Current Issues and Problems of Higher Education in India

Debabrata Mandal*

Abstract:

Education is the backbone of every country. A country will not able to survive in the competitive world, if its education system is not capable of contributing for its development. In these perspectives higher education plays an important role for the country's overall development which includes industrial, social, cultural, moral, individual, economic growth etc. India, even after 72 years of its independence, is far away from the goal of universal literacy. There are number of schools in the country, but they don't have proper basic infrastructure. The 'Higher Education' in India has grown in remarkable way, mainly in the post-independence period, in spite of in the last few decades lots of serious problem are facing the Indian higher education such kind of problem are lower level of teaching quality, economic difficulties, more concentrated on theories rather than practical knowledge, traditional method of teaching, lack of equity & quality, political interference, inadequate infrastructure and facilities.

Next few decades, India will have world's largest amount of young people, on those time it is very difficult to adjust between student and higher education institutions. However, on a possible note, India uses the higher education as a powerful tool to build a knowledge-based information society of the 21st century. There has been continuously improvement in the 'Higher Education' scenario in both quantitative and qualitative term. The system of Indian higher education is the third largest in the world which fulfills the educational requirements of millions of students who come from different section of the society. The present paper is an attempt, to identify and discuss a number of critical issues and challenges, of quantity and quality of 'Higher Education' In India and also includes some initiative or suggestions to meet those challenges. The paper is also an outcome of a review of a substantial number of secondary sources on the current scenario and challenges of higher education in India.

Keywords: Opportunities and Challenges, Enrolment, Privatization, Self-sustainability, Financing, Education system, Issues, Quality, Quantity, Solution, Global standards, Government.

1. Introduction:

'Higher education' In India is seen as one of the ways to upward social mobility, and moral development of the nation. Higher education always provides opportunities to the people to reflect on the social, cultural, moral, economic and spiritual issues. Higher education also provides specialized knowledge and skilled persons for national development. Higher education system in India has grown in a remarkable way, mainly in the post-independence period, in spite a lot of serious problems are facing the Indian higher education system. Though India has a long heritage of quality higher education system it has failed to solve the problems of Access, Equity, and Quality until recent past. Higher education is very important for a developing country like India and it is encouraging to increased human development.

_____

*Student 4th Semester, Department of Education, WBSU

The Education Commission 1964-66[1]described the role of education in social and economic transformation through a statement that a nation is shaped in its classrooms. Higher education gives individuals powers to get better employment, higher salaries. Higher education occupies special position in the education system of any country. It influences all levels of education. It influences every important national activity, it provides manpower for many areas like production, planning, management, and technological development. It influences on the future of the nation through ideas and innovation. It indicates that higher education occupies a crucial position in education system of a nation as it affects the overall development of a country.

2. Literature Review:

……………………….

3. Objectives of the Study:

1) To understand the present status of higher education system in India.
2) To find out the emerging issues & challenges of higher education system in India.
3) To analyze the major problem of higher education system in India.
4) To find out the solution for improvement the quality of higher education in India.

4. Methodology:

The present paper is a micro level and descriptive study in nature, based on secondary data collected from the published records, reports, books, journal and contributions of several institution, organizations and individual in Indie. Specifically, the secondary sources include annual reports of UGC, Education department of Ministry of Human Resource Development, planning commission, Economic survey, Websites. This is basically qualitative research and also follows the experimental approach. Discussions with experts from part of the research work. As these secondary sources have obvious limitations of sampling and dimensional studies, the present study could only be a macro analysis of the higher education system in the country as a whole.

4. Current Indian Higher Education Scenario:

In India universities established by an act of parliament (central universities) and state legislature (state universities). In India higher education starts after the (10+2). Next to china and United States India has the 3rd largest higher education system in the world in terms of size and largest number of educational institutions. The higher education system in India has grown in remarkable way after post-independence period. University plays a critical role in making our higher education system vibrant- through creating knowledge, disseminating knowledge and managing the knowledge assets. The three major areas to be focused to ensure that Indian higher education system is sustainable and meets global standards are-

---

[1]Report of the Education Commission, 1964-1966, VOL1, pp. 1-287. Retrieved from -
 http://dise.in/Downloads/KothariCommission

- Quality of Education- in terms of infrastructure, teacher, accreditation etc.
- Affordability of Education- ensuring poor and deserving student are not denied of education.
- Ethics in Education- avoiding over commercialization of education system and also ensure that Indian higher education system sustainable and meets global standards.

