



International Journal of Current Research in Education, Culture and Society
<http://eurekajournals.com/IJCRECS.html>

ISSN: 2581-4028

Special Issue: "Quality Assurance and its Impact on Higher Education Institutions in India"- An IQAC Initiative - 29th Dec - 2021

Dare and chance of Higher Education in India

Bhagyalakshmi BN¹, Uma TV²

¹APS College of Commerce.

E-mail Id: bhagyabn30@gmail.com, umaumatv@gmail.com

Abstract

In the world today, there is an awareness that economic success comes from the quality of education. Education is a nation's strength. A developed nation is inevitably an educated nation. Next to the United States and China, India has the third-largest higher education system in the world. As an emerging nation, India has made significant strides in the education field since independence. In spite of many challenges to the higher education system of India, we have many opportunities to overcome these challenges and make the higher education system much better. Our society needs more transparency and accountability, as well as the role of colleges and universities in the coming millennium, as well as emerging scientific research on how people learn. India needs people who are highly educated and skilled to drive our economy. As India provides highly qualified individuals to other countries, we are able to transform our country from a developing nation into a developed nation. It aims to draw attention to the challenges facing India's higher education system as well as the opportunities that it presents.

Keywords: Education, Opportunities, Challenges, Colleges, Universities.

Introduction

Among the world's higher education systems, India is third in terms of enrolment after China and the United States. This will make India a large education hub in the future. Since independence, India's Higher Education industry has seen a massive expansion in the number of Universities/University level Institutions & Colleges. The 'Right to Education Act,' which mandates compulsory and free education for all children aged 6 to 14, has ushered in a change in the country's education system, with figures revealing a stunning increase in school enrolment over the last four years. The private sector's involvement in higher education has resulted in significant developments in the field. In India, the private sector now promotes more than 60% of higher education institutions. This has hastened the establishment of colleges that have sprung up over the previous decade, giving India the world's greatest number of Higher Education institutions and the second-highest number of student enrolments. From 20 in 1950 to 677 in 2014, the number of universities has increased 34 times. Despite these figures, several of these

institutions are not ranked among the top in the world by international education rating agencies. Furthermore, India has not been able to produce world-class universities.

Today, knowledge is the most powerful weapon. The more information one possesses, the more powerful one becomes. India, on the other hand, continues to encounter significant obstacles. Despite increased investment in education, 25% of India's population remains illiterate; just 15% of Indian students complete high school, and only 7% graduate (Masani, 2008). In comparison to other major developing countries, the quality of education in India is much lower, whether at the basic or secondary level. In 2008, India's post-secondary institutions only had enough seats for 7% of the country's college-age population, 25% of teaching positions were unfilled across the country, and 57% of college professors lacked a master's or PhD degree (Newsweek, 2011). In 2011, India has 1522 degree-granting engineering institutions with an annual student intake of 582,000, as well as 1,244 polytechnics with an annual student intake of 265,000 (Science and Technology Education, 2009). However, these institutions are experiencing a teacher shortage, and questions about the quality of instruction have been raised (Mitra, 2008).

Despite these obstacles, India's higher education system has a lot of potential to overcome them and establish its international character. However, greater transparency and accountability are required, as is the role of universities and colleges in the new millennium, as well as increasing scientific study on how individuals learn. As a result of India's ability to provide highly skilled individuals to other countries, it is very simple for India to transition from a developing to a developed country.

A Current Summary of Higher Education

- With approximately 980 universities, 39931 colleges, 10725 independent institutions, and 34.6 million students, India's higher education system is the world's largest in terms of institutions and the second-largest in terms of enrolment. The government has set a target of 30% GER in higher education by 2020, up from 26.5 percent currently.
- India has a demographic advantage as a young nation: out of a population of over 1.25 billion, 672 million individuals, or nearly half of the population, are between the ages of 15 and 59, which is commonly referred to as the 'working age population.
- India is anticipated to be the world's fastest growing economy, with a GDP of USD 7.5 trillion by 2030. It is also one of the world's youngest countries, with a median age of 32. According to projections, our country will require a gross additional workforce of 250 million by 2030.
- By 2030, the developed world's skilled talent gap is estimated to be around 56 million, with India alone providing 47 million qualified workers.
- The private sector is extremely important, accounting for 64 percent of all institutions and 62 percent of enrolment. The private sector invests in professional education to the tune of almost 80%.
- The proposed National Education Policy (2019), chaired by Dr. K Kasturirangan, has been submitted to the Ministry of Human Resources and Development, and the government is working to formalise it.

