"Current Status & Challenges ofHigher Education in India''

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Abstract

All kinds of issues in education are big topics of discussion, both in the news media and among the general public. The current education system is beset by a wide range of challenges, from cuts in government funding to changes in disciplinary policies—and much more. Everyone agrees that providing high-quality education for our citizens is a worthy ideal. However, there are many diverse viewpoints about how that should be accomplished. And that leads to highly charged debates, with passionate advocates on both sides. Understanding education issues is important for students, parents, and taxpayers. By being well-informed, you can contribute valuable input to the discussion. You can also make better decisions about what causes you will support or what plans you will make for your future.Over the last two decades, India has remarkably transformed its higher education landscape. It has created widespread access to low-cost high-quality university education for students of all levels. With well-planned expansion and a student-centric learning-driven model of education, India has not only bettered its enrolment numbers but has dramatically enhanced its learning outcomes. India has also undertaken large-scale reforms to better faculty-student ratios by making teaching an attractive career path, expanding capacity for doctoral students at research universities and delinking educational qualifications from teaching eligibility. However, the challenges faced are immense and far-reaching. This paper focus on to identify the key challenges like Issue of higher education, Emerging Trends in Education. Missions of Education etc. in India's education sector.

Keywords: Higher Education, Current Issues, Emerging Trends in Education

Education Mission

The mission of higher education is to achieve access, equality, justice, quality, employability, inclusiveness and create a knowledge society/ economy.To increase access, the number of institutions in the country must double in the next five years. More universities must come up from central government and the existing universities must be developed. Also, programs that allow shift system of education (morning and evening shifts), evening PG programs and integrated UG/ PG programs would help the cause of access to higher education. There should be about 20% to 30% increase in intake of students every year. In order to improve the areas of research, it is necessary to upgrade laboratories, motivate researchers and provide research funding. International collaboration of research must be promoted and the researchers must be released from undue restrictions on international travel. There should be enhanced participation rates in higher education from girls, SC/ST students, minorities and physically handicapped.

Enrollment rates for higher education in India still lag far behind that in other countries, including China, even though India has the world's largest number of higher education institutions, with nearly one-third of these institutions being less than ten years old. Despite this, India does not have many world-class universities; only the Indian Institutes of technology consistently make it into the Times Higher Education University Rankings of the 400 top universities and colleges. Further, employers state that less than a quarter of engineers and MBA graduates in India are employable after graduation The major challenges facing India in the higher education sector are a lack of trained faculty; underfunded research facilities, libraries, and information technology systems; low quality research; and politicization of staffing

appointments. In addition, there are wide spread regional, rural-urban, and gender disparities in student enrollment.

The 12th Plan Document has fixed targets of 25.2 % GER by 2017-18 and 30% GER by 2020-21. As per All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2017-18, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education has increased from 24.5% in 2015-16 to 25.8% in 2017-18.

In order to increase the enrolment in higher educational institutions, various measures have been taken by Government which include:

- Issuing of new UGC regulation for Open and Distance Learning that allows entry of reputed institutions to offer education on the distance mode.
- Using of ICT technology- SWAYAM portal to reach out of people and allow them to secure good quality education.
- Opening of more centrally funded institutions.
- Encouraging opening of institutions by State Governments through the RashtriyaUchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) which aims to achieve equity, access and excellence in higher education. The scheme supports components such as upgrading autonomous colleges to universities, clustering colleges to establish a university, setting up of new professional colleges in un-served and underserved areas as well as providing infrastructure grants to universities and colleges to scale up capacity.
- More scholarship programmes to supplement the cost of education.

7 Big Issues in Higher Education

1. Student loan forgiveness

Here's how the American public education system works: Students attend primary and secondary school (which is free), then they have the option of going on to post-secondary training (which, for most students, is not free). So with costs continuing to rise at both public and private institutions of higher learning, student loan debt is one of the most prominent issues in education today. Statistics show that students who graduated from college in 2017 came out with an average debt load of $39,400, which was six percent higher than the previous year. As a whole, Americans owe close to $1.5 trillion in student loans.