National Assessment and Accreditation Council [2]gave a report in which the concern was over fact that two thirds (68%) of the country's universities and   90% of its colleges are "of middling or poor quality" and that well over half of the teaching faculty in India's colleges does not have the appropriate degree qualifications.

4.1. Growth of Higher Education in India:

The growth in higher education has been phenomenal since India's independence when there were only 20 universities and 500 colleges, but now India has progressed significantly in terms of higher education statics. This number increase to 659 universities and 33023 colleges up to 2011-2012.[3]

Table-1: Growth of Higher Education Institutions[4]

Year	No. of Universities	Colleges	Students
1950-51	30	695	23549
1960-61	55	1542	56673
1970-71	103	3060	128876
1980-81	133	4722	193341
1990-91	190	7346	263125
2000-01	256	12806	411628
2010-11	564	33023	816966

Source: Annual report 2011-12 MHRD- Govt. of India & Higher Education in India at a glance 2012

India has one of the largest higher education systems in the world, with 25.9 million students enrolled in more than 45,000 degree and diploma institution in the country. India should try to become ''knowledge economy'' to promote inclusive growth in higher education.

4.2. Emerging Issues and Challenges – An Analysis:

India has been a multi-cultural, multi-religious, and multi-linguistic society. Every state has a different and distinct identity. Dealing with various aspiration of such people in a democratic country is needed a challenge to the Gov. of India. There are many basic problems faced by higher education system in India. Such kind of problem are lower level of teaching quality,

---

[2] Chahal, Naveen. & Dar, Hafizullah. (2015*). International journal of management research & review,* Article   no-**1**59-169,IJMRR/volume 5/issue 3/Article No-4/159-169
[3] Annual report 2011-12 MHRD- Govt. of India & Higher Education in India at a glance 2012
[4] Ibid.

Financing of higher education, More concentrated on theories and rather than practical knowledge, Traditional methods of teaching, Privatization, Inadequate facilities, Infrastructure and Quota system.

4.3 India's Higher education system faces challenges on three fronts:

➢ **Expansion:** India's GER of 16% was much below the world average of 27% in 2010. [5]
➢ **Excellence:**
   (i) **Faculty shortage:** There is 40% and 35% shortage of faculty in state central universities, respectively.[6]
   (ii) **Accredited Institutions:** 62% of universities and 90% of colleges were average of below average in 2010, on the basis of their NAAC accreditation.

➢ **Equity:**
   There is widely disparity in the GER of Higher Education across states and the Gross Attendance Ratio (GAR) in urban and rural, and gender and community-wise.
   (i) **Inter-state Disparity:** 47% in Delhi v/s 9% in Assam.[7]
   (ii) **Urban-Rural Divide:** 30% in urban v/s 11.1% in rural areas.
   (iii) **Difference across community:** 14.8% for OBC, 11.6% for SC, 7.7% for ST and 9.6% for Muslims.
   (iv) **Gender disparity**: 15.25 for female's v/s 19% for males.

The enrolment in higher education among various groups such as casts, religion, backward classes produce a very poor picture. While upper casts like Christian, Jains, Brahman are significantly higher than others. The rank of Muslims, SC, St, are below national averages. There is also discrimination between rural-urban, female-male. That was a serious problem of higher education.

4.4. Emerging Challenges:

No doubt India is facing various challenges in higher education but to tackle these challenges and to boost higher education is utmost important. One of the greatest challenges to higher education in India that a large number of populations demanding admission in secondary education rather than higher education. Hare some serious challenges are highlighted –

➢ **Interference of political factors:** Most of the institutions are dominant political leaders, now they are playing key role in governing bodies of the universities and colleges. They use the student energy for their political purposes.

➢ **Economic Difficulties:** The number of students is coming from the ordinary family, backward classes and villages, many of them unable to provide the minimum necessities of life for

---

[5] Annual Report, 2009-10, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development. Retrieved from https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/document-reports/AR2009-10.pdf
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.

themselves so their attention divide between a part time jobs and college/universities education.

➢ **Lack of moral values:** Rapid growth of science and technology and industrialization has great harmful and danger to our moral /values.

➢ **No proper value education**: Value education is not offered in the schools and colleges. The education-led technology, inventions and innovations being misused.