- To promote a ranking culture in India, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has created the "National Framework of Ranking of Universities and Colleges tailored to local conditions, circumstances, and requirements." NIRF has already ranked for three years in a row.
- The UGC Graded Autonomy Regulations (GAR) 2017 were created by the government to offer graded autonomy to high-performing universities and higher educational institutions. In the first phase, autonomy was extended to 62 universities/HEIs.
- The government has named 20 Indian universities/higher educational institutions as "Institutions of Eminence" (IoE), a move aimed at propelling Indian universities into the top 100-200 global rankings within the next decade.
- To emphasise self-learning and promote access, equity, and quality, the government has introduced SWAYAM, an indigenously developed MOOCs platform. Currently, 72 MOOCs programmes have been developed, with 43 of them already being delivered via MOOCs. The goal is to create over 1000 MOOCs courses.
- Since 2013, the Central government has been providing Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) funding to all state governments in order to improve the quality of state institutions. A total of USD 1 billion has been set aside for three years (2017-2020).
- The government recently announced the "Study in India" programme, which aims to recruit international students from 30 target nations (mainly from the developing world at first) and has designated 15 zones in India that would be transformed into educational cities.
- Some of the government's initiatives to promote research, innovation, and entrepreneurship include the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), which aims to foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship by serving as a platform for the promotion of world-class Innovation Hubs, Grand Challenges, Start-up businesses, and other self-employment activities, especially in technology-driven areas.
- IMPRINT is a Pan-IIT + IISc collaborative project backed by the Ministry of Human Resource Development to address the major science and engineering concerns that India must address and champion in order to allow, empower, and embolden the country for inclusive progress and self-reliance.
- To satisfy the expanding needs of the 4th Industrial Revolution, the Indian government's Department of Science and Technology (DST) is establishing Technology Enabling Centres (TEC) in universities and higher education institutions.

India's Higher Education Challenges

Despite the fact that we are in our 69th year of independence, our educational system is still in its infancy. We were unable to include any universities in the top 100 universities in the globe. Various governments came and went during the course of these six decades. They attempted to improve the educational system by enacting various educational policies, but these efforts were insufficient to set an example for the rest of the cosmos. The UGC is dedicated to providing high-quality education in the higher education sector. In our educational system, we continue to face several problems and obstacles. The following are some of the basic issues in India's higher education system:

1. **Enrolment:** India's Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education is only 15%, which is extremely low when compared to both developed and developing countries. With rising school enrolments, the supply of higher education institutes is insufficient to match the country's expanding needs.
2. **Equity:** In GER, there is no equity amongst different factions of society. According to earlier studies, the GER in higher education in India differs significantly between male and female students. There are regional differences as well; some states have high GER while others lag much behind the national GER, indicating severe inequities in the higher education system.
3. **Quality:** Quality is a multi-dimensional, multi-level, and dynamic notion in higher education. Providing high-quality higher education is one of India's most pressing concerns today. The government, on the other hand, is always emphasizing high-quality education. Despite this, a large number of colleges and universities in India are unable to achieve the UGC's basic requirements, and our universities are unable to compete with the world's best universities.
4. **Infrastructure:** India's higher education system faces a number of challenges, primarily in terms of physical facilities and infrastructure, particularly in public-sector institutes. There are numerous colleges on the second and third floors of the building, as well as readymade hosiery and photocopy shops on the ground and first floors.
5. **Political interference:** Political leaders own the majority of educational institutions and play crucial roles in the governing bodies of universities. They are taking advantage of the helpless students for their own gain. Students plan campaigns, forget about their personal goals, and begin to pursue political careers.
6. **Faculty:** For many years, faculty shortages and the state educational system's incapacity to attract and retain well-qualified teachers have posed hurdles to an excellent education. Despite the fact that there are many vacancies in higher education, a large number of NET/Ph.D. candidates are unemployed, and these excellent students are applying to other departments, which is a major blow to the higher education system.
7. **Accreditation:** According to NAAC data, "not quite 25% of the total higher education institutions in the country were accredited as of June 2010." Only 30% of universities and 45 percent of institutions were judged to be of sufficient quality to be ranked at the 'A' level among those accredited."
8. **Research and Innovation:** In our country, there are a few minor scholars whose work is cited by well-known western authors. The emphasis on research in higher education institutions is insufficient. There is a lack of resources and facilities, as well as a shortage of qualified instructors to counsel pupils. The majority of research scholars do not have fellowships or do not receive them on time, which has a direct or indirect impact on their research. Furthermore, research centers in India are poorly connected to higher education institutions in India. As a result, higher education in India faces yet another hurdle.
9. **Structure of higher education:** Over-centralization, bureaucratic structures, and a lack of accountability, openness, and professionalism face Indian education management. The administrative burden of universities has increased dramatically as a result of the growing number of affiliated schools and students, diluting the fundamental concentration on academics and research (Kumar, 2015).

Chance in Higher Education

India is a huge country, with a population of young people aged 18 to 23 years old estimated to be over 150 million. The sheer magnitude of the market presents enormous chances for India's higher education sector to grow. India presently has over 33,000 colleges and 659 universities, which represents a phenomenal expansion over the last six decades. India has the world's third-largest educational system, with 21.4 million students enrolled in 2012. Unfortunately, India's educational infrastructure is insufficient to handle such massive numbers. Despite all of the government's educational spending, it is just insufficient to fulfil the expanding demands. As a result, the higher education sector has been highlighted as one of the most attractive areas for both domestic and international investment. It provides a plethora of investment opportunities in both unregulated and regulated markets (Nexus Novus, 26 July, 2013).

