

HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN INDIA: AN ANALYSIS ON PRESENT AND FUTURE WITH REFERENCE TO TEACHERS.

Abstract

Education is widely recognized as a crucial element in the development of both individuals and society. Education, training, and research are closely interconnected components that contribute significantly to the acquisition of knowledge and its responsible application. Educational institutions play a pivotal role in the dedication of efforts towards knowledge-related activities, encompassing tasks such as knowledge collection, selection, organization, processing, management, and dissemination. In the context of India, a rapidly advancing developing nation on its path to becoming a developed country, education is viewed as a fundamental and indispensable resource. The overall progress of a nation hinges on various applied disciplines and fields, with Information Technology and related subjects playing a pivotal role in fostering comprehensive and contemporary societal development. The integration and application of Information Technology have also brought about notable changes in education systems. Higher educational institutions have witnessed a surge in growth in recent years, with a noticeable increase in the number of institutions and universities, particularly those that are self-financed. While there are both advantages and disadvantages associated with such institutions, this paper presents a review of the higher education system in India. Within any educational program, teachers assume a position of paramount importance. Recognizing and rewarding their role in the implementation of advanced educational policies is essential.

Keywords: Education, Higher Education, Skills, India, Universities, Development.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of higher education can vary in interpretation among individuals. In terms of its level, higher education involves the pursuit of advanced educational qualifications through the teaching and learning processes within institutions like colleges and universities. Higher education plays a pivotal role in broadening students' understanding of the world, fostering knowledge acquisition, enhancing their capabilities, and offering fresh insights. It serves as a valuable input for the growth and advancement of industries by producing educated and skilled generations. Furthermore, higher education is regarded as an avenue through which individuals can actively engage in their own personal development and contribute to the broader development process.

Higher education encompasses all forms of post-secondary education, training, and research guidance conducted within educational institutions officially designated as institutions of higher education by state authorities and regulatory bodies. This comprehensive definition encompasses a wide range of activities within these higher education institutions, extending beyond traditional universities and graduate schools to include shorter-term educational and training programs offered by polytechnics, junior colleges, and various technical specialty schools. Additionally, it covers correspondence courses that leverage information technology. It's crucial to emphasize that teachers play a pivotal role in any educational program within this domain, as they are instrumental in achieving all educational objectives, holding the future of the nation within their hands.

II. SCENARIO OF HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN INDIA

In India, there exists a significant disparity between the capacity and the demand for higher education. Currently, India exhibits a lower enrollment rate in comparison to countries like China and Brazil. Despite ample funding available for research-related endeavors, the quality of research output in India remains subpar. This underutilization of the research budget is primarily attributed to the inadequacy of high-quality research work. While the quantity of research papers published in India has steadily increased over the past few decades, their citation impact lags behind that of other nations such as Germany, the United States, France, and China.

Another pressing issue within Indian higher education is the deficient quality of curriculum. Outdated and irrelevant curricula prevail in a majority of higher educational institutions. Additionally, there is a shortage of faculty members, leading to a high student-faculty ratio. More than 30% of faculty positions in state and central universities remain vacant. Beyond the well-established higher educational institutions in India, many colleges and universities lack essential research facilities, infrastructure, and basic amenities like libraries, hostels, transportation, and sports facilities, all of which are crucial for assessing institutional quality.

Presently, there is limited collaboration between higher educational institutions and industries in India, resulting in a low employability rate among graduates. Only a small fraction of Indian graduates are deemed employable, and the placement outcomes significantly deteriorate as one moves away from the top-tier institutes. These circumstances underscore the paramount importance of quality teachers in addressing these challenges.

III. CHALLENGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

Even though we have celebrated 75 years of independence, our education system remains in a state of incomplete development. Throughout the decades, different administrations have come and gone, each striving to improve the education system through the implementation of various policies. Unfortunately, these endeavors have frequently fallen short of establishing a global benchmark. The introduction of the New Education Policy in 2020 marks a positive step towards addressing this issue. The University Grants Commission (UGC) is actively dedicated to the promotion of quality education within the higher education sector. Nonetheless, our education system continues to grapple with a multitude of problems and challenges. In the following sections, we delve into some of the core challenges present within the higher education system in India:

- 1. Low Rate of Student Enrolment:** India's Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education is significantly lower when compared to both developed and other developing nations. Students in India tend to exhibit a preference for pursuing master's degrees abroad, leading to a consistent outflow of students to foreign countries.
- 2. Lack of Equity:** Equity in the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is lacking among various segments of society. Previous research has shown significant disparities in GER for higher education in India between males and females. Additionally, regional disparities are evident, with some states boasting high GER figures while others significantly lag behind the national GER, indicating substantial imbalances within the higher education system.
- 3. Inferior Quality of Institutions:** Quality in higher education is a complex and evolving concept with multiple dimensions and levels. In India, the pursuit of quality in higher education stands as one of the primary challenges. Nevertheless, the government maintains an ongoing commitment to enhancing educational quality. Despite these efforts, a significant number of colleges and universities in India struggle to meet the minimum standards stipulated by the UGC (University Grants Commission), preventing them from achieving recognition among the world's top universities.
- 4. Infrastructural Backwardness:** Inadequate infrastructure represents an additional hurdle for India's higher education system, with government-run institutions, in particular, grappling with subpar physical facilities and infrastructure. Numerous colleges operate within rented buildings and commercial complexes, exacerbating the issue.
- 5. Political Interventions:** A significant portion of educational institutions is subject to political influence. University governing bodies are predominantly comprised of politicians rather than academic experts.
- 6. Talent Shortage:** For several years, the shortage of faculty members and the struggle of the state educational system to attract and retain highly qualified educators have presented significant obstacles to providing quality education. Despite numerous vacancies in higher education, a substantial population of NET/PhD candidates remains unemployed. The reluctance of deserving candidates to apply for positions in government departments represents a major setback to the higher education system.

7. **Mediocre Ratings:** According to the data furnished by the NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council), a mere fraction of the total higher education institutions in the country holds accreditation. Within the accredited institutions, approximately only one-third of universities and colleges attain an 'A' level or higher rating.
8. **Lack of applied Research and Innovation:** In our country, there are very few scholars whose work is cited by renowned Western authors. Higher education institutions lack a sufficient emphasis on research, primarily due to limited resources, inadequate facilities, and a scarcity of high-quality faculty to mentor students. Many research scholars either lack fellowships or face delays in receiving them, which directly or indirectly hampers their research endeavors. Furthermore, Indian higher education institutions exhibit limited connectivity with research centers, presenting yet another challenge to the higher education landscape in India.
9. **Shift of Focus from Academics to Administration:** The management of the Indian education system grapples with issues related to excessive centralization, bureaucratic frameworks, and deficiencies in accountability, transparency, and professionalism. With the growing number of affiliated colleges and students, universities are increasingly burdened with administrative tasks, which has led to a dilution of their primary emphasis on academics and research.

IV. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

There is a pressing requirement for the implementation of an innovative and transformative approach to elevate the higher education level, thereby rendering the Indian educational system more pertinent and competitive on a global scale. To craft advanced curricula, arrange expert lectures, facilitate internships, engage in live projects, offer career guidance, and ensure successful placements, it is imperative to foster cooperation with the industrial sector. Enhancing the quality and reputation of higher educational institutions is of paramount importance, and this can be achieved through initiatives such as student exchange programs, faculty exchanges, and collaborations with esteemed national and international higher educational institutions. There is also a need to restructure and reorganize the role of teachers to effectively implement the new curriculum.