➢ **Poor women's education:** Women have a much lower literacy rate than men. Conservative cultural attitudes prevent girls from attending schools/college/ university. Despite Govt. attempts to provide incentives viz. midday meals, free books and uniforms, girl's attendance is poor. Though the minimum age for marriage is eighteen, many girls get married much earlier. Therefore, at the secondary level, female drop-out rate is high.

➢ **Constitutional provisions for women**:
  • Article 14confers on men and women equal rights and opportunities in the political, economic and social spheres.
  • Article 15 prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the ground of religion, race, caste, sex etc.
  • Article 39 (e) ensure equal pay.

Table-2 Growth of higher education enrolment boys and girls 2010-211[8]

Enrolment level	Boys	Girls	Total
Graduate	8580	6037	14637
Post Graduate	1167	882	2049
Research	81	56	137

Indian higher education system is growing very fast irrespective of various challenges but there is no reason that these Challenges cannot be overcome.

5. Various Major Problem of Higher Education:

No doubt that India faces today a number of problems pertaining to poverty, unemployment, disappearance of moral and spiritual values, corruption, terrorism etc. But in the last few decades a country wide various problem is founded in higher education system. Those are discussed as under-

  (i)   **Lack of Quality Education:** In the top 100 universities list by 'Times Higher Education World Reputation Rankings;[9] none of the Indian universities could be found in the list.

---

[8] Chahal, M. (2015).Higher Education in India: Emerging issues, challenges, and suggestions. *International journal of business Quantitative Economics and applied management*, 2349-5677 Retrieved from HTTP// www. Ijbemr.com

[9] Nadar, R. N. (2018). Contemporary issues and challenges in the Indian education system.*IOSR Journal of business and management.* PP.86-91. Retrieved from http://www.Iosrjournals.org

Ensuring quality in higher education is the foremost challenges being faced in India today. Still large number of colleges and universities in India are unable to meet the minimum requirements laid down by the UGC.

(ii)   **Inadequate infrastructure & facilities:** Poor infrastructure is another challenge to the higher education system of India, particularly the institutes run by the public section suffer from poor physical facilities and infrastructure.

(iii)   **Lack of Employability:** To ensure higher education highly employable for youth, it is necessary to make it relevant and practical. Low employability of graduates is one of the major problems in India.

(iv)   **Lack of modern relevance Curriculum:** Indian higher education is facing with the problem of poor-quality curriculum. In the most of the higher educational institute's curriculum is outdated and irrelevant.

(v)   **Lack of collaboration with the industries:** Now it is found that there is a very less collaboration of higher educational institutes with industries.

(vi)   **Equity:** There is no equity in GER among different sects of the society. There is also discrimination between rural-urban, female-male. That was a serious problem of higher education.

(vii)   **Corruption in education:** Corruption in Indian education system has been misusing the quality of education. It is one of the major contributors to domestic black money.

(viii)   **Privatization:** Approximately 50% of the higher education in India is imparted through private institutions, mainly those are unaided and very high-cost fir the student. It is also big problem.

(ix)   **Quota system:** Bringing the reservation and quota system for different categories in education lost its quality. Even deserving candidates of general categories are ignored and on quota we have to select another person from reserved category.

(x)   **Lack of quality Research work:** Today good quality research works are not found very much. The main reason is to limited focus on research and internationalization, very few Indian higher educational institutes are globally recognized.

6. Provide Solutions for Improvement the Quality of Higher Education:

Despite these challenges higher education system of India equally has lot of opportunities to overcome these challenges. These are-

(i)   **Arrangement of sufficient infrastructure:** There should be a good infrastructure of colleges and universities which may attract the students. Internet and Wi-Fi facility is still

out of reach many students.so it must be ensured to arrange the various good infrastructure of every colleges and universities which may attract the students.

(ii) **Avoid political interference:** It is very much needed for universities and colleges in both public and private must be away from the political interference.

(iii) **Relevant world class education:** There is a need to implement innovative and transformational approach from primary to higher education level to make Indian educational system globally more relevant and competitive.

(iv) **Job oriented course:** Need based job-oriented courses should be provided in colleges and universities that can fulfill the needs of society. Combination of arts subject and computer science and science and humanities or literature should be introduced so that such courses could be useful for the students to do job after recruitment in some companies.

(v) **Provide financial assistance:** It is very much necessary of providing financial assistance to economically weaker sections and also give opportunities or encouraging higher education among SC, ST Muslims.

(vi) **To increase number of universities:** We need more universities because our population is large and present number of universities is too less.

