



HIGHER EDUCATION: ITS PROGRESS AND PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

Since we have got independence we are facing challenges to establish a great and strong education system. Various governments came and gone. Off course they tried to establish new education policies in the system but this is very sad to dictate that they were not sufficient for our country. Still we are facing lot of problems and challenges in our Education System. India recognizes that the new global scenario poses unprecedented challenges for the higher education system. The University Grants Commission has appropriately stated that a whole range of skills will be demanded from the graduates of humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and commerce, as well as from the various professional disciplines such as agriculture, law, management, medicine or engineering's India can no longer continue the model of general education as it has been persisting in for the large bulk of the student population. Rather, it requires a major investment to make human resource productive by coupling the older general disciplines of humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and commerce to their applications in the new economy and having adequate field based experience to enhance knowledge with skills and develop appropriate attitudes.

Responding to these emerging needs, the UGC stated: "The University has a crucial role to play in promoting social change. It must make an impact on the community if it is to retain its legitimacy and gain public support". It seeks to do so by a new emphasis on community based programs and work on social issues. Concepts of access, equity, relevance and quality can be operational zed only if the system is both effective and efficient. Hence, the management of higher education and the total networking of the system has become an important issue for effective management.

Introduction

Education has vital role to play in the life of an individual as well as the society. It is considered to have the potential to effect change in the system of social stratification. Education assumes special significance in the context of a quasi-traditional or transitional society like India where it has to face multifaceted developmental challenges like, "Education and social change, education and national development, education and human rights, education and social justice, education and international understanding, education and equality, education and societal and cultural progress the list could be prolonged indefinitely A nation could develop in case its people make all-round progress believing in the individual dignity and value of human life. Education is the key parameter in the growth strategy of any developing nation and has rightly been accorded an honored place in the society.

The importance of education for the development, particularly in our country has often been ignored. The nexus between development and education has not been discernible or has been vividly demonstrated in the past as the education was the prerogative of a few i.e. elite of the society. The Education Commission (1964-66) specifically observed, "in a world based on science and technology, it is education that determines the level of prosperity, welfare and security of the people".

As stated in the UNESCO report, education reproduces and even exacerbates and perpetuates the vices inherent in the society. However, in apparent contradiction to this educational world may well set the stage, with an interior revolution of its own, for a subsequent social revolution. It is well known that education provides the learners with a wide range of opportunities, better jobs, higher pay, higher standard of living and social mobility. The success of literacy campaigns suggest that some parts of the less developed world are attaining in 20 years what the industrial world took over 100 years to achieve.

Significantly the educational administration is a social process that takes place within the context of social system. The Pre-British Indian education system comprised of three types. This included: At formal level, the education can conveniently be divided into:

1. Elementary Education
2. Secondary Education
3. Higher Education
 - a. General Education
 - b. Professional and Technical Education



The significance of education at each level cannot be minimized in the hierarchy of education yet the higher education is seen as the producer of elite class in the society which largely contributes in the systems of governance.

This paper has several key aims:-

- To highlight issues in higher education that face many countries and about which an International discussion can contribute insights;
- To contribute to the internationalization of higher education through discussion of international initiatives and linking of people and institutions committed to a global perspective and expanded international programs;
- To create a network of colleagues and centers working in the field of higher education worldwide in order to foster ongoing dialogue, communication, and possible collaborative research; and
- To link policymakers, key administrators, and the higher education research community in a creative dialogue on the central issues facing contemporary higher education.

Higher Education in India: Background

India can take pride in claiming itself to have one of the largest educational systems among developed countries of the World after China and U.S. xii with the reputation of having universities like Nalanda and Taxla in the early times. The references which stand well supported by the historians have enough evidences to justify this claim thereby establishing that higher education in India had its roots in the early times as well. The Mughal period did not have much to claim as this was a period of wars and instability. During the early part of the colonial rule the Britishers were more into establishing themselves rather than caring for the education in the country more so the British rulers were skeptic about the spread of education in India as it may not generate awareness and awakening among the Indian masses.

Once the British administrative juggernaut started rolling in India then they had to, out of compulsions, take some note of education in India which partially was also due to the pressure from Indian social and political leaders. But undoubtedly, in pre independence era, access to higher education was very limited. From the year 1883 till the independence the number of colleges in India were not only inadequate but in few hundreds and subsequently the enrolment of the students was also found to be low.

