Higher Education in India: Challenges and Suggestions

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ABSTRACT

It is a known fact that Education's directly Proportional to Development of any kind of ties including Economic, Social, Industrial development etc. In this Competitive World it is more important to pursue

Higher Education to cope up with the World and being relevant to it. So. keeping this in Mind. In order to achieve the Highest Zenith of Glory in Higher Education and to make it Sustainable. One must act on the Challenges in Higher Education and focus on How to tackle them. In this Research Paper, An attempt to address the both was made. Challenges include Digital Divide, Allocation of Funds to Education Sector, Meagle Lack of Infrastructure, WIDE GAP between. Student-Teacher Ratio, And the Suggestions to improve the Caritions like Promotion of Vocational Course, Pragmatism based on Education, Tromed faculty etc were mentioned.

Key Words: Higher Education Systero, Sustainable, Challenges.

INTRODUCTION

India has a huge advantage of having the Abundance of Human Resource. And it has to leverage this, by making the Youth skillful morder to have Development.

India being the Third Largest Higher Medications Sptom in the World. After Independence, it has seen Tremendous Growth. However, it's not on par with the Growing World. The Power of knowledge is the Real Power To attain this Procer, Fligher Education is essential as it gives the broad perspective of the World. To achieve Growth and Development, higher Education is the only way. The Framework Tidin's Higher Education is Complex To enhance the Higher Education System it is important to address the Challenges, Merely Addressing them is not enough. So, the Suggestions to enhance the system and to curb/solve the challenges were also discussed.

The challenges against the higher education in India are as follows:

1. Digital divide

Digital divide is the Gulf between those who have access to computers and the internet and those who don't have any access yet.

Digital divide is categorised into three types:

First, the gender divide- according to a 2013 report, even though internet access has increased and is available to everyone, one can observe and conclude that women are still lagging behind. Even in 2015, women in several parts of the country are not familiar with the usage of the internet and computers. Men in low income places tend to have a phone unlike the women.

Second, social divide, Internet access creates relationships and social circles among people with shared interests. Social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook create online peer groups based on similar interests.

More than ever internet usage has influenced social stratification which is evident in societies among those that are connected to the internet and those that are not. Non-connected groups are sidelined since they don't share in the internet benefits of the connected groups.

Third, the universal access divide, Individuals living with physical disabilities are often disadvantaged when it comes to accessing the internet. They may have the necessary skills but cannot exploit the available hardware and software.

Some parts of the world will remain segregated from the internet and its vast potential due to lack of digital literacy skills, low education levels, and inadequate broadband infrastructure.

A study by the Azim Premji Foundation showed that almost 60 per cent of school children in India cannot access online learning opportunities. A similar study by Oxfam India found that even among students of urban private schools, half of the parents reported issues with Internet signal and speed. Therefore, even in present times digital divide still possess a challenge against higher education.

2. Gender equality

Over the years the number of female students has increased in India, for graduation purposes. But there is yet a lot to be achieved. There's only 48.6% enrollment of women in higher education. The share of male students enrolled in engineering and technology is 71.1% compared to female enrolment, which is just 28.9%. The enrolment of females was lower in the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and National Institutes of Technology (NITs) in comparison to the overall enrolment of women. Considering the low enrolment of females in the stream, the government decided to increase female enrolment from 8% in 2013 to 14% in 2014-15, by creating supernumerary seats. The results are visible in real terms. This shows that there is still a challenge ahead of us to increase gender equality in higher education.

3. Lack of affordability

Why is it that Indian students flock to foreign countries just to acquire a medical degree, M.S. degree, MBA, and other post-graduate degrees? While India has top class IIT's, IIM's, Medical colleges, and other

institutions of higher learning, it is just not sufficient to cater to the huge demand. Merit category students find it extremely frustrating to join a course of their preference. Hence many are also under compulsion either to seek admissions in foreign universities or opt for other courses in India. This is typical Hobson's choice.

How do we ensure that every student in India gets to learn what he desires? For this, India needs to develop its educational sector, especially government run institutions, and raise their standards to global level. India needs to put in place a pragmatic policy to ensure top-class education for its youth at the most down-to-earth fees. If many East European countries and China are able to provide professional courses at very reasonable rates, why can't we do it in India? Can this be achieved? Why not? Higher education, especially professional courses like medical education, law, and engineering, are highly sought after by lakhs of students, across India. But there is a chronic shortage of seats, acute competition and prohibitive fee structure of private and deemed-to-be-universities, which is beyond the common man. Hence the clamour for getting admission in government institutions, where the fee structure is very economical in every respect.

