

HIGHER EDUCATION-ISSUES & CHALLENGES : A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Education is a very important factor for the development of a country. We should make it appropriate according to the time and changing scenario of the world. Education provides an opportunity to reflect upon the social, economic, cultural, and moral issues facing by a human being. India needs to focus on education for more educated and efficient people to drive our nation. In the world, there are many Indian who well known for their capabilities and skills. To develop India as a digital nation or to become a prosperous partner in global development, India has to strengthen higher education with research and development. This paper is mainly focused on the overall scenario of higher education in India. This paper aims to identify issues and challenges in the field of higher education in India. Finally, the paper concluded here is all stakeholders have to make jointly effort to get solutions of the problems in higher education in India.

INTRODUCTION:

India is developing the country and to achieve our goal we have to strengthen our higher education system. The continuing growth of the middle class in India (approximately 200 million people) has led to increased demand for higher education and we know that this demand cannot be met by the Indian Higher Education system. Although the Indian government is planning to establish new universities and colleges in the near future, these will not be enough to provide places for all students who seek higher education. If we think that what will India be like 25 years from now? Then we can find in some areas we can estimate quantitatively with a fair degree of confidence. In some others, we know the broad direction but are unable to reasonably put numbers to the country's likely accomplishment. Here we can indicate what would be most desirable and point out the opportunities and obstacles that will arise along the way. The main objective of the study is to identify issues and challenges in the field of higher education in India.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY:

According to **Altbach (2005)**, "India has significant advantages in the twenty-first-century knowledge race. It has a large higher education sector – the third largest in the world in student numbers, after China and the United States. It uses English as a primary language of higher education and research. It has a long academic tradition. Academic freedom is respected... Yet, the

weaknesses far outweigh the strengths. India educates approximately 10 percent of its young people in higher education, still a rather low number by international standards"

Altbach also points out that there are relatively few high-quality higher education institutions in India – "the world-class institutions are mainly limited to the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) and perhaps a few others such as the All India Institute of Medical Sciences and the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research. These institutions, combined, enroll well under 1 percent of the student population" (**Altbach 2005**). There is clearly a need for an increase in the provision of high quality higher education in India. As the public higher education system has been unable to provide enough places for the demand, there has been a growth in a range of private higher education providers. "A significant number of 'reputed' private institutions were accorded the status of 'deemed universities', thereby permitting them to confer degrees, and private providers became important actors in widening access to higher learning and training in India" (**Bhushan 2006**).

According to **Kemp (2007)**, "The Indian 11th Five Year plan requires an additional seven million new places in higher education by 2012 and a total of 16 million additional places in higher education by 2020." There are already many private higher education providers in India, such as Manipal University, NIIT, Birla, the Vedanta University, and

many wealthy business groups in India are investing in education – some with a background in education, others with business backgrounds in other sectors (such as Birla). The higher education sector in India had million enrolments in 2006, and with a burgeoning middle class of approximately 200 million people, there is a strong demand for higher education places which the public education system cannot meet.

OBJECTIVES:

To study the various issues and challenges of Higher Education in India.

Issues and challenges:

Integration, inclusiveness, openness, and flexibility are the most important dimensions of the learning environment required in the perspective of Indian Higher Education. In such an environment, traditional distinctions such as those between formal, non-formal and informal learning, as well as those between distance education and face-to-face instruction, become increasingly irrelevant. We require greater thrust to scientific and technological advancements. We should encourage universities to become cradles of higher learning and research, contributing generation of high-skilled global human resource force.

Knowledge becomes Superpower:

Humanity has gone through 3 ages of civilization namely agricultural era, industrial era and knowledge era. We are assumed to be in the knowledge era. We refer to the present society as a knowledge society. To make India a knowledge superpower higher education has to play a key role. Universities and colleges provide higher education to more than nine million students. To enable India to become knowledge superpower, education and knowledge resources have to reach out to a large number of people through various means in a seamless way. The new information communication technology has expanded its outreach through the Internet.

Therefore, the vision is to electronically reach out a large number of students, teachers, and the general public with the quality educational material, so as to address the issues of access to higher education with equity and quality. India has significant advantages in the 21st century knowledge race. It has a large higher education sector, the third largest in the world (in student numbers) after China and the United States. It uses English as a primary language of higher education and research. But there are a small number of high-quality institutions,

departments, and centers that can form the basis of the quality sector in higher education. The fact that the States, rather than the Central Government, exercise major responsibility for higher education creates a rather cumbersome structure, but the system allows for a variety of policies and approaches.

Numbers of Universities:

In India, one problem is numbers and the other is quality. We want to be a developed country. If we really want to achieve that target, we should have at least 20% of the age group in higher education. The present number is uncertain but is reported to be around 10%. In other words, within a decade we will have to double the opportunities for higher education. It is just impossible for the Government alone to create the facilities needed. Private providers have to play a role.

On the 29th of November 2006, the Chairman National Knowledge Commission wrote to the Prime Minister, recommending 1500 universities from India. Again, 2 years later, in 2008, Yasphal Committee recommended 1500 universities from India. These numbers are by no means large. The USA has 3500 universities; the UK with a population less than that of Tamil Nadu has 125 universities; Germany with a population of 82 million has 350 universities; Japan with a population of 127 million has 726 universities. It is said that a nation must periodically introduce minor revolutions. Otherwise, it will have to face a major revolution. India today, requires really a major revolution in higher education.