(vii) **Make education affordable to all:** Admission in educational institution should not be on caste or religion basis. Financial support to students on their caste and religion basis should be immediately stopped.

(viii) **Deal with corruption strictly:** So many colleges and universities colleges bribe from the student for giving opportunities to their admission. It must be immediately stopped.

(ix) **International collaboration:** Government must promote collaboration between Indian higher education institutes and top international institutes. With the increased development of transport and communication, the global village is witnessing a growing emphasis on international cooperation and action to find satisfactory solutions to problems.

(x) **Special grants for backward colleges and universities:** Govt. should arrange special grants to universities and colleges in backward areas for improve their infrastructure and facilitate innovations.

(xi) **Student-centered education and dynamic method:** Education must be student-centered and dynamic method. Teacher must be empowered of new attitudes and new skills. Methods of higher education also have to be appropriate to the learning to learn, learning to do, learning to be and learning to become.

(xii) **Privatization of Higher education:** Also, privatization of higher education is absolutely necessary in a vast country like India as government alone is helpless to full fill all demand of higher education.

(xiii) **Women empowerment in higher education:** Practically it could be said that higher education of female is more important than that of male. Higher can help women to go ahead, to free from all types of prejudice, to deal with the problems of her life, her family, her society and nation.

7. Conclusion:

To conclude that, Higher in India is a remarkable important part of modern Indian society. The system of Indian higher education is the second largest in the world which fulfills the educational requirements of millions of students who come from different section of the society. So, it is necessary to find out the serious problems of higher education in India and taken proper plan for reforms and improvement the higher education system. The present study expressed the current scenario of higher education in India. The key challenges of higher education related to demand supply gap, enrolments, privatization, economic problem, unemployment, colonially modeled institutions run with inadequate funding and excessive political and bureaucratic interference etc. These indicate that the situation of higher education is not admirable. Indian economy is facing various challenges regarding higher education over the period of time, so it is possible to overcome this problem through appropriate policy formation and their effective implementation. Despite all of challenges higher education system of India equally have lot of opportunities to overcome these challenges and have the capability to make its identity at international level.

References:

Aggarwal, J.C. (2004). Modern Indian Education history: development and problems. New Delhi: Shipra publication.

Ahmad, S.Y. (2017). Higher Education in India: challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Education and practice*, ISSN 2222-288X (Online), Vol 8. Retrieved from- https://files.eric.ed.gov

Annual report 2011-12 MHRD- Govt. of India & Higher Education in India at a glance 2012.

Annual Report, 2009-10, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development. Retrieved from- https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/document-reports/AR2009-10.pdf

Chahal, M. (2015). Higher Education in India: Emerging issues, challenges and suggestion. *International journal of business Quantitative Economics and applied management*, ISSN: 2349-5677, Volume 1, Issue 11.Retrieved from- http://www.Ijbemr.com

Chahal, Naveen. & Dar, Hafizullah. (2015*). International journal of management research & review,* Article no-159-169, IJMRR/volume 5/issue 3/Article No-4/159-169

Jahan, K.K, & Selvarani. D.C. (2015). Higher Education in India: Issues and challenges. International conference on Humanities literature and Management, Jan. 9-10. Dubai. Retrieved from-   http://www.icehm.org

Krishnan, D. K, & Thamarasseri, I. (2013). Contemporary issues in Indian education. New Delhi: Kanishka publishers.

Nadar, R. N. (2018). Contemporary issues and challenges in the Indian education system. *IOSR Journal of business and management,* e-ISSN: 2278, PP.86-91. Retrieved from- http://www.Iosrjournals.org

Report of the Education Commission, 1964-1966, VOL1, pp. 1-287.retrieved from- http://dise.in/Downloads/KothariCommission

Sharanabasappa, C. B, & Kadamudimatha, B.S. (2017). A study on higher education in India: Issues, challenges and direction. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development,* online ISSN: 2349-4182, page No-188-191. Retrieved from - http://www.allsubjectjournal.com

Sharma, S. (2015). Indian Higher Education System*: challenges and suggestions. Electronic Journal for Inclusive Education*. Retrieved from - http://www.coresholarlibraries.wright.edu

Singh, Vanita, & Sharma, Nirmala. (2008). Development of Higher education in India. New Delhi: Alfa publications.

Swamy, V.C. (2010). Higher education in India. New Delhi: Viva Books private limited.