An Analysis of Higher Education in India

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Abstract: The economic success of a country is tied to its educational system, and it's no secret that education is the backbone of a nation. One can't help but notice that an emerging country is one that's educated. India has the third-largest higher education industry in the world, behind only the United States as well as China. Following its independence, India has made some controversial inroads in the area of education, especially in the realm of education for girls. Even while India's higher education system has faced many difficulties, there are also many possibilities to surmount these issues and enhance the overall quality of higher education. It has to include more transparency and accountability, and examine the role of colleges and universities in the new century. This must also include an examination of the usefulness of developing scientific studies. To propel our economy, India requires well-qualified and well-trained individuals. India has the advantage of sending skilled individuals to other nations while also helping to advance our country from a developing nation to a developed one. This study aims to discuss issues and solutions in the Indian higher education industry.

Keywords: Education Commission, Educational System, Higher Education, Human Resource, Institutions.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since independence, the number of colleges and universities in India has increased significantly, as has the number of students enrolled in those institutions. A revolution has occurred in the educational system of the country as a result of the 'Right to Education Act,' that also advocates for compulsory and compulsory education to all children education for all children from 6 to 14 years of age. Statistics show that the educational system has improved significantly over the past four years as a result of the Act. Private investment in education has increased dramatically as a result of dramatic changes in the business. In India, the private sector is responsible for the promotion of approximately 60% of higher education institutions, according to official figures. Thus, institutions that were built up over the past decade have been accelerated, and India now has the largest number of top problems of education, with the second highest number of students enrolled among them. From 20 in 1950 to 677 in 2014, the number of universities has increased by a factor of 34. Several of these organizations have not been ranked among the finest in the country by multinational educational rating firms. Indian universities have also struggled to produce world-class institutions[1].

Today's knowledge is a source of strength. The greater the amount of data you have, the greater your power. India, on the other hand, is experiencing severe problems. Despite increased investment in education, 25 percent of India's population is already illiterate; only 15 percent of Indian students enroll in high school, and only 7 percent graduate. In comparison to the large developed countries of the world, the standard of education in India is significantly lower, whether it is in primary or secondary education. As of 2008, India's post-secondary schools offer just adequate seats to 7 percent of the country's college-age population, 25 percent of teaching positions across the globe are empty, and 57 percent of college instructors do not have a master's degree. With a total annual intake of 582,000 students and 1,244 polytechnics with an annual intake of 265,000 students, India currently has 1522 degree-granting engineering colleges, according to the latest available data. But despite these obstacles, India's higher education system already has a plethora of funds and the ability to use its worldwide reputation to address these issues. As a result, more transparency and accountability are required. The function of universities and colleges in the new century, and the most recent scientific research into how individuals learn, are of the greatest significance. As a result, India offers highly skilled workers to other countries, and the transition of our country from a developing to a developed one is very easy for India[2].

With the exception of the United States and China, India has the third largest higher education system in the world. University Grants Commission is the primary regulatory organization at the tertiary level. It establishes standards, provides information to legislators, and encourages collaboration between the center and states. University Grants Commission The following illustration depicts the views of the Indian educational system.
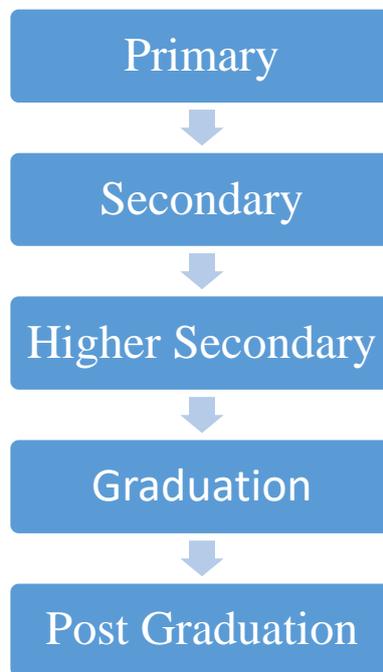
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Figure 1: Illustrates the sights of educational system in India.

Its commitment to providing the necessary financial services results in governments' self-binding obligations at all stages of the process. It is necessary to increase government expenditure on high schools, which now accounts for about 0.7 percent of GDP. Lobbying is going to require a lot of time and effort. In this regard, it is important to note that organizations are in a unique position to raise a significant amount of their own money. Students represent a massive potential outlet, and the development of offshore campuses, as well as the attraction of external students, are both obvious causes of this phenomenon as well[3].