Institutions of Higher Education

Higher education is of vital importance for the country, as it is powerful tool to build knowledge based society of the 21st century Higher Education means education imparted to students beyond schooling to say study beyond the level of secondary education. Often the term is assumed as education imparted by the colleges or the universities. In fact, the institutions of higher education included not only colleges and universities but also professional schools in the field of law, theology, medicine, business, music, and art. Higher education also includes institutions like teachers training schools, community college and institutions of technology. The term higher education also has in its fold training of highly skilled specialists in the fields of economics, science, technology and culture at various types of higher schools who accept the candidates who have completed secondary general education. In simple words, the term higher education generally refers to education at degree level and above.

At international level, the term higher education is parallel with tertiary (post school) education which further is divided into two types: Type A and Type B. Type A education in this context means degree level course of education generally completed in three years which have theoretical underpinning preparing one for the general or professional field – often higher education means university level education. Further, education refers to those students or research works where one can earn addition to master degree, master of philosophy and doctorate degree. The dawn of Independence saw the significance of higher education in its reach and coverage. At the time of Independence, there was bleak situation of higher education in India as the three important indicators, the number of educational institutions, the teachers and the students to assess the status of higher education were poorly placed. However, the period after 1950’s saw exponential growth in these three indicators as was reflected by secondary data analyzed in the ensuing pages.

Table 1: Higher Education in India during Pre Independence and Post Independence Period

Year	1883	1928	1947	1961-62
No. Of Colleges	139	307	591	2,282
Enrolment of Students	16,088	90,677	2,28,881	11,77,245



Source: <http://www.education.nic.in/cd50years/n/2j/3j/2J3J0201.htm> p; 1of 4 Dated 31/8/2011xiii After Independence, the Government of India was much busy in grappling with issues and problems of Post-partition. However, the Government was very clear on the issue that till the human resources are developed and groomed in a manner to bring about socio economic development it won't be possible for country to be self-reliant. The need to revamp the whole education system was felt by the then National leaders and as a result Radha Krishnan Education

Higher Education sector has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of Universities/University level Institutions & Colleges since Independence. The number of Universities has increased 34 times from 20 in 1950 to 677 in 2014. The sector boasts of 45 Central Universities of which 40 are under the purview of Ministry of Human Resource Development, 318 State Universities, 185 State Private universities, 129 Deemed to be Universities, 51 Institutions of National Importance (established under Acts of Parliament) under MHRD (IITs - 16, NITs – 30 and IISERs – 5) and four Institutions (established under various State legislations). The number of colleges has also registered manifold increase of 74 times with just 500 in 1950 growing to 37,204, as on 31st March, 2013.

The quantum growth in the Higher Education sector is spear-headed by Universities, which are the highest seats of learning. In India, "University" means a University established or incorporated by or under a Central Act, a Provincial Act or a State Act and includes any such institution as may, in consultation with the University concerned, be recognised by the University Grants Commission (UGC) in accordance with the regulations made in this regard under the UGC Act, 1956. Every year, millions of students from within the country and abroad, enter these portals mainly for their graduate, post graduate studies while millions leave these portals for the world outside.

Higher Education is the shared responsibility of both the Centre and the States. The coordination and determination of standards in Universities & Colleges is entrusted to the UGC and other statutory regulatory bodies. The Central Government provides grants to the UGC and establishes Central Universities/Institutions of National Importance in the country. The Central Government is also responsible for declaring an educational institution as "Deemed-to-be University" on the recommendations of the UGC.