Despite significant hurdles, the Indian higher education system is rapidly expanding, and there is no reason why these obstacles cannot be surmounted. It is simple for a country like India to overcome these challenges and induce a paradigm change in the country's higher education sector with the use of new-age learning tools. The possibilities are unlimited in such a lively country with such a large population that is adequately educated. If advanced digital teaching and learning technologies are used to transfer knowledge, and society is made aware of where we are now falling behind, our country can quickly become one of the most developed in the world.

At the state level, there are possibilities for strategic engagement and capacity building in higher education leadership and management. Quality assurance, international credit recognition, and a unified national qualifications framework are examples of areas where India can collaborate at the national and international level on systemic reform. Because higher education is a potent tool for lowering or eliminating income and wealth inequality, equal educational opportunity is deemed crucial. The concept of equalizing educational possibilities is also based on the reality that "the ability to benefit from higher education is distributed across all socioeconomic classes." There are great reserves of untapped ability in society; if offered the chance they can rise to the top. A great deal of talent of the highest level is, in fact, lost by an in an egalitarian system of education" (Balachander, 1986).

The need to improve graduates' employability is opening doors for collaboration in enterprise education and entrepreneurship, industry connections, research skills, and a wide range of transferable abilities, including English. The growing interest in Indian higher education institutions in the vocational skills market opens up opportunities for international collaboration. Increased support and participation in venues (conferences, workshops, seminars) that promote debate and dialogue with other countries around the world are needed to strengthen partnerships and increase mutual understanding in higher education. The British Council (British Council, 2014).

Suggestions for Improving Higher Education

- To make India's educational system more internationally relevant and competitive, it is necessary to employ creative and transformative approaches from primary to higher education levels.

- The quality and prestige of higher education institutions must be improved.
- Colleges and universities should have a good infrastructure in order to attract students.
- For better quality and collaborative research, the government should encourage collaboration between Indian higher education colleges and top international institutes, as well as create links between national research laboratories and research centers of top institutions.
- There is a need to focus on graduate students by providing them with courses that allow them to achieve greatness and get a deeper understanding of the subject so that they may get jobs after being hired by corporations, reducing the need for unneeded rush to higher education.
- Universities and colleges, whether public and private, must be free of political affiliations, favoritism, and money-making processes, among other things.
- Higher education should take an interdisciplinary approach so that students' knowledge is not limited to their particular subjects.

Conclusion

Education is the process of forming and strengthening a person's body, mind, and character. It is the bringing together of the head, heart, and mind, allowing a person to develop an all-around personality that recognizes the best in him or her. Although higher education in India has grown significantly in the six decades since independence, it is not equally accessible to all. India is now one of the world's fastest developing countries, with an annual growth rate of more than 9%. A huge portion of the population is still illiterate, and many children do not receive even primary education. This has not only hindered a substantial segment of the population from completely contributing to the country's growth, but it has also kept them from fully using the benefits of whatever development that has occurred for the people's benefit. Without a doubt, India faces numerous obstacles in higher education, but addressing these challenges and boosting higher education is critical. India has a large human resource potential; yet, how to appropriately utilise this potential is a topic that has to be discussed. Opportunities abound, but the question of how to reap the benefits of these opportunities and make them available to others is a source of anxiety. In order to maintain that rate of growth, the number of colleges as well as the quality of higher education in India must both increase. Financial Resources, Access and Equity, Quality Standards, Relevance, Infrastructure, and, finally, Responsiveness must all be reconsidered in order to meet and exceed future standards.

References

- Shaguri, Obadya Ray, Higher Education in India Access, Equity, Quality, EAN World Congress Scholar, Global Access to Postsecondary education, 2013.
- Masani, Zareer, India still Asia's reluctant tiger, BBC Radio 4, 27 February 2008.
- Newsweek, Special Report: The Education Race, August 18-25, 2011.
- Science and Technology Education, Press Information Bureau, Retrieved 200908-08.
- Mitra, Sramana, How To Save The World's Back Office of Forbes, 03.14.2008.
- Henard, Fabrice, Report, Learning our Lesson: Review of Quality teaching in Higher Education, 2008.

Higher Education in India: Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-17) and beyond FICCI Higher Education Summit 2012.

Kumar, Anuj & Ambrish, Higher Education: Growth, Challenges and Opportunities, International Journal of Arts, Humanities and Management Studies, Volume 01, No.2, Feb 2015.

Sharma, Sahil, Sharma, Purnendu, Indian Higher Education System: Challenges And Suggestions, Electronic Journal for Inclusive Education, Vol. 3, No. 4, 2015,pp.3-4.

Nexus Novus, Higher Education Opportunities in India, <http://nexusnovus.com/higher-education-opportunities-india>, Jul 26, 2013 accessed on 30/07/2016.

Balachander, K.K. “Higher education in India: Quest for Equality and Equity”, Mainstream, 1986.

British Council, Understanding India-The Future of Higher Education and Opportunities for International Cooperation, 2014.

<https://www.ficci-hes.c>