The Act's current laws, however, must be amended in order for this to be accomplished. There is also evidence that certain activities are 'rewarded' rather than receiving equal award funds, resulting in a decrease in overall financing for the operation. As previously stated, these actions were subject to stringent restrictions on the use of money obtained by the government in order to protect the general public's safety. The issue of governance in this region is unquestionably present. It is true that more financing is required for the private sector (as a result of regulatory reforms) in order to grow.

Private assets that were previously valuable will be revalued as a result of incentive-driven regulation. At the same time, the state's budget for other elements of education, as well as for the operations and administrative sectors, must be significantly cut as well. Universities were transformed into mediocrity-mentoring institutions, which was a significant contributing factor! The state would also engage in private "remote control," thus making private "remote control" more accessible.

1.1 Higher Education Commission of India:

Educators have reacted positively to the Union Government's decision to disband the University Grants Commission (UGC) and replace it with the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), which was announced last week. Some have voiced concerns about some aspects of the proposed Bill that would facilitate the transition, while others have urged caution, but all agree that the time has come to reform governance of the country's higher education system. Furthermore, the Centre's decision is consistent with its previous initiatives to reform higher education, including regulations for the grant of graded autonomy to universities, open distance learning, and online degrees; the grant of autonomous status to colleges and graded autonomy to universities; and reforms in the functioning of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)[4].

This week, the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development released an official press release arguing in favor of the necessity for what has been designated as the 'Higher Education Commission of India (Repeal of UGC Act) Act, 2018. Although the Press Note solicited suggestions from educators, many other stakeholders, and members of the general public that might be useful in the development of the proposed law, the Press Note stated the goals of the proposed amendment. A key goal, it stated, was to ensure less government involvement and more governance in matters relating to higher educational institutions, including separating the power to award grants from the power to manage academic standards (which would be a responsibility of the proposed

Commission), and giving the Commission authority not only to inspect institutions for academic quality, but also to conduct investigations into allegations of fraud and abuse by institutions (which the Commission will put in place).

The decision to abolish the UGC did not come about quickly, and it was not made without doing extensive research. One of the first choices Smriti Irani made as Minister for Human Resource Development (HRD) in 2015 was to commission a study of the University Grants Commission's (UGC) operations. Hari Gautam, a former chairperson of the University Grants Commission, chaired a panel that concluded that "reshaping or restructuring" the existing body would be a "futile" exercise, and that any amendment to the UGC Act would be of no use. The Committee suggested that an Act of Parliament be passed to create a National Higher Education Authority to take over from the University Grants Commission. In its criticism of the UGC, the Hari Gautam panel noted that it had been "plagued in the main by reductionism in its functioning," that "all kinds of people" had been appointed to key positions, and that the "working of UGC is so ad hoc that many do not know how many bureaus represent various disciplines...". In a nutshell, the UGC had failed in its mission of "serving as a sentinel of quality" and had instead "embraced the comparatively simpler role of providing financial support for education." Following that, the Human Resources Development Ministry said that it will "seriously consider" the suggestions. As of that moment, it maintained a cautious stance, asserting that the UGC could not be "unilaterally abolished" since it had been established by Act of Parliament. As a result, work has been ongoing behind the scenes since 2015[5].

Interestingly, the Higher Education and Research Bill, 2011, which sought to establish an overarching regulation authority to oversee higher education in the country, was withdrawn by the newly formed Modi government in September 2014. The Bill had been introduced by the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance regime, with Kapil Sibal serving as Minister of Human Resource Development, and was the result of recommendations made by a panel led by noted academic Yashpal. It proposed that the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) be abolished (AICTE). Several provisions of the Bill were withdrawn by the Modi government on the grounds that a parliamentary committee had expressed reservations about them, believing that they went against the country's federal structure.