Commission was established in the year 1948-49 to review the whole system of education in the country. Later on Kothari Commission was appointed by the union government and the reports of these two commissions made the base for the New Education Policy, 1986. The Government decided to review the growth and development of Higher education through five years plans which paid rich dividends in promoting education in India including higher education. Higher education may include education in general or specialized or professional areas. It won't be possible for the researcher to examine the all areas of higher education, therefore concerted effort has been made in this article to confine on general higher education. As given to understand that higher education is disseminated usually through institutions like universities and colleges or other institution of this kind. Thus, the higher education in India has been assessed through the three indicators of higher education in India;

i. Universities and Colleges

ii. Students Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)

iii. Teachers Strength

Growth of Universities and Institutions Of National Importance

Table 2: Institutions Of Higher Education And Their Intake Capacity

Capacity Indicators	1950	1991	2004	2006	2009	2010
No. of University Level institutions	25	117	320	367	467	544
No. of Colleges	700	7,346	16,885	18,064	25,951	31,324
No. of teachers (in thousands)	15	272	457	488	588	699
No. of students enrolled (in million)	0.1	4.9	9.95	11.2	13.6	14.6

Indian Higher Education - Statistics
Literacy Rates* (%):



Male - 82.14
Female - 65.46
Both - 74.04
Source: Census of India, 2011
Total Education Enrolments:
School Education:
Primary School (I to V) 127.9 Million
Middle School (VI to VIII) 56.4 Million
Secondary School (IX to X) 28.6 Million
Higher Secondary (XI to XII) 16.2 Million

Tertiary Education

Undergraduate and graduate enrolments-16.97 Million
Source: 8th All India School Education Survey, UGC Annual Report 2010-11

Universities and Colleges:

Universities in India - 573
Total Colleges - 33, 023

Source: UGC Annual Report 2010-11; Prof. Ved Prakash, "Inclusive and qualitative expansion of higher education in India - 12th Five Year Plan 2012-2017" University Grants Commission (2010-2011)

Enrolment by Gender Higher Education:

Male - 99.26 Million
Female - 70.49 Million
Total - 16.97 Million

Enrolment by Stages - Higher Education:

Undergraduate - 86.11%
Postgraduate - 12.07%
Diploma/ Certificate - 1.01%
Research - 0.81%

Source: UGC Annual Report 2010-11

Increasing Privatization of Higher Education:-

Over last two decades, a rapidly growing Indian economy has led to a huge demand for an educated and skilled labour force. To meet the manpower needs of a dynamic economy, not surprisingly, private enterprises have cropped up to complement public educational institutions, plagued as they are by capacity constraints. In fact, over the past few decades, it has been the private sector that has really driven capacity-creation in Indian higher education. Private presence in higher education got a fillip starting the mid-1980s, coinciding with the reducing investment by Government of India and the states. In 2001, when private unaided institutes made up 42.6 per cent of all higher education institutes, 32.8 per cent of Indian students studied there. By 2006, the share of private institutes went up to 63.2 per cent and their student share went up to 51.5 per cent. Privatization of higher education is especially noticeable in higher education professional courses such as engineering and Master of Business Administration (MBA), where majority of the institutions offering such programs have been established by the private sector. So much so, the share of private institutes in the field of pharmacy and engineering is more than 90 per cent. These statistics show that private education players are the norm rather than exception and that privatization of higher education is now an irreversible trend in India. Critics who argue that education is a social good and should remain exclusively in the hands of the government will find it hard to disagree that given the scale and complexity of Indian higher education challenges, the government on its own cannot single-handedly tackle all the issues. This is not to say that privatization is the panacea to all of India's higher education problems. In fact, this phenomenon has brought about its own set of issues and challenges. Yet, the fact that India has a burgeoning youth population that sees education as a ticket to prosperity, coupled with declining education spending by the government, translates into a great demand for private higher education.



TABLES -1GROWTH OF UNIVERSITIES AND INSTITUTIONS OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE TABLE 2: INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND THEIR INTAKE CAPACITY

Capacity Indicators	1950	1991	2004	2006	2009	2010
No. of University Level institutions	25	117	320	367	467	544
No. of Colleges	700	7,346	16,885	18,064	25,951	31,324
No. of teachers (in thousands)	15	272	457	488	588	699
No. of students enrolled (in million)	0.1	4.9	9.95	11.2	13.6	14.6

Source: Higher Education in India (Strategies and Schemes during 11th plan period (2007-12) for universities and college) UGC Report January 2011 Chapter 1 and 2, pp. 1 and 3. Total university level institutions by 01.07.2010 add up to 534.

