Higher Education In India: Challenges, Opportunities And Suggestions

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Abstract

Higher education sector in India is undergoing rapid transformation. Since Independence this sector has growth remarkably. The country now has the largest higher education in the world in terms of number of institution; it holds the second largest place in terms of student enrollment. However despite this impressive statistics, there are still many inadequacies that plague the sector. India’s GER (Gross Enrollment Ratio) not only significantly lags behind that of developed nations such as US, Switzerland, Japan and UK but also that of developing countries including China, Brazil, Malaysia and Philippines. Rising co-modification, substandard quality, inappropriate measures of assessment, lack of focus on quality research and development, poor infrastructure and faculty shortages are some of the enormous issues that the education sector is currently grappling with. This paper seeks the challenges and opportunities of higher education in India and also talks about some suggestions for making India a real knowledge hub.

Keywords: Higher Education, Research, Challenges, Opportunity, Enrollment

INTRODUCTION

Higher education means different things to different people. If we talk about higher education in terms of level, it means to gain higher educational qualification by the teaching learning process in the higher educational institutes such as colleges and universities knowledge develops the students ability and also given him/her a wider perspective of the world around. Higher education becomes input to the growth and seen as an opportunity to participle in the individual through a flexible education mode.
Aim of Education:
According to Huxley-“The main purpose of the education is the construction of the character.” We must first understand the aim of the education. A student, who wishes to develop and build up character, will learn how to do so from any good book on the subject. The stage of Higher education is very important stage of our life. Because in this stage the student has the development of socially relationally, spiritually etc. It is in the hands of the students to make good the defects in their character, for no one else can do this for them. Without proper education and the knowledge acquired through such education, millions cannot acquire the true knowledge of the self.

Higher Education In India:
Next to china and United States India has the third largest higher education system in the world in term of size and its diversity and largest in the world in term of number of educational attain a massive growth. In the India system, higher (tertiary) education starts after the 10+2 (i.e. ten year of primary and secondary education flowered by two years senior secondary educations.) Framework of higher education in India is very complex .It include various types of institutions like universities, collages, institution of national importance, polytechnics etc. Universities are also of India, by an act of parliament which are responsible for arranging and distributing resources required by distributing resources required by university grant commission (UGC), state universities, Deemed universities (aided & unaided) and primate 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-ordinate 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 Indian

Regulatory Bodies:
- University grant commission (UGC)
- All India council for Technical education (AICTE)
• Council of Architecture (COA)

**Research Councils:**
- Indian council of Research (ICHR)
- Indian council of social science Research (ICSSR)
- Indian council of philosophical Research (ICPR)
- National council of Rural Institute Research (NCRI)
- Project of History of Indian science philosophy and culture (PHISPC)

**Challenges facing higher education:**
This fall into broad categories:

- The low quality of teaching and learning: Arguably, the greatest challenge facing higher education in India is the chronic shortage of quality faculty. Various reports estimate that 30-40% of faculty positions are unfilled. Most faculties have had no training in teaching. Other issue in teaching and learning which compound the problems include:
  - Outdated, rigid curricula and the absence of employer engagements in course content and skills development very few opportunities for interdisciplinary learning.
  - Pedagogies and assessment are focused on input and rote learning; student has little opportunity to develop a wider range of transversal skills, including critical thinking, analytical reasoning, problem-solving and collaborative working.
  - Higher student: teacher ratio, due to the lack of teaching staff and pressure to enroll more students.
  - Separation of research and teaching: lack of early stage research experience.
  - An ineffective quality assurance system and a complete lack of accountability by institutions to the state and central government, students and other stakeholders.
This has resulted in graduates with low higher education across south Asia, and an insufficient basis for movement to higher levels of study and research. These problems are endemic across higher education institutions in India, including many of the “top tier” institutions, but particularly so in affiliated colleges and state universities.

- **The supply-Demand gap:**
  Despite an average growth rate of over 7% in the last decade, Indians GER in higher education is very low. By some estimates, even if India succeeds in its largest of 30% GER by 2020, 100 million qualified students will still not have places at university. India needs to drastically increase the number of places at universities and enrollment through distance learning programmer. Over the last offered by universities and colleges has narrowed resulting in saturated markets for engineers, technology graduated and MBAs.

- **Uneven growth and access to Opportunity:**
  Despite efforts to spread the location of higher education institutions of more evenly across the country, there is wide variation, particularly between urban and rural areas, but also between states. There are still Significant multi dimensional inequalities in enrolment rates between rural and urban populations, rich and poor, Minority and mainstream communities, maid and women and people with disabilities. Inclusive growth” is a priority for reform in Indian Education with the growth in the middle classes; Indian universities must prepare themselves for considerable changes in student profile.

- **Constraints on research and Innovation:**
  In the times Higher Education world University Rankings 2014-15, not a single university from India could make it to the list of top 275 Universities in the world and no India Institutes form engineering and technology figures in the list of top 100 Universities for that category. Isn’t it shocking for a country that boards of institutions and producing number of engineers than any other country in the world does not have a single world – class University?
  Over emphasis on academic qualifications by the University grants commission (UGC) has resulted in a number of university teachers registering for Ph.D. programmer. It is not passion for research but
passion for climbing up the career ladder in the form of promotion that motivates teachers to register for Ph.D. As a result, the quality of most Ph. D research is sub-standard and our Indian universities have highly qualified but highly unproductive academics. India cannot build internationally recognized research –Oriented Universities overnight, but the country has the key elements in place to being and sustain the process. India will need to create a dozen or more universities that can competes internationally to fully participate in the new world economy. Without these universities, India is destined to remain scientific back water.

Opportunities:

- Unsaturated demand for quality global education.
- Low GER of 15% in higher education as compared to 84% in USA.
- Sharp decline in dependency ratio predicted in the next 30 year
- India is expected to emerge as a global hub in education in Asia pacific region.
- Low focus on R & D.

Suggestion for improving the system of higher education:

- There is a need to implement innovation to transformation approach from primary to higher education level to make Indian educational system globally more relevant and competitive.
- In Higher educational Institutes Industrial Co-operation must be there for the development of curriculum, organizing expert Lectures internships, line projects, career counseling and placements.
- Higher education institutes need to improve quality, reputation and establish credibility through student exchange, Faculty exchange programs, and other collaborations with high-quality national and international higher educational institutes.
- Government must promote collaboration between Indian higher education institute between India higher education institutes and top International institute and also generates linkage between and research centers of top institutes for better quality and collaborative research.
There is a need to focus on the graduate students by providing them such courses in which they can achieve excellence, gain deeper knowledge of subject so that they will get jobs after recruitment in the companies which would unnecessary rush to the higher education.

**Conclusion**
The problems that confront Indian higher education today are low rates of enrollment, unequal access and poor quality of infrastructure and lack of relevance. The goals remain the same quality and relevant education. The main challenge to be overcome is to increase the present rate of enrollment of 20 percent given the low rate of enrollment be need more quality teaching institutions at the undergraduate level. The influence of a academicians on polices and the obsession with a flawed notion of excellence in terms of it being only about researcher have undermined the focus of having teaching institutions. Nobody denies the utility of research in teaching , but it should knowledge is equally important.

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