

THE SCENARIO OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA: PROBLEMS & SOLUTIONS

Abstract

Education is one the most important keys for the development of a nation. It provides an idea about person's social, cultural, intellectual, psychological, moral and spiritual dimension. It is believed that India have had higher education system since thousands of years and it was the pioneer for the whole world. The ancient higher education system had scope for learning and self- development of any person but after the arrival of British government, they introduced British education system. The aims and objectives of higher education in India during the tenure of British rule was to produce English knowing Indians to do their government's job just like factory production. The ancient higher education system in India had lost its importance since then. After independence our higher education system has undergone various changes but still the effects of British education system rule over our modern education system and the psyche of each and every student in India. Now it becomes necessary to change this condition in our country. Government must have to change our present education system which have been producing just numbers of workers rather than skilled students.

This chapter aims to present the problems that India is facing currently in higher education field and also includes some solutions for the improvement of it, expectations from students, teachers and educational institutes and also some initiatives that should be taken by government.

Keywords: Higher Education, Education System, Universities, Privatization, Government, Problems, Solutions etc.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Indira Gandhi once said, “Education is a liberating force, and in our age it is also a democratizing force, cutting across the barriers of caste and class, smothering our inequalities imposed by birth and other circumstances.”

To quote Jawaharlal Nehru “A university stands for humanism, for tolerance, for reason, for the adventure of ideas and for the search of truth. It stands for the onward march of the human race towards ever higher objectives. If the universities discharge their duties adequately, then it is well within the nation and the people.”

Dr. Radhakrishnan defines education as the instrument for social, economic and cultural change. For social and national integration, for increasing productively, education should be properly utilized. “The importance of education is not only in knowledge and skill, but it is to help us to live with others.”

Dr. Radhakrishnan says that the aim of education is to bring student nearer to God. In this aim one should study the various aspects of education. Through education Dr. Radhakrishnan wants to establish a classless society in order to bring equality between man and man. He wants that education should develop universal brotherhood. The most important aim of education is to help us to see the other world, the invisible and intangible world beyond space and time. Education has to give us a second birth, to help us to realize what we have already in us. “The meaning of education is to emancipate the individual and we need the education of the whole man-physical, vital, mental, intellectual and spiritual.” Education should enable one to imbibe attitude of simple living and high thinking. Dr. Radhakrishnan has attached great importance to spiritual education. He thinks that education which does not inculcate spiritual feelings in students is not true. Without a spiritual bent of mind, the physical and intellectual development of a person remains stunted. This situation is detrimental to the progress of mankind.

A satisfactory system of education aims at a balanced growth of the individual and insists on knowledge and wisdom. It should train the intellect, and furthermore, wisdom can be gained by the study of literature, philosophy and religion that interpret the higher laws of the universe. Education should develop in the minds of the students a love of sustained thinking, adherence to truth and the power of resistance to popular sentiments and mob passion.

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. Moreover higher education imparts knowledge, develops the student’s ability and also give him/her a wider perspective of the world around. Higher education becomes input to the growth and development of industry and also seen as an opportunity to participate in the development process of the individual through a flexible education mode.

II. HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN INDIA

India has the 3rd largest higher education system in the world next to China and United States of America. In India higher education starts after the 12th standard. The

structure of higher education in India is very complicated. It includes various type of institutions like universities, colleges, polytechnics etc. Universities are also of different types like central universities which are formed by government of India, by an act of parliament which are responsible for arranging and distributing resources required by university grant commission, State universities, Deemed universities and Private universities. India has a federal set-up and the Indian constitution places education as a concurrent responsibility of both state and the center. The center co-ordinates and fixed standards in higher and technical education. There are several regulatory bodies and research councils under the Ministry of Human Resource and Development which are responsible for the higher education in India like The Medical Council of India(MCI), Indian Council of Philosophical Research(ICPR), All India Council for Technical Education(AICTE), University Grant Commission(UGC), Indian Council for Agriculture Research(ICAR), The National Assessment and Accreditation Council(NAAC) and many others which aim to control and run higher education in India.

III. PROBLEMS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

On 15th August 1947, India had 20 universities and 396 colleges. The Government of India established the University Education Commission to manage and maintain growth and improvement of higher education in India. According to All India Survey on Higher Education, there are approximately 1,113 Universities, 43,796 colleges and 11,923 standalone institutions in India at present. Look at the increment in the numbers of universities and colleges in India after independence. But the main question is about quality of higher education in our country. We gain quantity but not the quality. Due to this condition, we are facing so many problems of higher education in our country.