Foreign Educational Institute:

There are a number of rationales for allowing foreign education institutions to be established in India. These are: to improve human resource development; to upgrade the quality of Indian higher education by internationalizing some specialized research areas; to minimize brain drain; to promote competitiveness; and to attract foreign investment in education. If we allow foreign educational institute than what will be the scenario? They will not focus on our culture and values, our students may become foreigner from within so we will lose our young generation. We have to make certain policies to handle these issues.

Advance Research:

Coming to another important component of higher education, that is research. In the Science Summit held in Bangalore, in 2000, the former secretary of

the Department of Science and Technology gave the following information based on estimates that emerged in a discussion meeting. In technology that is used in India, the foreign components were as follows: (1) Foreign technology used without alteration 50% (2) Foreign technology modified and adapted to suit our need 45% (3) Indigenous technology 5%. The Defence Minister of India stated in Parliament that, our weapons are out-dated and we are depending on imports from abroad for nearly 70% of our equipment. In an age of globalization, no country will sell advanced technology or lend advanced technology. We have to substantially develop our own. This requires augmenting our research capability. We may take a look at the state of research in India. It may be meaningful to compare our position with China. In 1980, India published 10,606 papers with citations. The number from China was 682. In 1990, India published 11563 research papers and the number from China was 6991. In 2005, the number from India was 25227 while the number from China was 72,362. We have to focus on advance research to fulfill our requirement in different areas. We should not depend on other countries for any equipment.

Research in Higher Education:

The higher education sector in India spends 4.1% of country's research fund. It is 17.0% in Germany; 22.6% in U.K. and 10.1% China. The research manpower in China is 8.6 lakhs; in India 1.3 lakhs and even in Korea it is 1.5 lakhs. Higher education scene in India should kindly be looked into. Every institution has Lecturers, Assistant professor, and Professor; and all are expected to do research. In India, higher education is in the affiliated colleges which are 22000 in number. They have no Professor; not even Assistant professors necessarily. Ninety percent (90%) of our undergraduate students and 66% of our postgraduate students; and 84% of our faculty in higher education are in the affiliated colleges. There is no research in the affiliated colleges; this means that in the field of higher education 84% of faculty members do not do research. They are not expected to do research and only 16% of the faculty in higher education is expected to do research in the country. How can university research prosper with such grossly inadequate numbers not engaging in research, in comparison with the entire higher education faculty being expected to do research in advanced countries? The India higher education sector should spend more money for research and motivate faculty of higher education working in

affiliated colleges.

Teacher Education:

At present teacher education programme (B.Ed.) is of two years duration after graduation. Pre-service education should provide enough exposure to the teacher so that they can fully utilize information and communication technologies. The focus of teacher training should become more school based. Teacher education programs should offer inputs so that the teachers become more commitment-oriented. Teacher education programmes should develop in teachers a new insight about a plurality of perspectives. This means each individual is unique and different from the other. There is another aspect which relates to developing collaborative programmes of teacher education jointly by the National Council of Educational and Training, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, State Council of Educational Research and Training and District Institute of Education and Training. At the moment these different institutions which are research and resource organizations work more or less in isolation (**Trist 1983**). Complexity and the flux of environment give rise to Meta problems which are different from discreet problems. Meta problems require inter-organization collaborations which provide poly-dimensional and multi-facet solutions. Thus, it is necessary that institutions like National Council of Educational and Training, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, National Council of Teacher Education, University Grants Commission and others have more collaborative projects.

Education at UG level:

Universities should give more attention to undergraduate teaching. Within 10 years at least 50% of university age learners can receive higher education. Links should be developed between school education and higher education. In many universities teaching at undergraduate level is not given full attention. This trend harms university education and must be checked. Most of the teaching in universities and colleges do not keep the potentialities of the learner in view. University teachers often keep only the prescribed content in focus and are unmindful of the learner's abilities to assimilate. University teachers should have to be oriented towards this through faculty improvement programme.

Technical education:

The continuous advancement of science and the application of improved technology from the middle range. Technical education, both vocational and professional, constitutes the foundation for the development of science and technology. A large number of the country's engineering colleges need to be upgraded to quality standards nearer to those of India's world-class IITs. India's expenditure on R&D, which is currently 1/60th that of Korea, needs to be dramatically enhanced. Another essential requirement is to improve the linkage between technology development and technology application by fostering close ties between basic research and business. Concentrated efforts are needed to tap the potentials of alternative methods of knowledge delivery including television, computerized self-learning, and internet-based courses. India should embark on a massive program to convert the entire higher educational curriculum into a multimedia, web-based format and to establish accredited standards for recognition of distance educational courseware.

CONCLUSION:

The needs of higher education cannot be met by the Government alone. It needs the participation of the Government, the private providers and perhaps selectively participation of foreign universities. We

have to free ourselves from the mindset and take a realistic attitude, taking into consideration the fact that a major revolution is taking place in higher education in the world. We have to take certain steps for improvement of our higher education system.

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