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Issues, Concerns and Directions for Improving the Class of Higher Education in India

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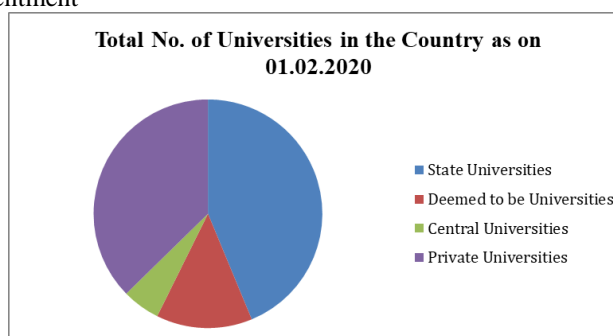
Abstract

Higher education system in India is one of the world's biggest systems of education in terms of students, which has a great potential to contest with global universities. It is one of the key drivers of growth performance, prosperity, and competitiveness in national and global economies. Education empowers minds that will be able to consider good thoughts and ideas as it is the key to success in life. The higher education system in India has experienced a vast change since freedom. It has long been defined by its rote-learning method and text book-centric education. The ancient learning system has been accused for taking away inventive thinking from the young minds which makes them undecided from accepting creative careers. Higher education system in India is one of the world's largest systems of education in terms of students, which has a great potential to compete with universal universities. It is one of the key drivers of growth performance, fruitfulness, and competitiveness in nationwide and international economies. Education allows minds that will be able to perceive good thoughts and ideas as it is the key to success in life, and teachers make a lifelong effect. It has been widely acknowledged that no country can ease poverty, attain admissible financial progress and harvest skilled human resources without significant investment in human capital. This study aims to highlight the trials and the openings in higher education system in India and to examine several features which are vital for a country to offer word-class education with international standards. It takes stock of the initiatives taken by the government to mend the standards of higher education.

Keywords: Education, Opportunities, Challenges, Governance, Development, Colleges, Academies/ Universities

Introduction

Nowadays, the situation of academia in India is varying and growing with the globalized system of education and universities and university level organizations facing a veritable blast of information and technology in all arenas. The higher education sector in India consists of 3.74 crore scholars across 993 universities, 39,931 academies, and 10,725 unconnected organizations, according to the AISHE-2019 (Sharma 2020). Education is the main tool for investment in human resources expansion. Moreover, it makes people more accountable for contributing in the growth of any economic sector in a nation (UGC, 2003). It is important for the individual, community and economic progress of the country as well as to live with contentment



Source: <https://www.ugc.ac.in/oldpdf/Consolidated%20list%20of%20All%20Universities.pdf>

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and richness. Across the world, higher education is likely to change to match variations in their host environment. In the established countries, the worth of higher education is frequently interrogated for resources exhausted, while in emerging countries, educational organizations are mainly esteemed for the contribution they can make towards national development. Education also aids students to scrutinize and make selections of their lives. Some higher education establishments offer adult teaching and leisure courses, upper secondary courses to prepare students for tertiary-level education, and small precise job-related groundwork at sub-degree level (OECD, 2008).

We experience numerous occasions in our day-to-day lives that are examples of compassion, comradeship, fraternity and forbearance. Even though all that, moral and ethical dilapidation is posturing noteworthy challenge to nearly all the public junctions of the nation. Contemporary world is the witness of extraordinary value destruction in spite of informative and technical advancement. The role of higher education establishments in today's world is huge, complex and vivacious. An extensive range of trials and openings are developing, that have radical, financial and communal effects. Perhaps, the most important are the trials related with shifting viewpoints of information itself, which are powerfully swaying the part and the charge of academies in our society.

"No country can really develop until its citizens are educated." – Nelson Mandela

Undoubtedly, getting higher education increases the scope of people's skills and knowledge, which in turn paves way for innovation, productivity, creativity, thereby fuelling entrepreneurship and technological developments. Educated inhabitants can be the crucial element of a country's growth which forms the economy and underwrites the poverty drop. It is perceived that excellent tutoring and fiscal performance are unswervingly associated in relation to development. Therefore, this paper attempts to highlight the current developments and existing challenges in the higher education sector of India and discusses its role in the economic progress of the nation.