1. The quality of education is absent in higher education in India. As a result of poor quality many students after graduation and post-graduation find it very difficult to get job which leads them to frustration. The main factor behind unemployment is lower quality graduates. This is an intense problem for students and due to this, students are losing their faith over education system of our country.
2. Insufficient infrastructure and facilities is considered as one of the major problems of higher education in our nation. Most of the colleges do not have proper infrastructure and facilities including laboratory, library, research area, internet, digital classroom, playground, workshop and auditorium. As a result of this students do not get proper practical knowledge and environment for co-curricular and extra-curricular activities which are very essential for the self-development of any student apart from education.
3. Large vacancies in faculty positions and poor quality of teachers are another main problem in higher education. The latest trend like the appointment of part-time teachers and the stay on the full-time appointment of teachers affect the efficient functioning of colleges and universities. Nowadays government appoint teachers on contract basis for 11 months and pays fixed salary for that tenure. Most of the government colleges run on in-charge Principals. Government conducts various eligibility exams for the faculties but do not provide them recruitment and those who get recruitment are paid fixed salary for certain years. Many colleges do not have enough number of faculties for various subjects. There are very few teachers and their knowledge is very insufficient. Most of the teachers are making money with tuition classes and they do not have the proper knowledge of even their own subjects. Most of the lecturers still stick to older methods of teaching like

writing on black-board, reading from the books and dictating the ready answers to the students. They ignore audio visual aids in teaching even if available in institution. The most teachers' teaching method is traditional and outdated which lacks effective grasping power and knowledge for students.

4. The present system of higher education becomes profitable business for government like a hen which delivers golden egg regularly. It is subject to heavy government involvement. Most of the educational institutions are owned by politicians and industrialists because they have lot of money to run it. Privatization of higher education especially in courses like management, engineering, technology and medicine leads them to secure financial profit and political power. Politicization of education leads to interference in the works of staff, teachers and students of colleges. Due to this situation, they can't perform their duties effectively and it disrupt the functioning of an educational institution. Government becomes liberal in granting the permission of new colleges each year even if there are thousands of seats remain vacant in already registered colleges. Government only wants to earn money through this kind of permissions for new unnecessary colleges.

If we see the present condition of various courses in the colleges of Gujarat state for the recent years, we will get terrible data of vacant seats. There are 28,000 to 30,000 seats have been remaining vacant for the last five years in engineering. Now look at the scenario of MBA and MCA courses. More than 13,000 seats remained vacant in the year 2017. In the year 2018, 16,500 seats remain vacant at the end of round 2 of admissions where 107 colleges do not have a single admission! On the other side, it is reported that Gujarat University needs 27 new colleges for BBA, BCA and BSc courses even if more than 3000 seats remain vacant that year!

5. Liberal reservation policy of government and hike in fees each year are the another major factor that create problems in higher education. Many eligible students with higher percentage can't get admission due to general quota but the students with lower percentage get admission due to their reservation quota in the process of admission. It becomes very difficult to get deserving and aspiring students because of this poisonous reservation quota in admission and enormous hike in college fees which only a few can afford to pay. The students have to pay a heavy sum of lakhs for admission for those who do not clear entrance exam and interview. Students from poor families have disadvantage since they are not academically prepared to pass highly competitive entrance examination and on the other side, students from rich families have the atmosphere of private tuition and coaching classes which helps them to crack this kinds of exams. In this situation higher education becomes a dream for many students whose family income is low and so many stop their education with a degree course and land in a job with a low income.
6. The traditional way of organizing seminars, conferences and symposiums by educational institutions is also considered as serious problem in higher education. if you attend any seminar or conference, you will find it like listening to broken stereotypical record player. You have long speeches, paper presentations, discussion of expert panel and suggestions like "We need to change it", "Each person has to understand his responsibility", "Government should increase funding", "They must change the system", "Students must be aware", "We have to change our attitude" from the invited experts. All these points sound proper but these seminars and conferences have mainly served the purpose of networking where experts and presenters want to establish themselves as thought leaders

in order to impress the people and step forward in their careers. In the end the organizer gets their 5 minutes vote of thanks, contact details are exchanged and everybody leaves with some memory. This is the normal scenario of each and every seminar or conference in any educational institution where it remains only theoretical presentations without any beneficial practical outcome.