Currently, students who have received certain federal student loans and are on income-driven repayment plans can qualify to have their remaining balance forgiven if they haven't repaid the loan in full after 20 to 25 years, depending on the plan. Additionally, the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program allows qualified borrowers who go into public service careers (such as teaching, government service, social work, or law enforcement) to have their student debt cancelled after 10 years.

2. Completion rates

The large number of students who begin post-secondary studies but do not graduate continues to be an issue. According to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, the overall six-year college completion rate for the cohort entering college in 2011 was only 56.9 percent. Around 45 percent of students completed a credential at the same institution where they started their studies, and about another 12 percent finished at a different institution.

The good news is that the report marks two straight years of increases, and the overall rate has now surpassed the pre-recession high of 56.1 percent.

While the trend is headed the right way, there is still concern over the significant percentage of college students who do not graduate. After all, 43 percent of students who began college in 2011 had still not completed a degree or certificate six years later. Close to a third of them had dropped out entirely.

3. <u>Student mental health</u>

Mental health challenges among students are a growing concern. A survey from the spring of 2018 found that almost two-thirds of college students said they had experienced "overwhelming anxiety" within the previous 12 months, and almost 57 percent reported higher-than-average <u>stress</u> levels.TheCenter for Collegiate Mental Health noted that over a five-year span leading up to 2015, the number of college students who sought help from campus counselingcenters increased by an average of 30 to 40 percent, even though enrollment grew by only five percent over that same time frame.

Among students seeking treatment, anxiety and <u>depression</u> were by far the most common complaints. Even more disturbingly, the report noted that the number of students who sought treatment as a result of engaging in self-harm or having suicidal thoughts had increased steadily between 2010 and 2017.

4. <u>Sexual assault</u>

Sexual assault is a serious problem on American campuses. According to a study by the U.S. Department of Justice and the National Center for Education Statistics, the number of reported on-campus forcible sex offenses grew from 2,200 in 2001 to 6,700 in 2014.A separate report from 2015 found that close to 12 percent of all college students experienced unwanted sexual penetration or touching through force (i.e., being physically overcome or threatened with a weapon) or incapacitation (i.e., being unable to consent due to being drunk, high, or asleep).

It's estimated that almost two-thirds of sexual assaults are not reported to law enforcement, so the actual number of incidents could be much higher.

5. <u>Trigger warnings</u>

The use of trigger warnings in academia is a highly contentious issue. Trigger warnings are designed to notify students that upcoming course material contains concepts or images that may invoke psychological or physiological reactions in people who have experienced trauma. Some college instructors provide such warnings before introducing films, texts, or other content involving things like violence or sexual abuse. The idea is to give students advance notice so that they can psychologically prepare themselves.

In 2015, NPR Ed surveyed more than 800 faculty members at higher education institutions across the U.S. and found that around half had given trigger warnings before bringing up potentially disturbing course material. Most did so on their own initiative, not in response to administrative policy or student requests.In fact, few schools either mandate or prohibit trigger warnings. One notable exception is the University of Chicago, which in 2016 informed all incoming first-year students that it did not support such warnings.

6. **College accreditation**

In order to participate in federal student <u>financial aid</u> programs, institutions of higher education must be accredited by an agency that is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. By law, accreditors must consider factors such as an institution's facilities, equipment, curricula, admission practices, faculty, and support services. The idea is to enforce an acceptable standard of quality.

But while federal regulations require accreditors to assess each institution's "success with respect to student achievement," they don't specify how to measure such achievement. Accreditors are free to define that for themselves. Unfortunately, some colleges that have questionable practices, low graduation rates, and high student loan default rates continue to be accredited. Critics argue that accreditors are not doing enough to ensure that students receive good value for their money.

7. **College rankings**

It's common for ranking organizations to refine their methodologies from year to year and change how they weigh various factors—which means it's possible for colleges to rise or fall in the rankings despite making no substantive changes to their programs or institutional policies. That makes it difficult to compare rankings from one year to the next, since things are often measured differently.

