

Challenges & opportunities in Higher Education In Indian Territory

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Abstract

In present day Higher education plays a key role in India. The world has realized that the economic success of the states is directly determined by their education systems. Education is a Nation's Strength. A developed nation is inevitably an educated nation. Indian higher education system is the Second largest in the world, next to the United States . Challenges in Higher Education in India It is our 72th year of independence still our education system has not been developed fully Since independence, India as a developing nation is contentiously progressing in the education field. Although there have been lot of hazard as well as criticism to higher education system of India but equally have lot of opportunities to overcome these challenges and to make higher education system much better. It needs greater transparency and accountability, the role of colleges and universities in the 21 century, and emerging scientific research on how people understood utmost important. India need well skilled and highly educated people who can bring our economy forward. India provides highly skilled people to other countries like USA, Japan, Shrilanka, arab counties too. The growth rate of India in the last two decades can directly attribute to the higher education system. If India wants to greater growth, it must transform its universities and other higher technical education institution to world class institutions, then its higher education system must be reformed. Since, the country must safeguard the interests of young researchers, besides providing a strong platform for research and ensure permanent appointments for faculty members. The current study aims to highlight the challenges and to point out the opportunities in higher education system in India.

Keywords: Education, Opportunities, Challenges in Indian education Institutions.

We are not able to list a single university in top 100 universities of the world. Various governments changed during these six decades. They tried to boost the education system and implemented various education policies but they were not sufficient to put an example for the universe. UGC is continuously working and focusing on quality education in higher education sector. Still we are facing lot of problems and challenges in our education system. Some of the basic challenges in higher education system in India are discussed below:

Enrolment: The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of India in higher education is only 15% which is quite low as compared to the developed as well as, other developing countries. With the increase of enrolments at school level, the supply of higher education institutes is insufficient to meet the growing demand in the country.

Equity: There is no equity in GER among different sects of the society. According to previous studies the GER in higher education in India among male and female varies to a greater extent. There are regional variations too some states have high GER while as some is quite behind the national GER which reflect a significant imbalances within the higher education system.

Quality: Quality in higher education is a multi-dimensional, multilevel, and a dynamic concept. Ensuring quality in higher education is amongst the foremost challenges being faced in India today. However, Government is continuously focusing on the quality education. Still Large number of colleges and universities in India are unable to meet the minimum requirements laid down by the UGC and our universities are not in a position to mark its place among the top universities of the world.

Infrastructure: Poor infrastructure is another challenge to the higher education system

Political interference: Most of the educational Institutions are owned by the political leaders, who are playing key role in governing bodies of the Universities. They are using the innocent students for their selfish means. Students organize campaigns, forget their own objectives and begin to develop their careers in politics.

Faculty: Faculty shortages and the inability of the state educational system to attract and retain well qualified teachers have been posing challenges to quality education for many years. Large numbers of NET / PhD candidates are unemployed even there are lot of vacancies in higher education, these deserving candidates are then applying in other departments which is a biggest blow to the higher education system.

Accreditation: As per the data provided by the NAAC, as , “not even 45% of the total higher education institutions in the country were accredited. And among those accredited, only 35% of the universities and 40% of the colleges were found to be of quality to be ranked at 'A' level”.

Research and Innovation: there are very nominal scholars in our country whose writing is cited by famous western authors. 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 advice 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 centers. So, this is another area of challenge to the higher education in India.

Structure of higher education: Management of the Indian education faces challenges of overcentralisation, bureaucratic structures and lack of accountability, transparency, and professionalism. As a result 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.