During the 150th year celebration of the Madras University, the President of India Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam stated that higher education would have to be continuously innovative, and make use of modern technology. He emphasized that research and inquiry, creativity and innovation, use of high technology, entrepreneurial and modern leadership were synonymous with the notion of a good educational model.

Considerable Restructurings:

Supplementary central changes will take longer to attain nonetheless could finally produce even better achievements in the superiority of undergraduate education. They include the following:

Refining graduate education:

Colleges and campuses must reconfigure graduate agendas. Universities have already initiated to make graduate learners to teach by giving them breaks to assist professors in large lecture sequences and by generating centers where they can get aid to become better teachers.

However, today many Ph.D. owners discover employment in colleges that are primarily ardent to teaching or toil as assistant teachers and are not likely to be research oriented.

To improve the quality of Indian higher education institution can be accelerated through the approaches like strong institutional governance and high quality leadership (Sengupta & Halder, 2014). Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) in its report (2013) has stressed that academic leadership is an "area of deficiency".

An additional generous groundwork is essential and will become ever more essential as the figure of applicable information continues to raise. With all the discussion in graduate institute spheres about formulating doctoral scholars for occupations separate from university, one has to marvel why sectors devote time preparing Ph.D. applicants for totally dissimilar professions before they have established adequate programs for the academic posts that graduate schools are made-up to serve, and that most of their scholars remain to occupy.

Creating a teaching faculty:

The seeds of such an alteration already exist through the propagation of teachers who are not on the lease trail but are appointed on a year-to-year basis or a fairly lengthier period to teach rudimentary undergraduate courses. Those assistant teachers now constitute as much as 70 percent of all college tutors. The duplication of such teachers has mostly been an ad hoc response to the need to cut budgets in order to manage with unadorned financial burdens ensuing from falls in State sustenance and greater pupil registrations. But investigators are discovering that depending on informally hired, part-time tutors can have hostile effects on graduation rates and the superiority of teaching. Earlier or far ahead, the current practices appear assured to stretch to additional acceptable arrangements. One reasonable consequence would be to make a carefully-selected, permanent teaching faculty, the fellows of which would lack occupancy but have appointments for a extensive time of years with enforceable assurances of academic liberty and acceptable bill if their agreements are not reintroduced. Such teachers would get chances for skill expansion to be converted into more well-informed and capable instructors, and they would impart extra time per week than the tenured faculty. In return, they would obtain satisfactory salaries, benefits and amenities and would share in discussions over educational strategies though not in matters involving research and the selection and promotion of tenure-track instructors.

Progress may have to come steadily as finances allow. But instead of today's legions of casually hired, poorly paid and uncertain assistant teachers, a considerable section of the college faculty would hold the time, exercise and job safety to contribute in an ongoing effort to develop additional effective devices of training to engross their scholars and support them grow additional lasting value from their lessons.

Re-thinking the undergraduate program:

The acquainted partition into arenas of meditation, electives and over-all instruction leaves too little room for pupils to chase all of the goals that instructors themselves think significant for a well-versed academy teaching. This three-way construction, with its importance on the main and its grip of disseminating necessities and widespread electives, was offered by research universities and strategized further to fulfil the welfares of a tenured, research-oriented faculty than to attain the numerous goals

of a decent undergraduate education. The prevailing structure is unlikely to alter so long as verdicts near the syllabus persist under the high-class control of the tenure-track instructors who profit from the status quo.

The apparent medication is to embrace the non-tenure-track teachers who currently make up most of the teaching faculty in curricular evaluations play a significant part in trying to attain the aims of undergraduate teaching and contribute in the process. It is asymmetrical to permit the tenure-track faculty to relish special control over the curriculum when they offer such a restricted segment of the teaching. Such a reorganization might be tough beneath the existing circumstances in many academies where most undergraduate teachers work part-time, are frequently selected randomly, and often lack either the time or the interest to partake wholly in a review of its undergraduate program. If assistant teachers attain the position formerly described, their noticeable part in training scholars would enable them to a seat at the table to converse the scholastic program, comprising its present structure. Such a step could as a minimum upsurge the probability of a thoughtful dialogue of the prevailing curricular structure to fix whether it actually aids the numerous goals of undergraduate teaching.