Higher Education in the 21st Century

Higher education has profoundly changed in the past two decades, and those involved in the academic enterprise have yet to grapple with the implications of these changes. Academic institutions and systems have faced pressures of increasing numbers of students and demographic changes, demands for accountability, reconsideration of the social and economic role of higher education, implications of the end of the Cold War, and the impact of new technologies, among others. While academic systems function in a national environment, the challenges play themselves out on a global scale. We can learn much from both national experiences and international trends. Ideas and solutions from one country or region may be relevant in another.

Since academic institutions worldwide stem from common historical roots and face common contemporary challenges, it is especially appropriate that international dialogue take place. A comparative and global approach to thinking about higher education benefits everyone—the experience of one country may not be directly relevant to another, but issues and solutions touch many nations.

Challenges of present higher educational system in India

The shift can occur only through a systemic approach to change as also the development of its human resource, and networking the system through information and communication technology. There are many basic problems facing higher education in India today. These include inadequate infrastructure and facilities, large vacancies in faculty positions and poor faculty thereof, low student enrolment rate, outmoded teaching methods, declining research standards, unmotivated students, overcrowded classrooms and widespread geographic, income, gender, and ethnic imbalances. Apart from concerns relating to deteriorating standards, there is reported exploitation of students by many private providers. Ensuring equitable access to quality higher education for students coming from poor families is a major challenge. Students from poor background are put to further disadvantage since they are not academically prepared to crack highly competitive entrance examinations that have bias towards urban elite and rich students having access to private tuitions and coaching.

Education in basic sciences and subjects that are not market friendly has suffered. Research in higher education institutions is at its lowest ebb. There is an inadequate and diminishing financial support for higher education from the government and from society. Many colleges established in rural areas are non-viable, are under-enrolled and have extremely poor infrastructure and facilities with just a few teachers. A series of judicial interventions over the last two decades and knee-jerk reaction of the government – both at the centre and state level and the regulatory bodies without proper understanding of the emerging market structure of higher education in India has further added confusion to the higher education landscape in the country. There is an absence of a well-informed reform agenda for higher education in the country. A few efforts made now and then are not rooted in the new global realities based on competition and increased mobility of students and workforce. Time to time system influenced with new challenges and government taken a major role to build the system. But there are many challenges always faced by the government. Some of the leading challenges before the higher education system are continuous up gradation of curriculum to keep in pace with rapid growth of science and technology; globalization and the resultant challenges from the international universities; grooming of many private institutions without any method of ensuring maintenance of quality and standard; need for adequate funding to meet the demands of various novel innovative



programs; developing a meaningful and purposeful inter-face between the universities, National Research Laboratories, industries, government and society, etc. ICT in higher education policy may not be able to completely overcome all these challenges though it may play a role in information and resource sharing. There are so many people in various parts of country which are still out of reach. This is when we have emphasized more on our education programs and made our system reachable to all areas. Government has to rethink on these areas to implement more on the policies. Money also plays a vital role for the education system which needs to be unique for all globally recognized syllabus and curricula. Take a look on our constitution which says that this is the responsibility of central and state government to build good education system. For that we need to have funds. But despite there was a large expenditure on the funds every year on Education where the fund goes and our system remains intact.

Conclusion

The journey of higher education in India along the Post-Independence era has witnessed some creditable achievements in the field of higher education resulting into overall growth in the status of higher education in India but at the same time has resulted into bigger problems and issues in the field. Undoubtedly, manifold increase in the number of institutions of higher education both in the universities and colleges yet the accessibility to higher education in the country has not achieved the desired standards. The wide variations in urban and rural accessibility are attention catching suggesting that emphasis on rural expansion of these institutions be given to bridge the gap between the rural-urban accessibility disparities. Another problem which evidently can be seen from the analysis that there were regional disparities as well; some of the states like Tamil Nadu had large number of universities whereas there were states which were doing with one university only not that the trend reflected top side development of these higher institutions but other effects of this kind of development cannot be overlooked as in such situations the students from those areas where there were dearth of such institutions will go to other states putting the pressure on those institutions as well as demotivating the present state. Dismal Students Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in India in the age group of 18-23 years is not a matter to rejoice. A country with such a massive population cannot afford to have literacy rate hopping between 60-70 per cent leaving 30 per cent of its population without education. No country can ever dream of development with such an average literacy rate and GER comparing it with the developed countries of the world with whom the country is vying to share the rankings in the development.

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