7. Lack of practical knowledge, various skills, project based learning and quality research work among the students are also remain major problem. Our students have the theoretical knowledge because they have to write it in exams at the end of academic year but they do not have the proper practical knowledge of any experiment, equipment, machines and even about how to operate certain functions of computer. Students are very poor in soft skills, life skills and communications skills. They can't give even proper answers during interviews for various jobs. Basically apart from bookish knowledge, they lack in the most common skills that every student should have for his/her self-development. Students have to follow heavy syllabus of text books for exams which requires a longer period but they are given very short time period to complete their projects which actually needs more time. Even teachers are not involving themselves in project based learning. The ratio of research work remains at very lower level in educational institutions. Very few students try to do genuine research work, otherwise most of them are involved in copy of previously done research in that area as a result of that most of the research works fail in the test of plagiarism.
8. It has been noticed that in the present time, most of Indian students prefer to select medical, commerce, management and engineering subjects rather than Humanities and Social Science subjects for the employment purpose because Humanities and Social Science subjects offer less jobs with lower salary than technical and commerce subjects. The students of technical and commerce courses are neglecting compulsory subjects like Communication Skills, Contributor Personality Development, English, Corporate Communication and Business Etiquettes. The number of students is decreasing year by year in Humanities and Social Science departments of various universities in India. The conditions of subjects like Hindi Literature, Sanskrit, History and Geography are worse. Government also do not pay much more emphasis on these subjects and the result of it is that students lack good command over English and communication skills, ethics, values, noble character and philosophy of life.
9. The main problem in higher education is its present system itself. Government has been following the education system since the introduction of British education model in higher education. British government removed our concepts of vedik mathematics, ancient studies, social system, yoga, ancestral languages, cultural values and ethics, importance of politics and economics from our education and introduced their history, English language, science, western theories, administration and civil services in the subjects of our higher education. Many governments tried to change it after independence but the basic concepts remain same. Our present examination system and the curriculum of subjects taught always remains defective, lakhs of students fail every year due to this problem. For example, we are taught useless theories in mathematics, fake glory of British Empire, history of Moghuls which misguide us since its introduction in our books.

IV. SOLUTIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

There are some solutions, suggestions and expectations from government, colleges and universities, industrial sector and students for improving the present condition of higher education system in India.

1. Educational institutions must hire faculties holding required degrees, with good command over communication skills and soft skills with practical knowledge of their subjects to improve the quality of education. Teachers must change their attitude towards their students. They should try to involve students not only in text book knowledge, research work, practical lessons, industrial visits, project works, laboratory sessions and library visits but also try to encourage them about developing their skills, participating in co-curricular activities and guiding them to be practical with good character and moral values in life after completing their education.
2. Higher educational institutes need to develop and improve the facilities and infrastructure level. The classrooms should be hi-tech and digital. They should provide proper internet facility so that both the teachers and students can use it for teaching, online presentations, live project work, research work and practical classes. They should provide all the necessary equipment, books and software in library and laboratories. Each educational institute must have language lab with audio visual aids to improve communication skills of students. Colleges need to organize expert lectures and career counseling for students.
3. Government needs to appoint lecturers and principals for the reserved positions in colleges. They should change their policies for that. Government should remove the contract based system for the recruitment and they should appoint teachers on the permanent basis. Government and private institutes should offer attractive remuneration to teachers so that faculties remain interested in good and out of the box teaching. Government should organize Teachers Training Programs for the recruitment of teachers. Rather than percentage in educational degrees, points and merit of teachers, they should recruit teachers on the basis of their teaching methods, presentations, practical knowledge and innovative ideas.
4. It becomes essential for the government to change their policies of earning money from granting the permissions of new colleges. Government must not permit new unnecessary colleges. Privatization of higher education is also very necessary in a country like India with 142 billion people where government alone is helpless to maintain and manage it. Industries should co-operate the educational institutes for industrial visits, practical lessons, projects, internships and job placement. Politicization becomes a major barrier in higher education. Government must stop political interference in it because two major factors leads to the downfall of a nation, one is 'Politics in education' and the other is 'Politician without education'.
5. There is a need to reform the reservation and quota system in higher education by the government which is based only on caste and religion. Government must remove it or revise it on the basis of economic condition of students. Government should design policy of admission strictly on the basis of only merit of the students. The quality will automatically improve in higher education through this step. Government must control overloaded hike in fees of colleges each year. Private educational institutes need to focus