Colleges should also ponder permitting certain significant sharing by associates of the managerial workforce who are mainly tangled in college life, such as the deans of student matters and directors of admission. The existing division between formal education and the extra-curriculum is illogical, since many objectives of undergraduate tutorings, such as ethical improvement and training for citizenship, are inclined considerably by the strategies for admitting students, the management of guidelines for student conduct, the counselling of undergraduates, the nature of residential life and the extracurricular events in which many students partake. Representatives from all assemblies accountable for the strategies and practices that affect these aims should have something to contribute to the assessments of undergraduate learning.

The Necessity for Research:

There is a pressing need for added and improved research both to recover the quality of undergraduate teaching and to upsurge the quantity of pupils who complete their studies. Amids the numerous queries worthy of inspection, four lines of investigations appear particularly significant:

- How can remedial education be enhanced? At present, low rates of completion in remedial courses are a major weakness to raising levels of educational achievement. The use of computer-aided instruction in remedial calculation offers encouraging example of the kind of development that could produce considerable benefits.
- Little is known about the types of courses or additional undergraduate practices that donate to such non-economic assistances in future life as improved fitness, better public involvement and lesser occurrence of material misuse and other types of self-destructive conduct. Improved understanding of those acquaintances might aid instructors upsurge the permanent worth of a college education while rendering a tougher experimental basis for the far-reaching assertions often made about the lifelong profits of a generous education. Such understanding

would also decrease the danger of accidentally eradicating treasured features of a college education in the haste to catch faster, cheaper means of making pupils gain noble occupations of instant worth to financial progress.

- Current research proposes that healthier counselling and other methods of student care may considerably improve the influence of amplified monetary assistance in improving the statistics of scholars who finish their educations.
- More effort is desirable to grow superior ways for colleges to quantity student scholarship, not only for precarious thinking and writing but also for other resolutions of undergraduate teaching.

The significance of this latest fact can barely be overvalued. Deprived of dependable procedures of education, struggle for pupils can do little to advance the class of training, since candidates have tiny way of knowing which college proposes them the finest education. Provosts, deans, departments and other administrative heads have difficulty in recognizing weaknesses in their academic curricula and need remedial action. Educational leaders will be handicapped in trying to convince their instructors to alter the technique they teach if they cannot offer resounding signal that different approaches will bring better outcomes.

Instruction was typically measured as a research-dependent bustle, education was self-evident. The traditional reward system, primarily based on scientific performance (e.g. publications) lacked concern about quality teaching. This trend therefore overlooked the purpose of teaching, while research drew the attention of leaders, researchers, politicians and funding councils. This trends has been regularly explored and even denounced by scholars, like Gibbs who has asked that the same quality enhancement processes already used for research be applied to teaching, such as peer review, rewards for excellence, co-operative work, and incentives to read and discuss the literature. He stated that teachers should receive training, funding and access to better facilities (Gibbs, 1995). All these modifications might do a lot to progress the class of undergraduate teaching as well as upsurge levels of accomplishment. With more investigations and experimentations, additional valuable concepts will certainly continue to appear.

The challenges:

Despite the cited quantitative immense growth during the past over one decade, the Indian subcontinent suffers from severe challenges on the road to organize its higher education system for the best possible economic development. In 2012, former UN diplomat Shashi Tharoor said, "India is entering the global employment marketplace with a self-imposed handicap of which we are just beginning to become conscious — an acute shortage of quality institutions of higher education. For far too long, we have been satisfied with the fact that we had produced, since the 1960s, the world's second chief pool of qualified scientists and engineers." (Implementing Quality in Higher Education, 2012).

Recommendations for the Development of the Quality of Higher Education:

Following are the procedures essential to recover the quality of education and research in higher education establishments in India:

- Offer need based and value based academic programs of studies which are interdisciplinary in their approach.
- Maintain highest standards in teaching and learning, complacent care and the extracurricular programs so that each student thrives to do their best.
- Establish academic events to make conditions for intensive devotion to the expansion of explicit disciplines and improvement of information through exchange of ideas and by bringing together several interdisciplinary approaches.
- Improve the class of instruction and learning according to global standards and all other dimensions, viz. curriculum areas, by means of innovative pedagogical practices and cutting-edge technology through accreditation with concerned bodies in all fields.
- Meet the global benchmarks in terms of educational facilities, physical infrastructure and research environment.
- Import quality education, sound learning and extensive corporate exposure to the students which would ensure their holistic development.
- Exercise effective control on expenditure to remain financially-stable, thereby continuing to offer good value for money to all stakeholders.
- Recruit and retain the best staff, and enhance the capacity to promote our staff so that they feel fulfilled and supported, as well as equipped.
- Take proper actions for encouraging innovations in the teaching-learning procedure, inter-disciplinary educations and research.
- Develop boardings for foreign students, including the ongoing upgrading of facilities for students and staff.
- Maintain and develop our infrastructural resources to provide the highest quality of facilities for the education we wish to offer.
- Ensure a pleasant working environment for all members of the community.