Some of the major areas of improvement in higher education system in India are;

1. **Move towards a Learning Society:** As the nation strives to progress towards becoming a learning society, the higher education system holds a pivotal role in this endeavor. Authorities should formulate plans to enhance the effectiveness of this pursuit. Additionally, it is crucial to offer students courses that enable them to excel, attain a deeper understanding of their subjects, and acquire enhanced skills and employability prospects. These efforts also contribute to the improvement of the overall value system.
2. **Ensure Industry and Academic Collaborations:** Collaboration between industry and academia is essential to align the curriculum with industry requirements, thereby enhancing the skills of students. Skill development is of paramount importance to ensure the employability of students, as these skills can be readily applied in various industries.

The synergy between industry and academia plays a pivotal role in guiding and preparing students for their careers.

- 3. Provide Incentives to Teachers and Researchers:** Both students and the industry are looking for advanced courses that provide the latest and highest-quality education, ensuring that students are not only well-prepared for the industry but also employable. It is essential to enhance vocational and diploma courses to make them more efficient and beneficial for students. Offering incentives to teachers and researchers is crucial to make these professions more appealing and to better prepare the younger generation for the future.
- 4. Introduce Innovative Practices:** New technologies and innovations present extensive possibilities for advancement in various aspects of life. They open doors to economic growth, enhanced healthcare, improved service delivery, more effective learning, and socio-cultural advancements. To boost the country's innovative potential, it is essential to focus on leveraging existing strengths in light of a fresh perspective on research and innovation for growth.
- 5. Mobilise Resources:** Authorities should take responsibility for securing public funding to support the development of the higher education sector. It is crucial to implement effective strategies for resource mobilization in higher education. Additionally, it is essential to establish a fee structure that takes into account students' financial capabilities, ensuring that individuals from lower economic backgrounds can participate in higher education initiatives.
- 6. Introduction of Information Age:** The world is transitioning into the information age, marked by advancements in communication, information, and technology that have introduced novel and cost-effective methods. These innovations extend the accessibility of higher education not only to young individuals but also to those seeking continuous education to meet the challenges posed by the rapid influx of information, the dynamic nature of professions, and the concept of lifelong learning.
- 7. Emphasis on Student-Centered Education and Dynamic Methods:** Higher education approaches must align with the requirements of effective learning. It is imperative to adopt student-centered education and dynamic teaching methods, which, in turn, necessitate the cultivation of fresh perspectives and skills among teachers. Traditional lecture-based teaching methods should be complemented by approaches that emphasize self-directed study, individualized interactions between teachers and students, and vibrant seminar and workshop sessions.
- 8. Design Need Based Job-Oriented Courses:** The primary aim of education is the development of an individual's personality. However, in the current education system, there is a deficiency in providing genuine life knowledge and enhancing a student's skills. Therefore, it is advisable to incorporate a blend of vocational courses alongside traditional higher degrees. This approach would offer students practical skills that are valuable for employment, subsequently reducing the unnecessary rush towards pursuing advanced degrees. The educational program should have a strong emphasis on graduate studies, research, and the formulation of effective strategies and mechanisms for the swift

and efficient dissemination and application of knowledge to address specific conditions and requirements.

- 9. International Cooperation:** Engaging in cooperation and collaboration with international universities, organizations, and industry stakeholders is instrumental in the advancement of India's higher education system. Such interactions offer fresh perspectives to both students and educators, enabling them to receive specialized training and become more adaptable to evolving trends and challenges.

V. CONCLUSION

The current state of the higher education system in India is in a transitional phase, necessitating a thorough review and revamping of existing practices and policies. This transformation should encompass expansion, excellence, and inclusivity as key elements. A comprehensive plan for change is required, aiming to significantly increase opportunities throughout universities nationwide and elevate India's gross enrolment ratio. The regulatory system governing higher education must undergo significant modifications, as it currently suffers from notable shortcomings. It is characterized by excessive regulation but inadequate governance. To address these challenges, it is imperative to augment public spending and diversify sources of financing.

To ensure excellence, a reform of the system of affiliated colleges for undergraduate education is essential. Education serves as the fundamental mechanism for promoting social inclusion by creating more opportunities. In all of these transformative efforts, the role of teachers is of paramount significance, as they are the driving force behind implementing changes and facilitating development.

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