Opportunities in Higher Education India is a large country, with an assured population of young people aged between 18 to 23 years to be around 150 millions. The sheer size of the market offers huge opportunities for development of the higher education sector in India. India now boasts of having more than 45,000 colleges and 659 universities, which has been quite a remarkable growth during the last 7 decades. In spite all the government spending in the educational sector, it is just too insufficient to meet the growing requirements. Therefore, higher Education sector has now been identified as one of the promising areas for private and foreign investments. It offers immense investment opportunities in both non-regulated and regulated segments . Indian higher education system is growing very fast irrespective of various challenges but there is no reason that these Challenges cannot be overcome. With the help of new-age learning tools, it is easy for country like India to overcome these problems and bring a paradigm shift in the country's higher education sector. With such a vibrant country with huge population properly educated, the possibilities are endless. If knowledge is imparted using advanced digital teaching and learning tools, and society is made aware of where we are currently lagging behind, our country can easily emerge as one of the most developed nations in the world. There are opportunities for strategic engagement and capacity building in higher education leadership and management at the state level. There are opportunities for India to collaboration at national and international level on areas of systemic reform, including quality assurance, international credit recognition, and unified national qualifications framework. Equality of educational opportunity in higher education is considered essential because higher education is a powerful tool for reducing or eliminating income and wealth disparities

Higher Education in India:

Next to China and United States India has the third largest higher education system in the world in terms of size and its diversity and largest in the world in terms of number of educational institutions. After independence Indian higher education attain a massive growth. In the Indian system, higher (tertiary) education starts after the 10+2 (i.e. ten years of primary and secondary education flowered by two years of senior secondary education). Framework of higher education in India is very complex. It includes various type of institutions like universities, colleges, institutes of national importance, polytechnics etc. Universities are also of different types like central universities which are formed by government of India, by an act of parliament which are responsible for arranging and distributing resources required by university grant commission(UGC), State universities, Deemed universities (aided and unaided) and Private 1 Sharma and Sharma: Indian Higher Education System: Challenges And Suggestions Published by CORE Scholar, 2015 universities. India has a federal set-up and the Indian constitution places education as a concurrent responsibility of both the centre and state. While the centre co-ordinates and fixed standards in higher and technical education, school education is the responsibility of state. Under the department of higher education there are several regulatory bodies and research councils which are responsible for the higher education in India.

Higher education reform in India

The growth rate of India in the last two decades can directly attribute to the higher education system. If India wants to greater growth, it must transform its universities and other higher technical education institution to world class institutions, then its higher education system must be reformed. Since, the country must safeguard the interests of young researchers, besides providing a strong platform for research and ensure permanent appointments for faculty members.

1.1.1 Lower enrolment ratio

There is a huge gap between those who move out from school and who enroll in higher education system, which is really needed to be bridged. India's Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is around 19 percent which 6 per cent lower than the world average and it is 50 per cent lesser than countries such as Australia and the US. India has the largest population of young people (100 million) between 17 to 19. When around 19 % students enroll into higher education institutes which translates to 20 million, which very low.

1.1.2 One common platform

In India, apart from UGC (University Grants Commission) there are several regulatory bodies like AICTE, MCI, BCI, NCTE and those under state governments. These individual bodies move in different paths, creating various hurdles like exams, teaching methods for students. So we need to bring all important regulatory bodies on a common platform and develop a common understanding and strategy for managing the change.

1.1.3 Lack of research centric approach

Most of the Indian higher education system lacks strong teaching-learning process and research. That is the reason why no higher education institution of India figures in the global top 200 higher education institutes around the world. Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore, which was in the 201-250 band in 2016, has slipped into the 251-300 band. According to World University Rankings– which ranks the top 1,000 universities from 77 countries – performance of Indian centres of learning has deeply deteriorated. Apart from IISc, The Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur and Indian Institute of Technology Madras have also dropped by at least one band.

1.1.4 Lack of good faculty

Shortage of quality faculty is proving to be a great stumbling block in the transformation of higher education in India. According to a government report, there is a massive need for expansion in higher education; but there is also a lack of deserving Ph.D. candidates for faculty positions in the higher education. This has created a shortage of almost 54 percent in the faculty talent pool in higher education, such a deficiency will greatly prove to be a stumbling block, which mainly due to the bad decisions taken by policymakers, bureaucrats, and university administrators.