The institutes should start skill based add on vocational courses for the vertical mobility of the students. Choice based credit programs should be properly implemented.

The institute should also promote International Strategic Partnership and collaborations with leading universities and business schools which shall include:

- Student exchange program
- Faculty exchange program
- Joint monographs
- Joint publications in the form of international journal and edited books.
- Joint research on contemporary issues

The institutes should have a social conscience to fight for downtrodden, and underprivileged students and society at large. They should undertake the extension work with NGO's, state governments, central government and other agencies in the areas of gender equality, economic self-reliance of women, girl education, population issue, issue of women rights, social exploitation, sexual harassment, female foeticide, mental health and general awareness.

The institutes should provide in-house training in the areas of communication, public speaking skills, creativity and innovation, team building, leadership effectiveness, stress management, time management, art of negotiation etc.

Higher education organizations are unfavorably significant here. Academies should be proactive in positioning openings for existing pupils to grow industrial proficiency through work know-how and practicums. In addition, technological and workstation talents' preparation should be done along with a theoretical syllabus. It can further be helpful in proposing mentoring prospects to support and formulate hopeful graduates for a competitive trade arcade. Information actually is power, but it's not just about prescribed theoretical credentials. Wide-ranging employability skills assist graduates, provide establishments exactly what they require technically-inclined personnel who are supple, systematized, and resourceful. In addition, universities are ideally-placed to offer employability, teaching to individuals wanting to alter professions or apply for novel jobs, who need an update to their prevailing skills. Cutting-edge courses for proficient specialists also exemplify a thrilling connection for higher education and industry.

Online courses at *Swayam* Portal should be promoted so that students can experience learning anytime and anywhere. Today, India is one of the wildest emerging nations of the world with the annual growth rate going above 9%. In order to sustain the rate of growth, there is need to focus on the quality of advanced learning. Presently, only few institutions in India are able to compete with the quality standards of World Ranking Organizations like THE, QS and ARWU. There is no Indian higher educational institute that is positioning itself in the top 100 universities of the world. In order to strive and thrive, there is an urgent need to relook the financial resources, quality standards, access and equity, and relevance of research. Therefore, in order to achieve and sustain national, regional or international quality, certain factors are relevant which demand careful attention like skill development, sound teaching and learning for holistic development, physical infrastructure and research environment, innovative pedagogical practices, vocational education, cross-disciplinary and multidisciplinary engagement etc.

I would like to quote few lines of a popular song by Cliff Edwards-

*"When you wish upon a star,
Makes no difference who you are,
Anything your heart desires,
Will come to you"*

Conclusion:

In short, the Indian education system should alter in agreement with the fluctuating periods and it is high time that the educators, scholars, administration and intelligentsias understand their tasks to guarantee a bright future in the light of applied technological education which is relevant in the long run.

The higher education segment has a widespread, established effect on the budget. Its convergence with corporate offers marketable worth to invention, while hypothetical teaching and skills drill aid entities and establishments to have the gears to prosper in a knowledge-based economy. Quality has both absolute and relative connotations. The idea of absoluteness in quality supports the moral of the higher education system at the delivering

as well as the receiving end i.e. institutional and students respectively.

The quality of a higher education system may be grasped from the point of assessment of rules and principles, which may develop depending on the need of the time. The alternative dynamics for teacher preparation and the sustaining quality in teacher input, like: curriculum design and development; Curricular practices vis-à-vis evaluation of learner' performance and progress vis-à-vis curriculum evaluation; and, quality management practices become crucial.

The Indian higher education system, today, is facing strong pressure to show improvements which requires institutional governance, autonomy, and high-quality education, but the matter of the fact is that maximum of the higher education establishments are incapable to encounter the global standard. As a result, the need of an extreme new breed of leadership in higher education becomes obvious.

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