The University Grants Committee (UGC) was established as a statutory body in 1956 by the University Grants Committee Act, which was modelled after the University Grants Committee of the United Kingdom. The British panel was disbanded in 1989 after seven decades of operation, but the University Grants Commission (UGC) remained in place with the primary responsibility of both funding and monitoring the standards of higher education in India. Along the way, it lost sight of the big picture and, among other things, failed to adapt to changes in the education sector that were brought about by increasing liberalization and internationalization. Despite a rapid increase in the number of universities over the last six decades from approximately 30 universities in 1956 to nearly 670 universities in 2015, there has also been a problem of declining educational standards, which the UGC has failed to address despite repeated requests. According to many academics, including Amrik Singh, who co-authored the book Fifty Years of Higher Education System in India (which was published in 2003), the use of the term "Grants" in the UGC's name caused a great deal of confusion, leading to the UGC authorities completing that their primary task would have been to disburse funds rather than to oversee quality[6].
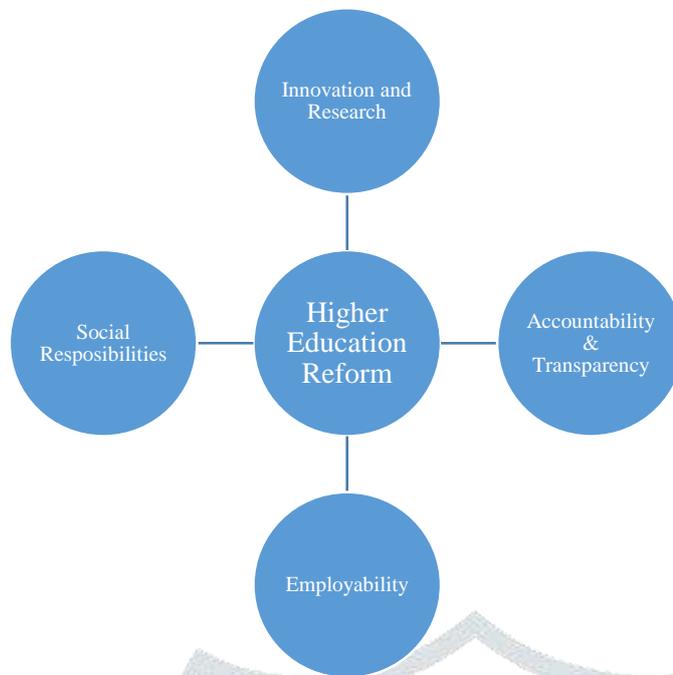
Figure 2: Illustrates the reforms in Indian higher education system.

Although there are some who support the proposed higher education commission Act, there are some who oppose it. According to them, the promise of "less government and more governance" would not be fulfilled by the provisions of the proposed Act, which is currently open for public comment. An overwhelming number of government-nominated individuals would serve on the search-and-selection committee that would choose the chairman and members of the HECI. As a result, neither education sector experts nor teachers would be considered for selection. In addition, the Committee's decision not to include the Secretary of Human Resources Development Ministry is only of marginal significance, given that the secretary to the Commission would be a member of the Union Government. The second objection is that the HECI may end up with tremendous powers that could be misused, particularly by the Central Government, because the latter would have the authority to award funding or withhold payments on the basis of low academic standards to those who meet the requirements. Despite the fact that education is included on the Concurrent List, such powers would be exercised in the states as well as the federal government. The state regime would have little influence because the HECI would be in charge of matters such as awarding scholarships and certifying academic excellence, and the states would be required to follow its directives[7].

The third nagging problem that experts have identified has to do with the heart of the matter – academic achievement. Because the government's presence would be overbearing through methods such as the selection process and other means, the inputs of teachers and students would, even if they came, have only a minor role to play in decision-making. If the University Grants Commission (UGC) failed to uphold academic excellence as a result of its lopsided priorities, critics argue that the new Commission could be an equally big failure if it allows the government to determine what constitutes academic excellence[8].

These are just a few of the traps that the Center must stay clear of. Apart from that, it would have to bear in mind that, in order for the HECI to make a positive difference in the arena of higher education, other specialized regulatory bodies would also have to be quick on their feet. The impact of the HECI on the larger educational sector, for example, would be less than desired if other regulatory bodies, such as the AICTE and the Medical Council of India, were to lag behind. To be sure, changes are being implemented in these organizations as well. However, for the time being, it is necessary to bid farewell to the UGC. Figure 2 depicts the educational changes that have taken place in India[9].

2. DISCUSSION

Because of the many years of democracy in our educational system, we still need a large number of levels. We are unable to identify a single university among the world's top 100 institutions of higher learning. In the course of nearly six decades, many governments have come and gone. They attempted to improve the educational system by launching a slew of educational programmes, but these were insufficient to establish a precedent for the rest of the world. The University Grants Commission works hard and is laser-focused on providing high-quality education in the higher education sector. In our educational system, we are likewise confronted with a slew of worries and issues.

India is a vast country with a projected population of approximately 150 million young people between the ages of 18 and 23 years old, according to recent estimates. Given the sheer size of India's higher education industry, there are tremendous development prospects. The country of India currently has more than 33,000 colleges and 659 universities, all of which have experienced rapid growth in recent decades. In 2012, 21.4 million students were admitted into Indian schools, making it the third-largest school network in the world. The educational system in India, on the other hand, is woefully inadequate to deal with such large numbers of students. Given the amount of money the government invests in the education sector; it is far too little to keep up with the growing demand. As a result, higher education has already been identified as one of the most promising areas for private and international investment. Both non-regulated and regulated industries benefit greatly from the tremendous incentives created by this situation, which is beneficial to both.