1.1.5 Lack of new teaching methods

The Indian higher education system has been following lecture drive method for several years. This has turned ineffective and not sufficient in many areas. Besides, there is a lack of teacher's learning and development areas need which is should be in the form educating them. There are no approaches like mentoring, spot visits, practical educational tours and involvement in research projects with peers. Finally, one need to change the teacher's training curriculum along with content, subject and methodology. Teachers must be encouraged take short duration professional training courses, which could help to strengthen the teacher's learning and development areas. Finally, there is no syllabus for integrating development concepts like emotional competencies, life skills and info-savvy skills. etc. Education institutions often lack the emphasis for pointing out on the learning outcomes than content teaching. Many institutions never take the initiative to collaborate or participate with international institutes in order to get the exposure of digital learning methods or technologies.

1.1.6 Increase in profit making institutions

Though private player in the higher education contributes significantly to the growth of the sector, the profit intent of these institutions has threatened the very basic foundation of social development goal. Many private players who are politicians, realtors, businessmen/women mint huge money by creating educational institutions, which had made us to say that no secret that the education industry has long lost its noble cause and is more of a business. This greatly harmed the higher education system.

1.1.7 Government initiatives for the issues

The government has taken a number of initiatives to tackle the reduce the demand supply gap in school education. It has been proposed to set up another 6,000 schools at the block level as model schools to benchmark excellence. Of these, 2000 will be set up under Public Private Partnership. Besides, a new proposal by the Human Resource Development Ministry has been put forward to replace the University Grants Commission, which is the governing body for all the colleges and universities. The new Higher Education Commission of India will also govern the functioning of the universities and colleges but it would give a special power of acting as 'self-governing' bodies.

This century has witnessed a revival of higher education reforms worldwide. India is no exception. Several reform measures recently introduced have contributed to the expansion of the system, quality improvement and enhanced relevance.

Reforms to expand the system

India's higher education sector has moved from a period of slow growth and low gross enrolment ratios (GERs) to an era of unprecedented expansion. Over the past 15 years, student enrolment

has quadrupled to reach 34 million with a GER of 24 percent in 2015-2016. The size of India's education system has now surpassed the United States, becoming the world's second largest after China.

Massification of the education system has heavily relied on non-state funding. Market friendly reforms introduced by the state include cost recovery measures in public institutions and the promotion of the private sector to own and operate universities. While privatization started slow, private universities are proliferating, and now account for more than 60 per cent of the enrolment share both in terms of institutions and enrolment. Massification in India is also accompanied by persisting social inequalities and widening regional inequalities in enrolment in higher education.

Reforms to improve quality

India established external quality assurance agencies and internal quality assurance mechanisms to enhance higher education quality. Although accreditation is mandatory to obtain public funding, a majority of private higher education institutions still remain non-accredited.

Ranking has been another effort to enhance quality. Indian institutions do not fare well in the world ranking of universities. In response, India initiated a national ranking process with the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) in 2015. The first results published in April 2016 and 2017 clearly indicated that the top ranking institutions are mostly public funded central universities.

It is currently believed that creating world class universities will boost India's position in the global rankings. This prompted India to plan to support the creation of 20 world class universities in the immediate future. It appears that India, like many other developing countries, is on a fast track towards the reorientation of existing institutions into world class universities.

Reforms to enhance relevance

Despite the sector's growth, many employers in India have lost confidence in the quality of the qualifications awarded by the country's universities. It is questioned whether these universities offer the skills and competencies to its graduates as expected in the labour market. In order to regain the credibility and enhance the relevance of university qualifications, India is now in the process of developing a National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF), which is focusing on learning outcomes, employability skills and competencies. This follows the 2013 development of a national skills qualification framework (NSQF).

Looking to the future

The massification of higher education is accompanied by a widening of regional disparities, persisting social inequalities and commercialization of the sector. The challenge now is to address the issues of equity and diversity to provide affordable, quality higher education in a period of market-led reforms. It is expected that the national policy on education currently in development will hopefully address some of these concerns.

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