



Challenges Before the Indian Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

India has one of the largest higher education systems in the world. Government of India focused on to create knowledge society, expansion of deepening excellence and achieving equal access to quality higher education in 12th five year plan (2012-17). Even though, there are still millions of youngsters who are far to have access of the higher education in India and many are not aware of the importance of Higher Education. In this Globalized arena, the entry of private sector in the field of higher education leads to more expensive where it has become hard for the majority to get into it. Moreover, higher education which is under the hands of private individuals has become a profit-making business. There are two weighty challenges before Indian higher education to meet global standards, firstly, higher education requires Government support, access of higher education to all, reform education policies by following the international trends to make students' talent, competence, determination, initiative and innovation at several levels.

KEYWORDS

Higher Education, Challenges

The core mission of Higher Education is to educate, to train, to undertake research and to provide service to community. In the context of globalization, the scope and demand for the higher education is increasing day by day. The new paradigms in higher education involve creation of intellects of world standard and also training of skilled human power at mass level without compromising on quality which has become the touchstone of higher education in 21st century.

Higher education plays a vital role in the overall development and growth of a country. It imparts in-depth knowledge and understanding so as to expose the students to new frontiers of knowledge in different walks of life. It not only broadens the cerebral power of individual within a narrow specialization but also gives a wider perspective of the world around. It is only the higher education that provides qualified and trained human resources to keep pace with the fast changing world. While elementary and secondary education fulfills the needs of a common man, it is the higher education alone which takes a man ahead of others in this competitive world. Investing into higher education is highly rewarding in order to strengthen the society and the nation as a whole.

II CURRENT SCENARIO OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The vastness and variety of the system of higher education could be viewed from the fact that we have about 547 universities and about 26000 colleges dispensing education with about 5,21,843 teachers at different levels and types to nearly 23,76,718 students who represent diverse cultural and socio-economic layers and regions. There can be no doubt that higher education has made a significant contribution to economic development, social progress and political democracy in India.

The Government of India has been quite concerned to ensure progress in the growth of higher education as it is aware that a knowledge society can be built on the fabric of higher education only. A good number of Commissions and Committees were setup by the Government of India to study the major challenges / issues/concerns of the Indian higher education and suggest ways and means to overcome them. A number of reports were tabled to the government. Some of the significant reports include Radhakrishnan Commission Report (1949), Kothari Commission Report (1964-1966); National Policy on Education (1968); National Policy on Education (1986); Acharya Ramamurthy Committee Report (1990); Programme of Action (1992); Report to the Nation: National Knowledge Commission (2005); Report of the Committee on Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher

Education' (2008) etc. These Commissions and Committees have deeply studied the issues, challenges and problems of the Indian higher education including the financial aspects also.

III MAJOR CHALLENGES BEFORE THE INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

The major challenges before the Indian higher education can be stated as follows: **1 Quality and Excellence:**

Quality of higher education has always been a major concern of the Government and UGC with massive institutional expansion of higher education during the last few years, the quality has been further compromised. UGC has devised a number of schemes to raise the standard of teaching and research in the universities and the colleges. Such Schemes like Universities with Potential for Excellence (UPE), Colleges with Potential for Excellence (CPE) Special Assistance Programme (SAP), Centre of Advanced Studies (CAS), etc have been trying to uplift the quality and excellence of higher education. Such more schemes are necessary to be devised for the enhancement in quality and excellence of higher education.

2 Academic and Administrative Reforms

During XI Plan UGC has taken a major initiative for academic and administrative Reforms in higher education. These Reforms were aimed at promotion of quality and excellence in teaching and research. To initiate such reforms UGC has given importance to – a) Introduction of semester system b) choice based credit system c) Revision of curriculum and e) examination reforms. The academic and administrative reforms is an ongoing process or exercise. Therefore it is utmost necessary that in the competitive world innovations in academic and administrative areas are very essential.

3 Globalization of Higher Education

Higher education is one of the most globalised activities. It is said that the cross- border higher education promotes the possibility for innovation in teaching and delivery methods and promotes greater mobility of students' programmers and providers. Informal globalization of Indian higher education has been going on for quite some time by way of students and teachers going abroad for higher studies, teaching, and research. Indian students have been going in large number to Universities in the United States of America, United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand. In the same way higher educational institutions from UK and USA have entered into maximum number of collaboration with Indian institute.

UGC is also implementing a scheme of Promotion of Indian Higher Education Abroad (PIHE). India also attracts students from about 195 countries most of whom come from countries of Asia and Africa. Most of these students enroll in India to undergraduate courses. A number of measures are essential to give initiatives to globalization of Indian higher education

4 Financial Constraints

Adequate resources have always been a challenge before higher education. Only about 1.0 % of India's GDP is spent on higher education. It is lower than that of countries like United States of America (2.9%), United Kingdom (1.3%) and China (1.5%) . A research study in this respect shows that about 75% of the maintenance expenditure goes on salaries and pensions

and 15% is utilized for the claims such as rents, electricity, telephone and examinations in Indian higher educational institutions. A number of Commissions and Committees have recommended and governments also have pledged from time to time that 6% GDP should be earmarked for education. However none has provided 6 % of GDP for education. It is a matter of satisfaction that the Central Government had taken a bold initiative and increased the allocation for higher education during XI plan to Rs. 46,449 crore from the meager expenditure of Rs,3,984 crore during x plan. Huge funds have flown into the system of higher education during the period of XI plan. But the State Governments have not risen to the occasion. Their allocation for higher education has not increased on the lines of Central Government. In most of the Universities and colleges vacant positions of the teachers are not yet filled up, buildings and infrastructure are poorly maintained and the maintenance grants have stagnated for a number of years. So various steps by the Central Government and state governments are essential to be taken to facilitate financial assistance to the institutes of higher education

5 Poor Standard of Primary and Secondary Education

Primary education is the foundation stone of any education system and secondary education is the back bone. All are well known about the miserable condition of Indian primary and secondary education. Till today both levels of education are unable to serve their purpose. Most of the children of primary and secondary school complete their schooling without undergoing adequate training. So when they go for higher education they face a lot of difficulties. If these stages of education are upto the mark in their performance then the poor performance of higher education is obvious.

6 Quality of Research

Teaching and research are interrelated and are integral parts of higher education. The qualities of teaching and research are the back bone of development of any nation. More research is one of the prominent indicators of quality of higher education. So imputes to research is essential in higher education.

7 Politicization of Higher Education

Politicization of Higher Education has become the main obstacle in the quality of higher education. Now a days, it has become a trend in the Indian higher education although the interference of politics in educational institutions is legally banned. Most of the political parties are influencing the higher educational institutions. Its seem to be one of the major challenges before Indian higher education.

8 Unplanned Growth of Institutions

The mushrooming of private educational institutions in the country stands testimony to the quality of taking a back seat in higher education. Engineering and medical colleges in the private sector have endangered the quality of higher education

9 Increasing Strength of Students

The dictum education for all is harming the quality of higher education because the strength of students in classes is increasing year after year and violating the given ratio of num-

ber of students in classes. It is certainly harming the quality of higher education

IV Conclusion

Thus we find a number of challenges in the Indian higher education. These challenges can be solved or minimized with the help of active initiatives of the Central Government and State Governments and also with the deliberations of intelligentsia in the country.

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