Although the Indian higher education sector is experiencing rapid growth, there is no reason to believe that it will be unable to overcome the numerous challenges that it is currently facing. Countries such as India will be able to overcome these challenges with the help of new-generation learning instruments, resulting in a paradigm shift in the country's higher education sector. With a thriving economy and a large population that has received adequate education, the possibilities are virtually limitless. With the spread of innovative digital teaching and learning tools, and the growing awareness of where we are actually lagging behind, our country will increasingly emerge as one of the most technologically advanced nations on Earth[10].

At the state level, there are opportunities for political cooperation as well as capacity development in higher education administration and management. India has the ability to collaborate on a national and international level in the fields of institutional advancement, such as quality assurance, international recognition of credit, and the establishment of a single national certification mechanism. Higher education is considered necessary because it is an effective tool for reducing or eliminating income and wealth inequality. Equitable benefits for education are also considered necessary in higher education. It is also important to note that "the ability to benefit from higher education is shared among all classes of individuals," which contributes to the notion of equal education access. In the field of culture, there are vast reservoirs of untapped potential; if given the opportunity, these individuals will rise to the top of their respective fields. In reality, a significant amount of top-level talent is wasted as a result of an unfair educational system.

In order to increase the employability of graduates, it is necessary to provide entry points for collaboration in entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurship, business relations, study expertise, and a wide variety of transferable skills, including English, among other things. The growing gap in vocational skills training in Indian higher education institutions provides opportunities for potential collaboration with international partners. Greater collaboration and increased mutual awareness are required in higher education, and this can be achieved by increasing financial support as well as participation in forums that promote interaction and dialogue with other countries around the world.

Public-private partnerships are frequently promoted in the most unusual places, such as rooms and other similar spaces, and are used to improve higher education in underserved areas of the country. For the Public Private Partnership to be successful, the government must provide specific incentives to private businesses and organizations in order for the programmes to be implemented. Higher education should be given a prominent position in the process of reshaping and upgrading it on a regular basis in order to raise the overall quality of higher education. The promotion of the quality of education provided by provincial, central, and private institutions, as well as the implementation of the changes proposed by the University Grants Commission's quality certification agency, are essential. The government and private educational institutions have, as a result, gone to varying degrees in this direction. In order to prepare for a high-quality and sufficient quantity of instructional professionals, it is necessary to improve coordination while taking into consideration all of the essential factors. These activities need a major restructuring process for the research foundation's institutes, which will take time and effort. Public-private collaboration is essential for the advancement of excellence in the higher education sector. The Government of India will establish public-private partnerships via the implementation of a sound plan. Universities, businesses, and national science laboratories should collaborate to develop a purposeful interface between them. This interface should include higher education institutions engaged in research activities in order to promote the availability of new sophisticated equipment to researchers. The Commission for University Grants and the Ministry of Human Resource Development should play a major role in the development of a purposeful interface between universities, businesses, and national science laboratories.

3. CONCLUSION

Learning is a method of forming and developing an individual's physical, mental, and moral characteristics. Because it integrates the functions of the brain, heart, and intellect, it allows a person to develop an all-around personality that represents the best aspects of himself or herself. Greater access to higher education has accelerated in India since independence, particularly in the past six decades, although it has not been achieved evenly throughout the country. In terms of yearly growth rates, India is presently one of the world's fastest-growing nations, with annual growth rates of more than 9 percent. A significant part of the population also has access to an alphabet, and a large proportion of youngsters do not even complete elementary school. Not only has it been prohibited for a large part of the population to fully contribute to the development of the nation, but it has also been forbidden for them to benefit from any advancements that have been achieved for the benefit of the general public. No doubt, India is experiencing a variety of higher education difficulties, but overcoming these obstacles and expanding higher education is critical to the country's long-term development. India has a great amount of human capital potential, and the challenge now is to make the most of this resource. There are possibilities available, but the question of how to take use of these services and make them apparent to others is one that requires consideration. In order to maintain this growth rate, the number of institutions as well as the overall quality of higher education in India must be expanded. In order to meet and exceed the current and future requirements, there is an urgent need to rethink financial resources, involvement and properties, quality levels, significance, technology, and responsiveness at the highest levels of government.

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