For colleges, a higher ranking can lead to more visibility, more qualified applicants, and more alumni donations (in short: more money). And the unfortunate reality is that, in their quest to outrank their competitors, some schools outright lie about test scores, graduation rates, or financial information.

Emerging Trends in Education

What are the forces that will shape education in the years to come? Some of the new trends in education are:

1. **Maker learning**

The maker movement is rapidly gaining traction in K-12 schools across America. Maker learning is based on the idea that you will engage students in learning by encouraging interest-driven problem solving and hands-on activities (i.e., learning by doing). In collaborative spaces called makerspaces, students identify problems, dream up inventions, make prototypes, and keep tinkering until they come up with something that makes sense. It's a do-it-yourself educational approach that focuses on iterative trial and error and views failure as an opportunity to refine and improve.

2**. Moving away from letter grades**

The no-more-grades movement is taking hold in public schools as well. Many states have enacted policies aimed at encouraging public schools to use something other than grades to assess students' abilities. It's part of a larger shift toward what's commonly known as mastery-based or competency-based learning, which strives to ensure that students become proficient in defined areas of skill.

But what happens when it's time to apply to college? It seems that even colleges and universities are getting on board. At least 75 higher education institutions across New England (including Dartmouth and Harvard) have formally indicated that students who present competency-based transcripts will not be disadvantaged in any way during the admission process.

3. **The rise of micro-credentials**

Some post-secondary schools are developing micro-credentialing partnerships with third-party learning providers, while other schools are offering such solutions on their own. According to one survey, around 20 percent of higher education institutions offer some type of alternative credentialing.

Micro-credentials can serve as evidence that students have mastered particular skills, but the rigor and market worth of such credentials can vary significantly. Still, they are an increasingly popular way of unbundling content and providing it on demand.

4. **Flipped classrooms**

A growing number of schools are embracing the notion of flipped learning. It's an instructional approach that reverses the traditional model of the teacher giving a lecture in front of the class, then sending students home to work through assignments that enhance their understanding of the concepts. In flipped learning, students watch lecture videos or read relevant course content on their own before class, and class time is devoted to expanding on the material through group discussions and collaborative learning projects (i.e., doing what was traditionally meant as homework). The instructor is there to guide students when questions or problems arise.

Flipped learning is becoming widespread in all levels of education, but it is especially prevalent at the college level. A 2017 survey found that 61 percent of college faculty were using the flipped model in some

or all of their classes. That marked a six-percent increase over 2016. Another 24 percent of college instructors were either exploring the idea of flipped classes or actively planning to implement it.

5. Social-emotional learning

There is a growing consensus that schools have a responsibility to foster students' social and emotional development along with their cognitive skills. Social-emotional learning (SEL) focuses on helping students develop the abilities to identify their strengths, manage their emotions, set goals, show empathy, make responsible decisions, and build and maintain healthy relationships. Research has shown that such skills play a key role in reducing anti-social behaviour, boosting academic achievement, and improving long-term health.

Conclusion:

Nowadays, higher education is not only confined to the development of the individuals physically, mentally, intellectually and spiritually, but it is also a means to provide them with necessary skills for their well-being as well as for the socio-economic development of the society at large. India is having the third largest system higher education in the world after to the United States and China. While some feel that the government has the ability to further expand the higher education system and to improve educational opportunities for all, some other strongly believe that the resource position will not allow the government to expand public higher education any further. They even argue that government subsidies to higher education will have to be drastically reduced, if not eliminated altogether. In the present neo-liberal framework, there emerges yet another strong school of thought, which argues that even if the government has resources, it is not an efficient proposal for the government to expand public higher education. There are also obligations to allow free import of higher education as a service commodity from developed nations in the form of cross-border supply consumption abroad etc. The cumulative effect of all these factors and the prevailing competitive environment have hustled the morale, confidence and commitment of the university community in general, even inducing trepidation.

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