4. Lack of infrastructure and quality

Infrastructure plays an important role in the education sector. Classroom design, auditoriums, laboratories, campus area etc. are crucial elements of a learning environment. Poor building conditions especially in Higher Education Institutions such as dark classrooms with no proper ventilation, broken furniture, leaky washrooms, poorly maintained cafeterias and pantry areas, messed-up library arrangement creates a negative environment and this adversely affects student's learning outcome. Classrooms are the backbone of any education institution. Classrooms must also be well equipped with the latest technology like AV systems, projectors, and Wi-Fi hotspots. Seating and furniture must also be given equal importance while planning classroom design. Well designed seatings are comfortable and thus provide relaxed and convenient seating to the students. Well-equipped labs encourage students to perform lab activities more effectively. It prompts students to translate their theory learning into practical results. The library is a resource for any educational institution. It has an important role to play in both learning and teaching. Libraries must also be flexible to incorporate technologies like e-library, digital books, access to central library and libraries across the campus in various locations. Reported in 2015, the lack of proper infrastructure and poor investment are badly impacting the higher education sector in the northeastern region. There is very acute funding for the universities in the North eastern Region of our country, which affects higher education quite badly.

5. Political interference

Constant political interference in universities, especially in appointments to leadership positions, has caused irreparable damage to the institutions which produced outstanding work in post-Independence India, said Chair Professor of National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bengaluru, P. Balaram. Political interference is pervasive at all levels from selecting location of institutions, approval of grant-in-aid status, selection of examination centres to all senior appointments and in many states from VC to college Principals to District Education Officers.

There is large-scale corruption in appointments, transfers, approval to affiliation and grant recognition of

institutions, even to the extent of manipulation of exam results.

Undeserving educational institutions often received rapid accreditation, while 'more qualified' institutions wait for long periods, the answer almost invariably would relate to political interference.

Widespread corruption prevails in the functioning of regulators like AICTE, UGC, MCI and NCTE.

6. Not being skill oriented

According to consulting firm McKinsey, around 69% of companies globally are focussing on skill-building and more than 50% believe that the pandemic and the challenges it threw up have increased the demand for a multi-skilled workforce. According to an Accenture report titled Fueling India's skill (R)evolution, the country could lose 2.3% of its annual growth by 2028 if skill-building is not on par with modern technological interventions. Therefore focus towards skill based education is more important than knowledge based education.

7. 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.

These were major challenges which are being faced by the higher education facilities in our country, now let's see the *suggestion* we have, to make a change.

1. Promotion of vocational courses-

the labour market becomes more specialised and economies demand higher levels of skill, there is a need to invest more on vocational courses by the authorities. It focuses on practical skills, it prepares students for the global stage, awakens passion in students, and it also is helpful to non-conventional students who wish to study while balancing other obligations. Options such as online learning, evening, night weekend make this alternative beneficial for those trying to develop new career expertise while working full-time.

2. Create awareness for girl education

- in multiple parts of India early marriages are still happening, multiple times girls are stopped from pursuing higher education due to marriages. Therefore there's an utmost need to create awareness towards their higher education

3. Increase student teacher ratio

- While there are now no guidelines or rules governing teacher-student ratios on campuses, the existing overall ratio across streams is 1:18. When the then UPA government sanctioned new teaching posts while implementing the 27 per cent OBC quota in 2008, it followed the 1:18 ratio, giving it a sort of official stamp. India's student teacher ratio is the lowest compared to several

countries. India trails behind several countries including Brazil and China in terms of student-teacher ratio in the higher education segment, a government report has revealed. The 24:1 ratio of India is lower than 19:1 in Brazil and China. Among the eight countries compared, India's student-ratio has turned out to be the lowest - against Sweden's 12:1, Britain's 16:1, Russia's 10:1 and Canada's 9:1.

4. **Regular training of faculty,** is a change making suggestion in itself, since the more trained faculty is the more it makes education less stressful to the students because they will get proper guidance.

5. **It is also required To ensure all graduates passing out must be meeting the demands and needs of industries.**

6. **Entrepreneurs must be encouraged**- Entrepreneurship Accelerates Economic Growth. Entrepreneurs are important to market economies because they can act as the wheels of the economic growth of the country. By creating new products and services, they stimulate new employment, which ultimately results in the acceleration of economic development. Students should be encouraged to become entrepreneurs.

7. **Education Should be on a research and analytical basis.**

Conclusion- therefore, through establishing an education sector which is accessible to all, equal towards everyone, is well equipped with facilities, and trained faculty. Through curbing the challenges of female education, India is set to achieve great development in all her sectors. But it could be achieved only when higher education in the country achieves the importance it deserves.

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