more on it. For example, if we look upon the case of Dr. Jivraj Mehta Institute of Technology in Moga (Anand). The institute charged Rupees 55,000 as annual fees. But in the year 2018, it is offering admission to students for only 2,500 rupees per year in mechanical, civil and electrical engineering courses to those students who secured their ACPC merit number between 1 and 30,000. Private higher educational institutes should follow this kind of offers to students who are in need of it. The level of fees for higher education should be at the stage where every class of people afford to pay it. Government need to start up coaching classes with low fees for various entrance examinations and interviews for the admission process of students so that students with poor family background can attain higher education.

6. Higher educational institutes and colleges must have to change the traditional pattern of organizing conferences, seminars and educational meetings. Whatever discussed in these kinds of seminars should be followed practically than theoretically. The outcome should be beneficial for students rather than printing the expectations and suggestions in research journals. The thoughts should be transformed into actions. Government need to make policies and its implementation from the discussions, points and results of these kinds of conferences and seminars otherwise it will become futile to organize it.
7. Students need not only to focus on text book syllabus but also encourage themselves for active participation in co-curricular activities, research work, industrial visits, vocational courses, various skills development, digital presentations and class room teaching with self-awareness to sharpen their hidden talents. Students must involve themselves more in practical knowledge than theoretical knowledge of any subject. They need to improve their communication skills: listening, speaking, writing and reading so that they can give proper answers and present themselves effectively in interviews for various jobs. Students should do fair research work and they should avoid copying in it. Government should offer sufficient research grants, fellowship and stipends to research fellows to encourage them to design their career in various research areas.
8. Government need more and effective promotion of Humanities and Social Science subjects before they lose their existence in higher education. Undoubtedly students prefer technical subjects over Humanities because it offers attractive and better job. Students have to understand the equal importance of Humanities and Social Science subjects and for this, teachers also should take responsibility for the betterment of it. Most of the subjects of Humanities lead students towards the career of teaching so government should acknowledge the importance of it so that our country can produce noble teachers. It is said that “one teacher is equal to hundred mothers” because he/she teaches us not only the subjects but also how to live life with good character and guides us towards our journey in life.
9. It becomes very essential for government to change the present system of examination in higher education in India which has its root in Thomas Babbington Macaulay’s controversial ‘Minute on Education’ (1835) which is responsible for introducing British Model of Education during the British empire in our country. Government should introduce worldwide accepted Credit Based Choice (CBC) system where students can select their own subjects and also ask the examiner to conduct the examination when the students are ready for them. It becomes very essential to remove annual and semester examination system and introduce regular and continuous assessment of student’s

performance in learning. Government should provide need based job-oriented courses where students can achieve excellence, skills and practical knowledge for jobs.

V. CONCLUSION

We have explored some points of history and the present scenario of higher education system in India in this chapter. We present various problems like poor quality of education, insufficient infrastructure and facilities, students' unawareness for self-development, government's negative attitude with teachers' recruitment, traditional methods of teaching, privatization and politicization of education, reservation policy in admission, hike in fees, typical scenario of seminar and conferences, lack of practical knowledge in students, the condition of research works, less emphasis on humanities and social science subjects and our defective education system. We also explain some solutions like recruitment of skilled teachers, hi-tech facilities in educational institutes, industrial co-operation with colleges, teachers training programs, innovative ideas for students, abolition of politics in education, removal of reservation and quota system, maintain the level of fees for each class of people, practical implementation from seminars and conferences, skills development of students, continuous upgradation of curriculum, emphasis on literature, philosophy and languages, reformation of current education system and examination pattern for the improvement of higher education in India.

After having analysed various problems which Indian higher education system is facing, we have come to the conclusion that it becomes very essential to redesign or repaint our current higher education system. It is said that 'journey begins with the first step'. Now the time is to modernize our education system so that our country can get creative, innovative, skilled and knowledgeable graduate people who can lead our country from developing to developed nation on the map of world. The overall picture of higher education in India does not match with the global quality standards. Only government is not responsible for that. To improve this condition; each and every student, teacher, parents, educational institution and the persons who are directly or indirectly connected with higher education must come ahead actively to perform his/her duties and responsibilities.

In the words of Albert Einstein, "Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think."

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