB RESOURCES

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Higher_education_in_India
- <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/a-blueprint-for-higher-education/article 7522994.ece>
- <https://thediplomat.com/2013/10/challenges-and-solutions-in-indian-higher-education/>
- <https://www.importantindia.com/831/article-on-present-position-of-higher-education-in-india/>

